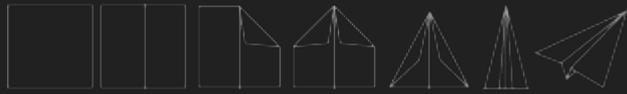


COOPST...RTER



Mentoring cooperative ambassadors and entrepreneurs

CoopStarter 2.0
Intellectual output 7

Ambassador Training Materials.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



PROJECT

Name	CoopStarter 2.0
Coordinator	Cooperatives Europe
Erasmus + project	2017-1-BE01-KA202-024764
Project start	01 September 2017
Duration	36 months
Website	www.starter.coop
E-mail	l.cousin@coopseurope.coop

DELIVERABLE

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INTRODUCTION

The CoopStarter Mentorship Programme is designed to enable mentors to support and upskill CoopStarter ambassadors. The advantages of this are twofold. Firstly it will give ambassadors the opportunity to be supported throughout the process of their cooperative start-up journey, meaning that they will be more likely to succeed and sustain their entrepreneurial activities. Secondly, it will give mentors a unique opportunity to develop their own training capacities and practice through access to a wide range of resources to help them build a structured learning pathway for their mentees. This will strengthen the support infrastructure for new cooperative start-ups and build the body of knowledge around co-op-specific mentoring approaches.

The coopstarter mentor

Contrary to traditional corporate mentors, the CoopStarter mentor or cooperative mentor has deep understanding of the cooperative way of doing business. Cooperative mentors have their own cooperative business or at least know how to start one. Cooperative mentors are good at sharing their wisdom and their role is first and foremost to offer advice, guidance and support to ambassadors.

Mentorship in action

People usually talk about mentoring, but it isn't obvious what being a mentor means or what the process of mentoring entails. Is it training, counselling, coaching or teaching? Or everything at once? One could define mentors as people who encourage and help to improve through good practices others. Furthermore, the mentor provides support for working through crucial and often complex decisions. Mentoring is considered as a learning partnership and therefore it is important to understand that ambassadors may be very diverse, ranging from graduates trying to develop an idea to the more experienced looking for practical guidance to start their own cooperative businesses. One should think of mentoring as a way to improve the skills of ambassadors by enabling them to boost their own competences and confidence. Most importantly, CoopStarter mentors will open the way for ambassadors to overcome the fear of starting up cooperative businesses.

Who is this training material for?

This training material is aimed at cooperative mentors, i.e. employees of cooperative associations or youth workers, who provide support to ambassadors as part of their professional activity. This training material will aid the cooperative mentors in their work with ambassadors who are about to start or are already running cooperative businesses.

The cooperative mentors are typically expert professionals with great knowledge of the cooperative business model and the cooperative values and principles. Furthermore, they have knowledge of and experience in how to start a cooperative business within the structural and legal framework of the given country. Mentors will come from different levels of professional and educational backgrounds and therefore material needs to be shaped accordingly.

How should it be used?

Mentoring is intended to improve the skills of the ambassadors by enabling them to enhance their own decision-making ability and effectiveness. Furthermore, the mentor provides support for working through crucial and often complex decisions.

An active partnership between the mentor and the ambassadors is a social and practical tool in the process of starting up a cooperative business.

For the purpose of this training material, mentoring is considered as a developmental learning partnership where a mentor provides guidance to ambassadors helping them towards a successful cooperative business.

Ambassadors may be very diverse, ranging from graduates trying to develop an idea to the more experienced looking for practical guidance to start their own businesses.

The main goal of the training material is to help mentors understand how to best help ambassadors start a cooperative business or run an already existing cooperative business and how to achieve the best possible result from the mentoring relationship.

The training material is designed to help mentors support and upskill ambassadors, using the resources created for CoopStarter 2.0 and resources available in the Knowledge Base (KB). It should also function as a resource document for mentors willing to improve their own training capacity by using the diversity of the available resource materials. It is also intended to provide knowledge of the social and economic sustainability of cooperatives, understanding and practical application of good business practices through practical training methods and tools.

Tools and entrepreneurship events

Moving people from their normal environment either at home, work or school to a different setting can be an efficient way to boost innovative thinking, constructive collaboration and a way to reshape the approach to cooperative entrepreneurship.

The events organized by the ambassadors in CoopStarter 2.0 with the help of the mentors are meant to take the participants through the process of mobilizing the community, generating ideas, creating a business plan and starting a cooperative. What the mentor should always keep in mind and what should be relayed to the ambassadors is that the events “Let’s cooperate”, “Let’s generate” and “Let’s start for real” are meant to stimulate creativity in groups.

In order to work with creativity in groups and achieve something valuable from it, you need to understand not only inventiveness, group dynamics, how individuals work, learning processes and so on but also how to capture and frame the ideas and energy created.

As a mentor you play an important role in this process, as your experience and insight are needed to support the ambassadors in their work to organize events where innovative and entrepreneurial skills will be nourished and developed. At the same time you will be needed to upskill the young ambassadors so that they are prepared to become facilitators that can lead a cooperative entrepreneurial project through a tight and intense process of constructive collaboration.

The CoopStarter Mentorship Programme is supported by a toolkit for trainers as well as the Knowledge Base comprised of all of the materials and resources developed through the other Intellectual Outputs of the CoopStarter Programme. These resource documents created for ambassadors and mentors should help this process under way as it offers a diversity of available online resources and a structured pathway to develop cooperative entrepreneurs.

