



## Rural Community Cooperative Facilitator (CCF)



## Training Course – Module 2 – Cooperative Formation

<http://www.entcom.eu>

ENTCOM – Entrepreneurship and Community Cooperatives

Project Number: 2014-1-IT02-KA204-003631



## 2: Cooperative Formation

**Skill Topic Area:** The advantages/disadvantages of different formation structures – although this will differ in each Member State there will be a need to include general advice for CCFs to give to cooperatives e.g. the psychology of groups.



Self-organization of groups of people provides a potential strategy for sustainable local development, also in difficult areas and for poor populations.

**Cooperative enterprise is not the only form you can use to organize a group of people to start a business with that aim.**

In this module, we are studying the cooperative and the process of formation of this kind of enterprise.

It can be one of the ways to organize a social form that can be **autonomous** and **sustainable in a long time**, and solve effective problems, **making collective interests**.

The **cooperative** is a possible way to structure an entrepreneurial initiatives of self-organization of citizens and self-help in communities.

In this form of entrepreneurship, typically rooted in community culture, natural and social capital are integral and inseparable from economic considerations. It transforms the community into an entrepreneur and an enterprise.

Cooperatives are, in fact, **companies of people who organize themselves** in a participatory way to resolve **problems** and **common needs**. Members are **not owners of profits made**, but leave them in the enterprise for future generations.

In a model of a new social role and greater equity among all citizens, cooperation is proposed as a widespread social infrastructure that enriches the economy, creates mobility and social capital, strengthen cohesion.

Next to state intervention, which must continue to ensure the enforceability of fundamental rights, it foreshadows a more direct and independent assumption of responsibility by citizens and communities for the solution of common needs.

It is **an instrument to cope with the lack or absence of basic services to the community**, such as schools, shops, social services, environmentalist problems, exploitation of land resources. At the same

time, in giving that services, cooperative is **a way to respond to the employment crisis** that arose in the surrounding areas.

The presence of cooperatives, or the group of cooperatives, where there are, has produced **a positive impact on the community** concerned, recovering traditional products and ancient crafts, restoring environmental goods and monumental, contributing to safeguarding the environment and enhancing cultural traditions, encouraging the development of tourism and seasonal returns, giving value to the housing, promoting the spread of renewable energy. And then, **all have been able to create job opportunities within communities.**

In summary, many experiences show that ***the cooperative form is an effective tool, available to citizens who wish to use it, to respond positively to the serious problems, social and individual, that the difficulties of public and "market failures" may result in many countries, particularly in rural areas, and areas with a strong risk of depopulation.***

Initiatives are born in different countries and in different areas, from different needs and different histories. So, **cooperative is a flexible instrument we can adapt to our project, preserving aims and values.**

In this module, you can find sub-modules. Each of these contains text, pictures, videos, references to good practices, activities to use with groups, and reading material to study in depth. Sub-modules are:

1. General characteristics of the cooperative form of enterprise: organization and governance,
2. Cooperative values and principles – what are common principles and values which characterize a cooperative enterprise and how you can spread them in a new organization, in a startup phase;
3. Focus on advantages and disadvantages on different formation structures;
4. The group: entrepreneurial attitude, team working, organizational skills assessment; and
5. Examples of community cooperatives.

### **1: General characteristics of the cooperative form of enterprise: organization and governance**

**What is a cooperative enterprise?** We need a definition that is available for all different countries, beyond different legal frameworks.

According to ICA definition, *“A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprise”*.

Co-operatives are enterprises, active in every sector of economy, everywhere.

Here there are some pictures of community cooperatives in the rural area near Lecce, in the south of Italy: the cultivation of the typical dwarf pea and other legumes in Zollino, and the „home of water“, a water public dispenser in Melpignano.



Picture 1 – The products



Picture 2 – Community Cooperative Working



Picture 3 – The home of water in Melpignano

The **members** of a cooperative can be:

- the customers: people who buy products from the cooperative
- the employees: people who work in the cooperative;
- the producers: if they sell their products to cooperative (as in agricultural cooperatives, where members are producers).

#### What they have in common?

They all can get something (products or services they want to buy, their own work, product or services they sell, etc.) at better conditions than the usual they can find on the market.

In cooperatives:

- members are the owners;
- members run the enterprise.

When you start the process to form a new cooperative, it is important to clarify to the future members what is their role, as **owners and employees at the same time**, if it is a working cooperative.

It is important to share the participative practices and the rules on governance.