For each of the three events, you will find the objective, the format and the different IOs you can refer to. This overview will help you to find which tools to use before and during the event and where you can find them in the different CoopStarter 2.0 IOs.

Using this training material and the training provided, the cooperative mentors will learn how to deliver structured, professional and valuable mentoring and training to young potential cooperative entrepreneurs and fully implement a successful cooperative mentorship program. This training material gives mentors information about how to mentor, engage in a successful mentoring relationship and how to work with the mentee to develop and refine their business ideas in the framework of the cooperative business model, values and principals.

About cooperative businesses

Cooperatives are everywhere! There are 2.6 million cooperatives with over 1 billion memberships and customers worldwide. Cooperatives are usually locally owned enterprises, which makes them seem quite insignificant. However, the entire global cooperative economy is the 5th largest economy in the world.

A cooperative is formed by a group of people whose common objective is to work together. All cooperatives are owned and governed democratically applying the principle of “one member, one vote”. In a cooperative, ownership, governance and benefit are held by the same group of people: its members. In a cooperative, members or employee-owners share the governance by making important decisions democratically, like electing the board of directors, adopting or amending by-laws or even granting key decisions to the working or member stab.

Cooperatives are manifold. Any type of business can be a cooperative; computer programmers, philosophers, engineers, day-care workers, journalists, graphic designers, doctors and nurses, bakers, taxi-drivers, academics, plumbers, secretaries, the sky is the limit.

Cooperatives are also easy to set up and run and they offer a range of benefits that are difficult to find in traditional businesses. Most cooperatives are owned by employees that are rooted in their local community, providing more jobs thus developing and supporting the local economy.

Keep in mind that a cooperative is a business enterprise, and as such, it requires careful planning, analysis, and market research to succeed. One of the most important elements in starting a cooperative is to find a group of people who share the same business ethics and who wish to run a business democratically. Successful cooperatives find a balance between entrepreneurial vision and a good understanding and commitment to the principles of shared ownership. Most important keep an open mind and fight for your idea and what you believe and do not forget to celebrate that you are a member of a much broader community whose most important goal is to make a better world.

As a mentor, your primary role is to pass on this understanding of the cooperative mind-set to the ambassadors and future cooperative entrepreneurs.

Section 1 - Mentorship Programme

1. Mentorship behaviours: best practices

1.1 What is mentoring?

Mentoring is designed to help people to develop more effectively, both professionally and personally. The mentoring relationship is designed to increase the confidence of the mentee and to support them mentee to be able to build a new range of skills, knowledge and behaviours to take control of their own development and work.

Mentoring differs from training or teaching. It is a position which is a sweet mix between coaching, advising and guiding. A mentor does not need to be a qualified trainer or hold professional qualifications for the role that the mentee carries out. However, a mentor has an experience both professionally and personally to be shared. They need to be able to provide the right mix of encouragement and challenge to enable the mentee to reflect upon and identify the course of action they need to take in regards to their own development.

1.2 The purpose of mentoring

The purpose of mentoring is to capture the knowledge and skills contained within experienced co-operators and to pass on and share this valuable experience to new/less experienced cooperative entrepreneurs. This type of knowledge transfer is valuable for both the individual co-operators and for the new cooperative enterprise as a whole, for example:

- For the less experienced cooperative entrepreneurs, being mentored gives them an ideal opportunity to develop as a person and also to build on the foundations of their career. Mentoring provides an empowering and enabling process through which they are encouraged to take an active role in identifying the most effective and achievable steps to help them flourish and grow both in the cooperative enterprise, but also as individuals. It also provides them with the opportunity to acquire new professional and personal skills, learn more about cooperative enterprise (and the context within which it operates) and develop interpersonal relationships.
- For the more experienced mentor, mentoring a less experienced cooperative entrepreneur enables them to feel valued for their knowledge, gives them practical experience of leadership and encourages personal growth and job satisfaction in helping a cooperative entrepreneur to develop not only their work-based abilities, but also to see them transfer these skills to other areas of their life. For example, supporting someone to better set up and manage their cooperative enterprise may enable that co-operator to prevent over-working thereby improving their work-life balance and avoiding stress and anxiety.

1.3 The knowledge, skills and behaviour of a good co-op mentor

An effective co-op mentor will ideally possess the co-op-related knowledge, skills and experience from which the mentee can benefit in terms of sharing and learning through their mentoring relationship. Therefore, it makes sense for a mentor to be matched with a potential mentee who has identified their skill set and experience as being the most beneficial to their development. In terms of skills and behaviour, the mentor will ideally:

- Possess excellent communication skills. As well as speaking confidently, it is important that the mentor is able to listen actively. This involves showing an interest in what the mentee is saying and using body language, such as nodding and smiling, as well as reflecting back what has been said to the mentee ¹(see below and also IO3 for more information on active listening).
- Be aware of body language and how to conduct themselves to convey a relaxed and approachable style which encourages their mentee to open up. ² In addition, being aware of body language, the mentor will be able to “read” the signals from their mentee and be able to approach sessions according to how open/closed their mentee is behaving. For example, if the mentee appears tense, the mentor may decide to delay the more challenging aspects of the session and engage in a “fun” activity such as a quiz, to make the mentee more comfortable.
- Have the confidence in own abilities and be able to convey this so as to be able to act as a role model. It is also important to have the confidence to be the questioner and challenge assumptions which the mentee has about their limitations.
- Be able to be objective and give constructive feedback and guidance to the mentee based on a measured evaluation of information and not on the mentor’s personal opinions (see below and IO3 for more information on giving feedback). It is important for the mentor to respect the mentee and not be judgemental if they choose to deal with issues in a different way to the mentor.³
- Be calm and patient and not get frustrated or anxious in the mentoring sessions. It is important that the mentee doesn’t feel pressured or rushed as this will damage their relationship with the mentor as they will not feel able to continue to work with the mentor.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and be able to encourage and support the mentee even when they are facing challenges. Presenting a ‘glass half full’ attitude and underlining the value of what can be learned from mistakes and pitfalls is a very valuable skill. However, for this to be effective

¹ Tips and tricks with examples of how to encourage feedback in Toolkit for mentors - IO8

² Tips and tricks in the storytelling sheet in Toolkit for mentors - IO8

³ Tips and trick in Toolkit for mentors - IO8, where you can also find an exercise about body language and how to ask leading questions

it is useful for the mentor to give practical examples from their own experience so it doesn't come across as platitudes.

1.4 Questioning, listening and interpersonal skills when mentoring (refer also to IO3)

In order to get the most out of the mentoring sessions, it is important to use relaxed and open body language and to make eye contact in a non-threatening way so that the mentee knows they have your full attention. Using active listening will ensure that the mentee knows you are fully engaged in what they are saying by using body language, such as nodding and smiling, as well as reflecting back what they are discussing. This also helps the mentor to better understand what the mentee wants to achieve – by reflecting back your interpretation of what is being said, you can clarify their statements and double-check you have fully understood their views and concerns.

In terms of questioning and listening skills in the mentoring it's important to ask questions about what the mentee perceives to be the challenges in their work, and then work through the different options for tackling the issues. It's a good idea to use open 'leading' questions to get the mentee to open up and reflect on their own way of working. These are effective as they should encourage the mentee to give fuller answers and also as there was no 'right or wrong' answer they aren't threatening questions. Also, by using questions such as 'What have you found most useful about today's session?' it helps the mentor to assess what the mentee is getting out of the mentoring as well as giving the mentor a sense of how to make the sessions most beneficial for the mentee.

1.5 Using and giving feedback⁴

It is important to be mindful in initial stages to establish a rapport and trust to gauge the type of feedback that is most appropriate for the mentee. Feedback is very useful as it can give practical advice on how to better complete co-op development-based tasks and better organise the planning and workload along with tips and pointers as to how to put these into practice.

In terms of giving feedback verbally:

- Keep the language objective and neutral, starting off with four positive comments and pointing out what is positive and looking how far the mentee has already come in terms of professional development.
- Ask mentees to explain why they have completed tasks in the way they have as this will give the opportunity to offer suggestions for improvements.
- Avoid using a patronising tone and keep the language up-beat, encouraging and objective.
- Tease out some areas for improvement for the mentee, such as starting them off on a thought process which leads them to come up with her own solutions for problems which have been identified.

⁴ Tips and tricks with examples of how to encourage feedback in Toolkit for mentors - IO8; Reference also to Becoming an entrepreneur and ambassador – IO3

In terms of giving feedback on writing (such as business plan etc.):

- Keep language objective and neutral and avoid being overly critical.
- Make the links between the mentees work and the feedback clear.
- Avoid using a red pen or scrawling over mentees notes/plans as this can make people feel demoralised and as if they are back at school.
- Summarise the main points of feedback in bullet points to provide a useful list of action points to work from.

It is essential to use ongoing feedback from the mentee to both shape the sessions and to get the best from the mentor-mentee relationship.

1.6 Potential barriers to mentoring and suitable strategies to overcome these barriers

The types of barriers which may affect co-op mentoring may be:

- The capacity of the mentor may limit the amount of time that they have spare to be able to undertake mentoring. To overcome this, it may be possible to limit the contact time for the mentoring to shorter sessions over a longer period and for the mentor to take a more 'hands off' approach and carry out some of the mentoring through email or other less contact-intensive ways.
- If the mentor does not have the full range of necessary experience to mentor the mentee, then you will need to reach out to other organisations in order to arrange to swap skills and share knowledge. It is important that the mentor is aware of his or her own limits and is open to collaborate with others and perhaps pass on the role of mentor to someone with more/different experience in order not to discourage the mentee in the process they are going through.
- If the mentor is unsure of how to proceed with the mentoring relationship or is finding it difficult to develop a solid and productive mentoring relationship. In general it can be an advantage if he or she can exchange with other mentors on these doubts in a forum set up for the mentors.