**Cooperatives governance** has to protect interest of members and of the whole community, and assure the maintenance of members control.

A **democratic governance** allows members to participate directly to decisions and to the life of enterprise. In a cooperative, members constitute the general assembly, and they vote their representatives among the same members.

Democracy is inside one of the basic cooperative principle: one person-one vote.

A democratic governance means that:

- the power is not concentrated in a small number of people, but “diffused”;
- it facilitate the access to information;
- it is better than hierarchical governance to manage markets complexity and uncertainty;
- it facilitate new proposals and new ideas, by sharing experiences and expertise.

Generally, in cooperative enterprises, we have **an horizontal organizational model**. It can develop a structure constituted by multiple small groups making independent decisions, where members are engaged in devising the rules.

Democracy is on the basis of self-governance. This means that governance rules are decided, and regularly revised, by the members, and that each member know them very well.

Becoming a member, it is possible to participate economically, but also expressing the own contribution in meeting, general assembly and discussions, voting and deliberating with others members.

It is important to work, in cooperative, for the implementation of participatory practices: participatory management, ways to engage members and workers in decisions and in reflecting on new perspectives, in building up new connections with stakeholders and community.

All cooperatives are democratically controlled. In the specific case of community cooperatives, the idea of active participation of members, horizontal organizational model and cooperation with the community are stronger than usual.

*Watch the videos:*

- ✓ **What is a Cooperative - Co-operatives UK**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90FL\\_bBE4mw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90FL_bBE4mw)

- ✓ **Cooperatives are everyway:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RCZPrUIU0o&feature=share>

## **2: Cooperative values and principles**

Even if the legal form of cooperative enterprises is very different from country to country, we can recognize a cooperative from their governance and organizational model (as we have already seen in the previous sub topic) and from the cooperative principles.

**So, what are common principles and values which characterize a cooperative enterprise? How you can spread them in a new organization, in a startup phase? Let's start to answer!**

- Since the beginning of the cooperative history, cooperatives ethical values are:
- Self-help: interest for helping each other by working together for mutual benefit;
- Self-responsibility: members should feel responsible for the success of their organisation.
- Democracy: the cooperative democratic governance is based on "one-member one-vote";
- Equity: members are treated fairly, and the small part of divisible profits is distributed according to the level of their participation;
- Equality: all members have an equal possibility to express themselves;
- Solidarity: a sense of collective responsibility for the enterprise. And then, cooperatives support other co-operatives.

Other ethical values are **openness, honesty, social responsibility, caring for others.**

Watch the video:

**“New Pioneers” – video on cooperative origins:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYPe5xJAm5w>

Picture 4 – Democratic governance



These values are put into practice through 7 cooperative principles that are the guidelines of cooperative formation:

### **1. Voluntary and Open Membership**

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons who are interested in cooperative aims and activity and ask to be a member, without discriminations. Cooperatives must keep the “open door” to those who, meeting the requirements decided by members, want to share their objectives.

### **2. Democratic Member Control**

Co-operatives are controlled by their members, and this is called democratic governance. Members actively participate to take decisions and to define policies and the organizational model. The general assembly of members elects his representatives. All members have equal voting power (one member, one vote).

### 3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to the capital of the cooperative they democratically control. Members subscribe part of the capital as condition of membership, and the whole capital is property of the cooperative.

Surpluses are used for developing the cooperative, for setting up reserves; for supporting specific activities or projects, for giving benefits to members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative.

*Picture 5 – Members participation and control*



### 4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous and controlled exclusively by their members. They always have to assure the maintenance of democratic control by themselves.



*Picture 6 – Education, training, formation, intergenerationality*

## 5. Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members. Education and training is recognized as an important instrument for skills development and intergenerationality. Resources are dedicated to train elected representatives, managers and employees, as they can contribute effectively to the enterprise development.

They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

## 6. Cooperation among Cooperatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

## 7. Concern for Community

Cooperatives members elaborate plan and policies to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities.

When you are working for a new entrepreneurial project to realize using the cooperative form, the values and principles have to become the guidelines of the new organization. If you look to a cooperative, you will be able to recognize them in its policies, in its activities, products and services. Entrepreneurial culture will be truly impregnated of values and people spontaneously will communicate them in their attitude and behavior.

*Watch the video:*

**The Seven Cooperative Principles:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6c7YoZQhyEc>

### **3: Focus on advantages and disadvantages of different formation structures**

If compared to other types of companies, what are main characteristic of cooperatives? Why should we choose a cooperative form?