2. Mentorship expertise: the practicalities of being a skilled mentor

2.1 Preparing and planning the mentoring sessions

Prior to undertaking the first mentoring session, it's important to meet with the mentee and to outline what mentoring is, how long the commitment would be for and an example of the types of matters that could be covered in the sessions. Specify for the mentee that it is up to him/her to set up and respect the agreed goals and priorities. As part of this meeting it gives the mentor the opportunity to:

- Ask the mentee any questions they have about the process, and if they are happy to fill in some basic background information before the first session. This is useful for the mentor to have a better understanding of the expectations the mentee has of the sessions along with the issues which they want to focus on, and means the mentor can plan the session around their needs
- Establish what the mentee's motivation is for joining the CoopStarter 2.0 Project and the extent of their knowledge about cooperative business models.
- Agree a suitable date and time – it may be necessary to have longer sessions at the beginning of the mentoring process so that there is time to carry out practical activities, such as the Honey and Mumford learning styles questionnaire together as part of the sessions.
- Discuss the type of space that would be suitable for the sessions as different surroundings will suit different people, as some people may prefer somewhere neutral and private rather than a café or an open plan meeting space. It is also advisable to think about safeguarding issues and ensure both you and your mentee are not at risk, for example meeting somewhere after dark/not well lit area etc.
- Prepare the paperwork for the first session and to ensure all of the different aspects, such as the venue, timings, session plan and mentee needs/expectations are considered.
- Plan the first session and reflect on the initial learning goals identified by the mentee.

2.2 Recording mentoring activity

It is important to maintain basic records of mentoring as this will enable the mentor to plan the sessions more effectively and chart progress against agreed goals. It will also enable the mentor to reflect the process back to the mentee and demonstrate how they are progressing in achieving their outcomes. The records should contain:

- The dates and times of the sessions to provide a timeline of progress and a reference point for the sessions.

- Details of the venue/space used – this may provide a valuable reference point if there is a pattern of behaviour which can be linked to certain spaces providing a better atmosphere where the mentee feels more comfortable and opens up more readily.
- Background information about the mentee, including the mentee preferred learning style, as this will help the mentor to better plan sessions using the most appropriate materials to support the mentee’s learning. It is also useful (although not essential) to have some idea of the mentee’s personal life if this affects the planning of the mentoring. For example, it may be that the mentee has caring responsibilities which restrict their schedule at certain times, or perhaps the mentee has additional support needs and needs more encouragement as well as an approach requiring smaller, more incremental steps.
- Brief notes of the session and the issues discussed/tackled – this can be a history of the sessions so that they can be compared side by side and progress charted. This should also include issues/actions which are being carried through from the previous session, and notes to carry through to the next session as this keeps a consistent thread running through the sessions and maintains continuity. This will also allow the mentor to reflect on what went well and what could be improved by using different tools/techniques or approach.
- Feedback from the mentee ⁵– as this will help the mentor with their reflective practice and in planning subsequent sessions. The mentee may also provide the mentor with a focus for the session which the mentor can record and incorporate into the subsequent session to ensure the mentee’s needs are being met.
- An action plan which records and marks milestones and key achievements. Learning goals can be agreed and written up into the ‘Mentoring action plan’ at each session to check progress against each of the learning goals. In order to make the goals tangible and achievable, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) targets can be used to set out what needs to happen, who was going to do it, when it needed to be done by, and how it would be measured.

2.3 The process of mentoring and using mentoring models

Different mentors may use a variety of models to help their mentee to explore different themes, and the choice of model is usually dictated by which model the mentor feels most comfortable using, and what is most suitable for the mentee. Using a model of mentoring is useful for managing a mentoring relationship as it gives a consistent structure to the sessions, and provides useful parameters within which to operate. Whilst there are prompts and suggestions within each of the models, they are designed to provide a guide and template rather than be too prescriptive. The overall goal of mentoring models is to equip the mentee with a range of practical techniques and tools which enable them to move forwards and to successfully accomplish their aims, both

⁵ Tips and tricks with examples of how to encourage feedback in Toolkit for mentors - IO8

professionally and personally. By establishing a pattern of working through a challenge or issue, the mentee will learn how to use this process themselves to work through challenges independently.

One example is the 5 Cs Model of Mentoring, also known as the Classic Mentoring Model. The mentor focuses on the 5Cs and encourages their mentee to work through their Challenges, Choices, Consequences, Creative Solutions and Conclusions. The session is structured so that each stage is completed for each of the challenges and provides a 'closed circle' so that an action plan can emerge once the process has been completed.

Another example is the GROW model that was originally developed in the 1980s by business coaches Graham Alexander, Alan Fine and Sir John Whitmore. GROW stands for: Goal; Current Reality; Options (or Obstacles); Will (or Way Forward). Using the GROW model is very much like planning a journey. To begin with you decide on your destination (the goal), and think about where you currently are (your current reality). Once you have established this you consider the different routes you could take (the options) to your destination. To complete the journey, you need to create the will, and ensure you're committed to setting off and are ready to tackle the obstacles that you could meet on the way.

2.4 Tools and techniques to support cooperative mentoring

It is also important to take into consideration the learning cycle (covered in IO3) and to plan mentoring activities/tasks in terms of being part of the process of planning, doing, reflecting and linking. Ideally the mentor will guide the mentee through this cycle and help them to develop and continually improve through performing the role of supportive critical friend.

There are a number of tools and techniques that can be used to support effective mentoring. Tools which examine learning preferences, such as visual auditory kinaesthetic (VAK), Honey and Mumford's Activists, Reflectors, Theorists and Pragmatists, and Left-brain Right-brain will help the mentor to understand the differences between the preferred ways their mentee processes information⁶. For example:

- According to the VAK model, visual learners prefer using pictures, visual presentations, films and handouts, auditory learners prefer listening to the spoken word or engaging in discussion, whereas kinaesthetic learners prefer to learn by doing and being involved in practical hands-on activities.
- Honey and Mumford's Learning Styles questionnaire states that learners have preferences for the way in which they learn: Activists, Reflectors, Theorists and Pragmatists (Honey, 2006). Most learners will have a preference for one learning style or another, but each learner will have a different balance of all four learning preferences.

⁶ see also Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador - IO3

- The Left-brain Right-Brain quiz helps to determine whether people have a preference for using their left or right brain, based on research that shows people have two very different ways of thinking depending on the dominant hemisphere of their brain.

In terms of designing and delivering mentoring suited to the mentee's learning style, it is important to understand the learning style which the mentee naturally prefers so as to better engage them, hold their interest and encourage them to participate. In addition, tools which enable the mentor to build their relationship with their mentee can be used to learn more about them and how they perceive themselves, such as:

- The colour test – which matches choices of groupings of words with a colour. The choices are designed to denote a personality type, and the colour 'personality' is described. See IO8 for example.
- The Thomas-Kilmann Response to Conflict Questionnaire (Thomas & Kilmann, 2002) can be used to assess an individual's typical behaviour in conflict situations and describe the results along a scale between assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Many of these tools and techniques have their main value creating a non-threatening space to explore and discuss different perceptions, which can also be an effective way to start conversations and introduce more specific questions which relate to the issues which they have identified. They can also be ideal ice-breakers or energisers if the mentoring session is not moving forwards as planned.

2.5 The mentoring contract/code of conduct

It is good practice to have a mentoring contract/code of conduct that should include a number of essential points to ensure a quality, ethical mentoring relationship. This can be a formal agreement drawn up by both mentor and mentee but can equally be a more flexible verbal agreement if that suits the situation. If the following points are agreed and adhered to, it gives both parties a useful reference and framework for their mentoring relationship and clearly states the intentions, expectations and behaviours which are appropriate to maintaining a good quality and ethical mentoring relationship, such as:

- A clear statement of commitment to the process from both the mentor and mentee so that each has a clear idea of their expectations of the process. This may also include a statement to encourage the mentee not to give up even when it gets challenging.
- A framework for the mentoring sessions in terms of frequency and length of session and (if appropriate) the length of the mentoring commitment. This will give both parties clear parameters and enable them to plan and organise the sessions. This should also include an agreement to give plenty of notice if either party needs to cancel their session to minimise inconvenience and keep the relationship positive.

- A commitment to carry out the actions which have been agreed upon at the end of each session and according to the action plan as this will help both parties to value each other and see that there is a mutual commitment to the mentoring process.
- A statement of confidentiality, so that the mentee is able to trust the mentor and be open in the sessions.
- A positive and encouraging statement from both the mentor and the mentee so that each party is starting the mentoring journey with an optimistic declaration – the mentee to be open to change and moving forwards, the mentor to be fully supportive of the mentee’s journey and their abilities.
- An agreement that both parties will be able to give feedback on the mentoring journey and can also work together to seek an appropriate alternative if they agree this is the best course of action. This is important so that if, for any reason, the mentoring isn’t progressing as hoped, the outcome doesn’t have to feel like ‘failure’, but more like recognising that a different strategy may be more effective.

2.6 The role, remit and responsibilities of a good mentor

A good mentor will help their mentee achieve a particular goal or set of goals which have been identified by their mentee with support and guidance from their mentor. The goal or goals may be co-op related and task specific, but may equally be about personal growth and development which lead to improved performance for the development and running of the co-op.

In terms of remit and responsibilities, the mentor should:

- Ensure they have the capacity in their own schedule to be able to commit the required amount of time to the mentoring process.
- Use a contract or an agreement which clearly outlines the mentor and mentee’s role, remit and responsibilities, which can be discussed and agreed with the mentee to make sure that both parties are fully aware of the arrangement they are entering into and how the mentoring will be conducted.
- Ensure that confidentiality is discussed at the beginning of the relationship and that a clear system is used which follows organisational protocol. The relevant data protection legislation for your region should be adhered to, as well as any organisational policies and procedures on handling personal data.
- Provide an enabling environment which allows the mentee to identify choices open to them, make their own decisions and make mistakes without being judged.

- Work with the mentee to develop an action plan together with the tools and techniques which they can use to extend their own skills and knowledge.

2.7 Background to mentoring tools

Using a combination of feedback and planning sheets means that there is flexibility to plan the scope and content of the sessions, but also keep the thread running through the sessions to ensure consistency and a continuation of themes. As well as using tools and techniques that examine learning preferences to better support effective mentoring, this selection of tools for planning and running/recording the sessions means that progress can be checked against a range of objectives and plotted against the mentoring journey:

- **Template 1** - Record of mentoring sessions/notes - this will enable the mentor to plan the sessions more effectively and chart progress against agreed goals.
- **Template 2** - Mentoring action plan – for the mentee this provides an ongoing action plan for the mentoring process and sets out tasks/goals against dates to achieve them.
- **Template 3** - Mentee feedback form - this will help the mentor with their reflective practice and in planning subsequent sessions.