- A first difference is the aim, which is not making profit, and so to gain the maximum from the investment made, but is **mutuality**: to work, to buy goods and services from the market or sell product at better conditions than those they would obtain individually. The members of a cooperative are people who want to satisfy their needs by the means of mutuality that is the reciprocal support in order to optimize the results of their efforts.
- In cooperatives the focal point moves **from capital to people and people's needs**, so that individuals become a community.

- Cooperatives should adopt organizational and managerial models that are “horizontal” and centered on the active participation of various stakeholders (members and employees are the first ones!), so, everyone can give an active contribution to decisions and can express their ideas.
- The business project, the organizational and managerial model and the governance must recognize the importance of the human capital, even though the financial capital has a functional value in order to reach the common objective.

So, you can choose to found a cooperative enterprise if you can recognize yourself in these characteristics. If you prefer an individual way to work and decide, probably you can prefer another form.

It is important, for the foundation of a cooperative, to have a precise idea of what kind of business members want to do. In other words, as well as in the other types of enterprise, **it is necessary to have a business project.**

Therefore in a cooperative skills, personal resources and competences are essential for those who want to join because they are the frame on which the aim will be composed.

If you don't have a precise project or business idea, but you want to do something useful for your community without founding an enterprise, you can choose a no-profit association form.

A case study

*Watch the video:*

**NRECA: The Electric Cooperative Story:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tenKnIx4ouY>

#### **4: The group: entrepreneurial attitude, team working, organizational skills assessment**

Why can we speak of “groups” when we speak about cooperation? Because...

- a large part of work time is devoted to the activities to do in groups instead of alone;
- there is more attention to participative processes; and
- there are horizontal structures, empowerment processes within the organizations.

So, **what is a group?**

“A group is a set of two or more individuals who interact and depend on each other to achieve a common goal” (Turner, 1982).

The group exists when individuals define themselves as members and when its existence is recognized by other people.

This definition highlights some fundamental elements:

- the awareness of people to be part of the group, and their identification to the group;
- the social recognition: the group is recognized as such;
- the interdependence between the members: the members - although operating according to their roles and according to their skills - are dependent on each other in the achievement of a common goal.

The **team** is a particular form of group, with a precise definition of tasks and activities, specific roles and high members' commitment.

In teamwork energies are invested:

- in the task, or the implementation of actions in order to achieve the objectives; and
- in people relations, the dynamics that occur between people and that can represent both a brake and an accelerator of the group's performance.

When cooperative is in a startup phase, it is important to project the new organizational model in order to allow people and teams to work better and to generate positive interactions.

A small community, like an enterprise, is really collaborative if it shows a great desire to build new meanings and new skills through collaboration.

Another issue is **the entrepreneurial attitude of the group**. It is not necessary that all members are good entrepreneurs, but it is important that in the new enterprise there are "cooperatives entrepreneurs". According to an EU Recommendation of 2006, "Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship" is a key competences for lifelong learning: "sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance".

When you are starting a new entrepreneurial project in a cooperative form, you need to reflect, as a group, on some issues:

- *What is our individual skills-profile?*
- *What is our team and organizational skills-profile?*
- *What do we want to do? How?*
- *Have we got all skills we need for our activities? Or we need to get them from outside?*

Each member, with his/her skills, abilities and attitudes, can influence all the eco-system where he/she works. There is a dynamic relationship between individual skills and abilities and collective ones, and a strict relationship between the skills of the team and the real opportunity, for the new entrepreneurship, to implement the key activities (the activities that are necessary to assure the production of the value, and so the products or services).

- ⇒ If you are working on a cooperative enterprise project, **reflect on your skills and make a list of it, differentiating between technical skills** (regarding the sector of activities, the content of the job) **and soft skills or personal attitudes**. (Picture 7 – My skills are...; Picture 8 – The skills of the new cooperative team are...)

As regards soft skills, you can reflect on your strategy (understood as a useful attitude to support the start-up of new ideas and the birth of projects). *Are you good at...?*

- ✓ **creating a network** of formal and informal contacts for the organization, structuring and effective public relations with the territory;
- ✓ evaluating **the potential of a new business**, detecting signals and cultural changes, adapting the supply to the demand;
- ✓ **dealing with the challenges, managing innovation**, imagining new products and services starting from the needs identified in current markets or future ones, elaborate and sharing a vision.