Quick guide to templates ⁷		
Name of template	When to be filled out	By whom
1. Record of mentoring sessions/notes	Update after each session	Mentor
2. Mentoring action plan	Update before and after each session	Mentee
3. Mentee feedback form	After each session	Mentee

⁷ All these templates can be found in IO8

Section 2 - How to support cooperative ambassadors in practice

Introduction - Mentorship in action

This section will provide an overview of objectives and actions for the job of being a mentor in CoopStarter 2.0. It will give an introduction to both general and specific objectives of the multiplier events, and covers the responsibilities of both the ambassador and the mentor.⁸

It is practical in the sense that it suggests actions for fulfilling the central role of the mentor: facilitating the application of the methods of CoopStarter in the real world. It is meant as a provisional guide on how to work with theory and practice in the project, and focuses specifically on the task of supporting the multiplier events. This means delivering on the twofold task of supporting the events successfully, AND supporting the starting of a new cooperative business. The mentor is central to the communication and implementation of the CoopStarter methodology, and the correct application of tools.

The Events in general

All of the events should be understood as steps on the way to achieving the general aim of the CoopStarter mentorship programme, which is to support cooperative entrepreneurship in general, and to facilitate and support the creation of new (young) cooperative businesses. Before going into detail with the specific events, we have sketched the common characteristics of all CoopStarter events, and the general role of the mentors in all events.

Objectives

All events have following three objectives:

1. Testing and evaluating intellectual outputs in real conditions, before improving them.
2. Upskilling young ambassadors, through an activity enabling them to put into practice theoretical knowledge.
3. Upskilling mentors, through a practical learning case where they will have to provide active support to ambassadors in their initial stages.

⁸ Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador - IO3 and Coopstarter guidebook - IO4 are made to support the ambassadors in their work to organize and facilitate these events

Target groups

The primary target group is young people (18-30 years old), and the secondary target group is the local community at large, especially businesses and organisations with skills and interest within the field of cooperative entrepreneurship.

Roles

Ambassadors from host country organize and facilitate these events. They apply methods and tools provided by learning material.

Mentors help ambassadors prepare events, by providing complementary local training and support. They also provide during the events, by mentoring the community of entrepreneurs. Mentors will apply methods and tools provided by training material.⁹

CoopStarter 2.0 partners (YECN) will provide complementary online sessions (informal training), enabling for an exchange of experience among mentors before and after this session.

Content

The learning material for each event will be central to the ambassadors' practical work on

1. mobilizing a community
2. generating ideas
3. starting a cooperative

This training material for the mentors¹⁰ is a guide for the mentor to support ambassadors' work.

Training

Ambassadors will be trained during the so called "Training of ambassadors" to successfully organise these three local events, that should lead to the creation of specific cooperative businesses or projects.

Mentors will be trained during the "Training of mentors" to deliver comprehensible, practical and local training to ambassadors, to support them in implementing local multiplier events and in developing their individual cooperative-related projects.

⁹ Mentoring cooperative ambassadors and entrepreneurs - IO7, Toolkit for mentors - IO8 and the Knowledge Base will support the mentor in his/her work with the ambassadors and young entrepreneurs

¹⁰ Included in Mentoring cooperative ambassadors and entrepreneurs - IO7

Format

The events should proceed as follows:

1. **Ambassadors will organise an event with specific objectives in mind.** The event will develop the business idea one step further in accordance with the relevant stage of CoopStarter 2.0.
2. **The event will activate a community of potential cooperators/ entrepreneurs.** Ambassadors will plan an event that ensures the continuous participation of valuable collaborators, who in the end will end up as part of the cooperative business.
3. **Ambassadors can choose their own format,** and suit it to their own objectives and target audiences, as long as it remains within the limits of CoopStarter mentorship programme.
4. **Mentors will help ambassadors refine their objectives,** adapt the method to their audience, and capitalize on existing local initiatives and resources.

Replicability

We intend to make events fully replicable across Europe. This experience will allow us to improve methodological tools, and complement them with practical experiences and examples from four pilot countries.

The role of the mentor

The mentoring stance

As a mentor, you can choose different ways of working with the ambassador, as well as different approaches to make the partnership fruitful and productive. We advise you to experiment with different approaches, and to have an open dialogue with the ambassador about what he or she needs. These are some of the different stances a mentor can choose:

- **Advisor and coach:** Provide advice, guidance, and feedback; share their experience and expertise as appropriate; act as a sounding board for ideas and action plans.
- **Champion and cheerleader:** Offer encouragement and support to try new things; help the ambassador move out of their comfort zones; celebrate successes; help the ambassador understand when things do not go as planned.
- **Resource and recommendations:** Identify resources that will help ambassadors with personal development and growth, such as recommending books, workshops, or other

learning tools; encourage ambassadors to join networking organizations or introduce them to new contacts.

- **Devil's advocate and "truth-sayer"**: Provide the tough feedback that ambassadors need to hear in order to move forward; push ambassadors to take risks when appropriate; help ambassadors consider and weigh potential consequences of decisions and actions to avoid the pitfalls and predictable surprises that may occur.

Practicalities of Coopstarter 2.0

The practical role of the mentor is to support the ambassador as much as possible before, during and after the event itself. Support can take the form of simple advice, professional expertise, suggestion of specific tools and practical solutions to concrete problems, and should focus specifically on adapting the CoopStarter 2.0 methodology to a local context.

The events will be created on the basis of the (business) ideas of the ambassadors. It is important to make sure they understand the connection from one event to the other, and are able to make use of the different tools in the learning material. The mentor should be aware of the contents of the CoopStarter 2.0, and able to help the ambassador in the practical application of tools in order to fulfil the objectives of each stage of the project.