The new team has to be organized. About organization, *are you good at...?*

- ✓ defining the specifications of a project and assessing the feasibility, reducing risk, finding the resources to achieve the objectives, **pontificate**;
- ✓ assigning and coordinating the resources assigned, **governing actions**, providing resources for the effective development of action plans; and
- ✓ **monitoring** the achievement of the objectives, analyzing and evaluating the costs and results.

Another important skill that should be present in the team is relationship and teamwork promotion. *Are you good at...?*

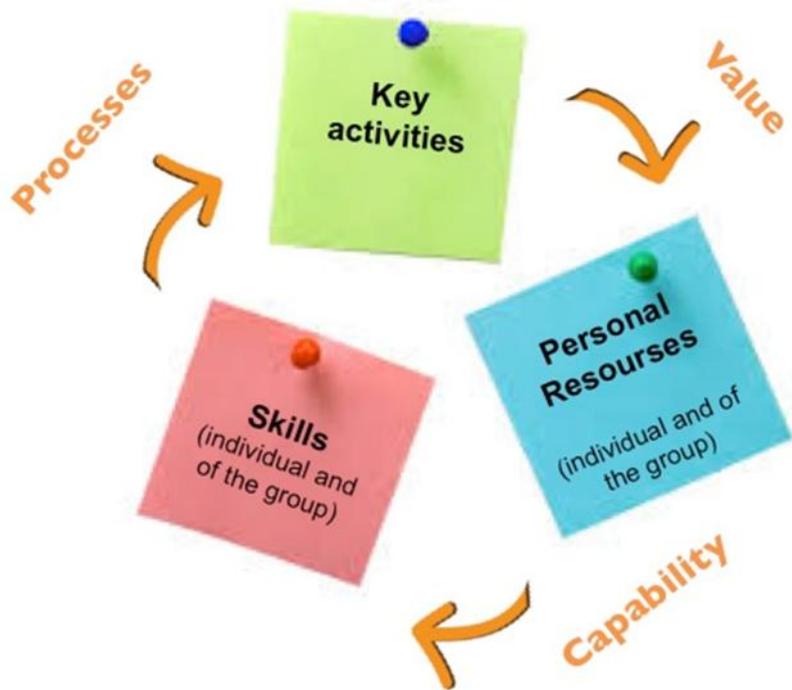
- ✓ guiding, engaging and mobilizing groups and teams towards ambitious goals, encouraging and empowering members and employees;
- ✓ ensuring effective sharing of information, making a clear and coherent intervention in front of one or more people;
- ✓ evaluating and rewarding performance, enhancing and empowering employees.

These skills need to be supported by **personal resources**, as perseverance, enthusiasm, audacity, etc...

So, the “organizational skills” (understood as the skills of the team) are the result of the integration of individual skills and they can express a great potential.

The success of the new cooperative enterprise can be strengthened by the balance between individual presents and prospective skills and strategic organizational opportunities.

*Picture 9 – Key activities, Skills, Personal Resources*



A team will be more effective if there is an appropriate distribution of these skills among the members, and if all of them are mainly present, with the necessary technical expertise to carry out the specific activities (agriculture, logistic services, assistance, etc.).

When you start a cooperative project, you have to know:

- If and how much the skills of the team actually express and increases the value of the enterprise; and
- How to identify skills-gaps that can compromise the success of the enterprise.

In this second option, you need to solve the gap, through education and training, looking for new members with different skills, “buying” the skills from outside if they do not concern a strategic area of value for the enterprise.

## **5: Examples of community cooperatives**

### **JEMMA COOPERATIVA DI COMUNITA' DI ZOLLINO (Lecce, in the south of Italy)**

Combining the development of the territory, the protection of local specialties, the employment and sustainability: this is the aim of Jemma - Zollino Community Cooperative, an innovative way of doing

business and promoting the socio-economic development of a community, starting from the needs and peculiarities of the territory.

Born in 2012 with a participatory and "bottom up" process, under the impulse of Legacoop and the municipality, the Zollino Community Cooperative defined its goals: the promotion and dissemination of an environmental culture, oriented to the use of natural resources, the preservation of plant biodiversity, the promotion of typical crops, the promotion of energy-saving practices and the reduction of the ecological footprint in the domestic management and production activities, the use and dissemination of knowledge of the cultural and environmental heritage.

The Community Cooperative is born from the desire to restore and enhance the local products; including the pea and the bean of Zollino, said kuccia in griko, typical native legumes nutrition peasant of old, unique taste and organoleptic properties.