Central questions to facilitate a general understanding of the process:

- **Why are we doing an event? (Reason/vision)**
Example: Because we want to change this (we have this idea), and we need to gather a team around it.
- **How are we going to create this event? (Method/mission)**
Example: By doing so and so (using these tools), we are going to gather a team.
- **What is the event going to be like? (Tasks/operation)**
Example: The event will consist of this and this (when, where, a presentation/workshop etc.), and therefore we need to do this (tasks), and when that's done, we have gathered a team.

Preparation

A central task of the CoopStarter mentor is to make sure that the ambassador (and the collaborators) are well prepared for the event, and that central issues regarding simple practical tasks and facilitation are solved beforehand.

One technique to achieve good preparation is to **attempt reverse engineering of the proceedings of the event**. This involves listing concrete ideal outcomes (not more than three), and try to imagine

what might precede these outcomes. It is advised to work with very specific outcomes (ex.: “we would like to work with someone who knows PHP”), AND more general outcomes (ex.: “we would like to gather a community”), in order to not close off the process too early. Working like this, your ambassador will be able to understand the mechanics of event building much better, and to create groups of tasks, tools and micro events that will help strengthen their initial goal. The process of reverse engineering can be taken as far back, as the mentor and ambassador see fit, and the technique should obviously be coupled with the tools already provided by CoopStarter 2.0.

In order to be prepared for the events, and the actual work of putting these together, both the **mentor and the ambassador should create checklists** of relevant tasks and subjects that they consider important to the process. Sharing these will help facilitate a transparent and flexible workflow. Here is an example of what it could look like:

- What should I read?
 - CoopStarter methodology
 - Specific topics
 - Cooperative literature
 - Business literature

- What tools do I need?
 - CoopStarter tools
 - For mentoring
 - For supporting events

- What relevant skills/resources are specific to me?
 - Project management
 - Sector or profession-specific skills/knowledge
 - Business planning/modelling/development
 - Economy
 - Law

- What challenges do I anticipate?
 - Gathering a community
 - Generating ideas
 - Starting a business

- What action do I need to take?
 - Before
 - During
 - After

Facilitation

Proper facilitation relies on good preparation. As a CoopStarter 2.0 mentor, you should know the gaming and communication tools provided within our methodology, in order to guide the ambassadors' choice of facilitation techniques. To facilitate an event, the ambassador must fully understand the desired outcome, and the background and context of the meeting should be made clear to participants in advance. The bulk of facilitators' responsibility is to:

- **Design and plan** the group process and select the tools that best help the group progress towards that outcome.
- **Guide and control** the group process to ensure that:
 - There is effective participation.
 - Participants achieve a mutual understanding.
 - Their contributions are considered and included in the ideas, solutions or decisions that emerge.
 - Participants take shared responsibility for the outcome.
- **Record and action** Ensure that outcomes, actions and questions are properly recorded and actioned, and appropriately dealt with afterwards.
- These simple points can be the cornerstones of the ambassador's facilitation plan, in which an overview of the concrete proceedings should be sketched along with answers to the questions below:
 - Why should participants come to the event?
 - How are they going to participate?
 - What will they take away from the event?

Evaluation

The last step of the facilitation plan (record and action) can be complemented by an evaluation in which the ambassador shortly recaps the event in order to learn from it.

The central focus should be the actual outcome of the session, and the actions that hopefully follow logically from the presentation of the project. Therefore, we will limit the evaluation to contain four simple questions:

- What do you think went really well? (Preparation/facilitation)
- What could have been improved? (Preparation/facilitation)
- What will you change before the next event and how? (Preparation/facilitation)
- What is the overall status of the project, and what needs extra work?

This structure should allow the ambassador to cover all relevant outcomes from the event and create a shortlist of important points for the next event. As a mentor, you should make

suggestions for improvements and interesting areas of preparation and research, and make sure there is consistency between the objectives, goals and tasks and the event itself. One important aspect is to help the ambassador understand the overall progress(ion) of the project, in order for him or her to be able to share this with their community.

Adaptation

The successful application of any theoretical and methodological approach to a concrete, practical context can be a complicated job, and one that requires practice. In the CoopStarter 2.0 project, the mentor will be instrumental in stressing the fact **that there needs to be a phase of testing and adaptation of the tools being used**, and help the ambassador choose the right tools for the right occasion, and make them relevant to all of the community. As a mentor, you should be aware of the broad range of tools available in the project, and take time to help the ambassador explore their use.

Environment is everything. The primary practical application of the CoopStarter 2.0 methodology is going to happen locally, and this is a vital premise to the central task of adapting the cooperative mind-set, methods and models for concrete use. Choose whatever methods and models suit your needs, and NOT vice versa.

FIRST EVENT - Community mobilizing: Let's cooperate

The general objective of the first event is to gather a community around a (business) idea and promote collaboration and professional development. Mentors should be well prepared to support the creation of this event by having studied the CoopStarter 2.0 methodology. For this event, the mobilization of relevant partners/cooperators to take part in the community is obviously the most important task.

Specific objectives of the event

Ambassadors will organise an information session, to present their individual project (promote the central idea) and introduce participants to the general principles of cooperative entrepreneurship.

They should create a community of potential entrepreneurs to be involved throughout the following stages (hackathon and deep-dive session). Ambassadors will carefully choose their audience, depending on their own projects, and work on an activity adapted to this audience.