The cooperative (jemma in griko means "blood") calls for the return to the land and its resources, not only agricultural but also historical and cultural, as the lifeblood for growth and the good of the community and as a symbol of belonging.

The Community Cooperative in Zollino carries on the following activities:

- **Production and marketing** (exploitation, production, processing and marketing of local products, such as legumes and extra virgin olive oil, resulting from the action of the community);
- **Research** (research projects on the study of local products either for the purpose of production and consumer protection);
- **Alternative energy and energy saving** (The cooperative is engaged in the dissemination of innovative technologies and practices in the environmental field. The goal is to promote throughout the community a "culture" of energy conservation, rational use of energy, the upgrading of buildings and the possibility of producing energy from renewable sources for own consumption).
- **Teaching and territorial promotion** (guided tours in the area and curricula to the discovery of nature, of good environmental practices and typical local products);
- **Other services:** cleaning of apartments and / or rooms; babysitting, supermarket, home delivery services, road maintenance, logistics, handling, organization of training courses, etc.

### **FABER CITY Alberobello Community Cooperative**

Faber City Cooperative community of Alberobello (Unesco heritage city, famous for Trulli, special buildings), was born in the January of 2015. Fabercity wants to be a bridge between different realities, you want to catch better the needs of citizens and, therefore, devise efficient and innovative responses to those implemented by the traditional players.

The members started conducting a research about the needs of citizens, the research "Alberobello ... you like?" has received special attention from various national and local stakeholders and considered a good practice to map and identify possible chance of development of a community.

Faber City has put in place all those activities that respond to the common needs: the cooperative provides a complementary educational service, integrated to sports services giving to children and their families an opportunity for growth, investing in young and unemployed trainers.

One of the priorities of Fabercity is the rediscovery of the social role of agriculture and rural festivals, recognizing agricultural enterprises and community cooperatives as providers of health services and social integration, as well as tourism and recreation.

### **MELPIGNANO Community Cooperative**

Melpignano is a small town of 2500 citizens, placed in Apulia, a region in the south of Italy, in an area called Salento not so far from coasts.

The cooperative was born to give an advantage to the community, to avoid depopulation and to enhance cultural, social and economic sustainable development. Citizens are very involved to community life: the cooperative was founded by the residents on July 12, 2012 in St. George's Square.

Cooperative was preferred because it is a democratic model (equality among members), it stimulated citizens participation. Mutuality is the biggest aim of this business idea: citizens can work for cooperative, they can take a practical advantage (electricity) and they can find better conditions to have products (water) than that they can find on market.

Anybody who lives in Melpignano or all citizens who live in the neighboring towns are eligible for membership. If it is possible to install photovoltaic panels on the roofs (following criteria established by the Engineering Department of the University of Salento), members can benefit of free energy. Some cooperative members take care of the photovoltaic panels and House of water's maintenance.

The cooperative developed the project "Photovoltaic panels on the roofs", focusing on the innovative field of renewable energy. In particular, cooperative members can install a solar panel on home roof with a participation fee of 25,00 euros.

Today the cooperative has installed 35 solar panels with 179 kw. Cooperative members have no energy costs and the rest of the profit can be used for community development.

Using the profit coming from electricity sale, the Community Cooperative created the "House of water": citizens can buy 2 liters of water at 10 cents, using glass bottles to reduce environmental waste. This good practice encourages citizens to adopt a culture of sustainability, to develop people capabilities, trying to imagine a future change.

The cooperative aims to develop the active participation of citizens in the decision making process. There are workshops and informal meetings about the meaning of being a member of a cooperative, to participate and give contributions, to be a cooperative and community entrepreneur.

Comunità Cooperativa Melpignano has different goals:

- social, cultural and economic sustainable development;
- citizens' participation to decision making, using a bottom up process;

- improving the quality of citizens' life.

The cooperative aims to develop the active participation of citizens in the decision making process, to improve the condition of the town and the production of clean and renewable energy. Melpignano Community Cooperative encourages the involvement of employees in the cooperative and the contact with other agencies favor to form a social hub.

They receive everyday invitation all over Italy to talk about their experience.



**Now, test your knowledge answering to the issues proposed about the following situational scenarios.**

### **Situational Scenario 1**

*You are part of a committee who wants to promote a community cooperative in your small rural area. So, this is the startup phase of a cooperative enterprise, but at the same time this probably will be a community opportunity. You need to ensure that citizens and prospective members fully understand the cooperative principles and the model of governance.*

Issue question: *What can you proceed to divulgate and involve new people?*

Choose the best option a) or b):

- A. The committee decides to convene a public meeting, open to all interested people, where everyone can get information on proposal, express needs and opinions, make new proposal.*
- B. The committee decides to develop a business plan, starting from activities that seems to be more remunerative, and then select people who can be members and give a new contribution.*

### **Situational Scenario 2**

*A group of four people is starting an entrepreneurship project. They are forming a cooperative that prepare food using biological and local products. They want to manage a restaurant, and prepare catering for events and ceremonies.*

*They want to buy product from local producers and give value to local agriculture.*

Try to hypothesize their key activities.

*[Select ingredients and products, preparing food, presenting food, looking for clients, communicating their value, etc.]*

Issue question: *what are strategic skills members need to have? If they have not some of them, what can they do?*

Choose the best option A, B or C

- A. The skills linked to key activities are: knowledge of alimentary products, measuring quality of food, cooking, presenting food, commercial skills, communication, and administration and management skills. If none of the members can cook, select products, presenting and selling food, members should get this skills from outsides, looking for employees and management.*

- B. *It is necessary to find some skills between members: knowledge of alimentary products, measuring quality of food, cooking, presenting food, commercial skills, communication, administration and management skills. If the four members do not hold some of them, they should discuss case by case. If they can get the skill with a training course or studying and practicing by themselves, they should do it. If they need specialized people, they can engage a new person in the cooperative, paying attention to the economic sustainability. They can buy from external people performances that are not strategic (for example, to clean the restaurant), or not so frequently used (for example, a particular kind of cooking in a small village in winter, with few clients).*
- C. *All skills are necessary, and so the four members has to cover all activities, also if they are not strategic (for example to clean restaurant). If it is not sustainable to engage new people as members, it is necessary for them to work more and to do everything.*

(NOTE: Answers can be found at the end of the Course)

### **Further reading**

- ICA International Co-operative Alliance (1995), **Statement on the Co-operative Identity**: <http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles>
- Cooperatives UK (2009), **Simply Legal – All you Need to Know about Legal Forms and Organizational Types for Community Enterprises**, Manchester. <http://bit.ly/1NGg837>
- **Ready, Steady, Coop! a practical guide for cooperative startups** (CoopstarterProject):<https://coopseurope.coop/sites/default/files/Ready%2C%20Steady%2C%20Coop%21.pdf>
- Co-operACTION, toolkit for young co-operators (2013), Brussels, IFM SEI
- Peredo A.M., Chrisman J.J. (2006), **“Towards a Theory of Community-Based Enterprise”**, The Academy of Management Review, 31(2), pp. 309-328. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2006.20208683>
- Conaty P., Bollier D. (a cura di) (2014), **Toward an Open Co-operativism. A New Social Economy Based on Open Platforms, Co-operative Models, and Commons**, A Report on a Commons Strategies Group Workshop, Berlin.
- Birchall J. (2011), **People-Centered Businesses – Co-operatives, Mutuels and the Idea of Membership**, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Holyoake G.J. (1893), **The History of the Rochdale Pioneers**, Swan Sonnenschein & Co, Londra, (1st ed.1857).
- International Labour Organization (ILO) (2002), **“Recommendation Concerning the Promotion of Cooperatives”**, Recommendation no. 193, Geneva.

### **Links to relevant websites**

Cooperatives Europe - <https://coopseurope.coop>

I.C.A. - International Cooperative Alliance – <http://ica.coop>

**Blueprint I.C.A.** <http://ica.coop/en/blueprint-co-op-decade>

**Stories Project, by Euricse and I.C.A.:** <http://stories.coop>

**Cooprouté project – The European Route of cooperative culture:** <http://www.cooprouté.coop>

**The University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives:** <http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/default.aspx>

**The Italian documentation centre on cooperatives and social economy:**

<http://www.cooperazione.net/eng/index.asp>

**Community Cooperative of Melpignano, in the south of Italy:**

<http://www.coopcomunitamelpignano.it>

**The Italian project Coop startup:** <http://www.coopstartup.it>

[http://www.coopstartup.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Coopstartup\\_SltoWeb\\_EN1.pdf](http://www.coopstartup.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Coopstartup_SltoWeb_EN1.pdf)

**Cecop - European Confederation of Industrial and Services Cooperatives**

<http://www.cecop.coop>