Target group and duration

A minimum of 25 local participants should be involved, and the event is expected to last approximately half a day. As a mentor, support the ambassadors in finding relevant partners/cooperators for the event using your network.

Impact

Mentors acquire experience in gathering and working with a community of young people, support the organisation of an information session, and have an understanding of the potential for setting up new (young) cooperatives within their geographic area.

Ambassadors acquire experience in gathering, informing and working with a community of their peers, and promote their own project towards the wider public. A group of people interested in collaboration and working on the presented project will now have gathered and be ready to be involved in the next event (hackathon).

Adaptation

The tools that the ambassador should use when gathering a community can be found in the learning material, and supporting tools for this same process for the mentor can be found in Toolkit for mentors - IO8.

It is your task as a mentor to give advice regarding the application of the all types of tools, and to be able to support the adaptation of tools to the specific local context of the project. We highly recommend the mentor spend time with the ambassador going through the tools one by one, in order to find the best method for gathering a community, and form this to fit the needs. We highly recommend using “Business Model You”, “Purposeful Questions” and “Structure a project” for preparing and developing the project with the ambassador, and The Game a learning tool, Storytelling and Positive Communication for gathering a community. As a mentor, you should encourage an autonomous approach to the application of all tools.

Preparation

Mobilizing and motivating the right group of people for a project is NOT an easy task. It is essential that both ambassador and mentor mobilize their entire networks and try to reach as many possible participants as possible. As a mentor, you might know of businesses or youth and student organisations that can be an obvious match for the project, and please keep in mind that a central part of the task is to help the ambassadors find their peers. The following questions can guide your work:

- Does the project have clear objectives? Does the event itself?
- Is there a plan that documents how to reach the objective?
- How will you make sure that the right audience is selected?
- Is there a checklist of simple practical tasks?
- Do you need additional tools (for event management?)
- Did the ambassador try to reverse engineer the process?
- How will the event be advertised?
- Have the ambassador reached collaborators with the right skills? Will they attend?
- Does the ambassador understand the learning material, and how to apply the relevant tools?
- Does the ambassador understand that **motivation** is a central issue, and is there a plan to handle this?

Facilitation

Facilitation should be based on tested methods, and directed towards encouraging active participation from the audience. For this reason, ambassadors should explore different game-based methods of CoopStarter 2.0, in order to test different tools for gamification of the event. The mentor should help assess the relevance of particular tools, encourage extensive testing, and support the development and use of a detailed plan for handling the event. The facilitation process can be divided into three distinct phases:

Design and plan how to build a community: The ambassador chooses and tests tools that support the general objective of gathering a community, and specific outcomes relevant to the project itself. The form of presentation and method of engaging participants is chosen. The mentors will provide support for all of the above.

- Design/choose the correct group process
- Have a realistic agenda

- Define participants' knowledge (of subject) in relation to content
- What supplies do you need (Tools, internet, furniture, food/drink)
- How a particular space and its surroundings can help the event

Guide and control the event: The ambassador should focus on guiding the event towards a successful outcome that reflects the direction of the specific project. This can be done by knowing how to control group proceedings in the following manner:

Set the ground rules – If needed the ambassador can sketch how and when interaction and dialogue can/will happen, in order to secure an exchange of ideas.

- **Set the scene** – Overview of objectives and agenda. Participants should understand their role, and what the group is seeking to achieve.
- **Get things flowing** – Participants introduce themselves and what they want, in order to get the meeting off to a positive start.
- **Keep up momentum and focus** – As energy levels rise/fall, you might need to intervene. Participants should stay focused. A break can be necessary.
- **Listen, engage and include** – The ambassador should listen actively, and remain interested and engaged. This sets a good example for other participants.
- **Monitor checkpoints, and summarize** – Keep in control of the agenda, tell people what they have achieved and what's next; summarize often.
- **Intervene only if absolutely required.**

As soon as patterns and groups within participants start to form, the mentor should support division and delegation of work where possible, and try to understand how these sub-groups can work on different tasks in order to help develop the project quickly.

The ambassador should be open to suggestions and feedback from the community, and both ambassador and mentor should be aware of opportunities to work with particularly skilled collaborators, and value the feedback of participants that seem very engaged and ready to work hard on a project.

Record and action: If facilitation is done well, participants might be ready to start to delegate work and plan who can do what in the project. It is important to let the community know that the CoopStarter methodology contains tools for the next step of developing the cooperative business, and to let eager participants know what the next steps will be within the framework. Any concrete plans for action suggested by the newly formed community should be supported, and pointed in a direction that can compliment the coming steps of CoopStarter 2.0 project. Participants should (still) answer the following questions:

- Why do you want to be part of this project?
- How are you going to participate?
- What will be your contribution?

This will provide an immediate overview of participants that can be extremely useful to the development of teams within the community, and make sure that collaborators understand their own role in the project.

Evaluation

The evaluation will obviously focus on the community that has been gathered, the skills that are represented within this community, and the possibility of moving the project forwards on the basis of this first event. Having already covered concrete steps of action planning as the last part of the facilitation process, the ambassador can turn the attention to the progression of the event itself in order to learn from the experience.

First, the ambassadors should recap the event with respect to our four central questions of evaluation (please see the section above).

Secondly, the ambassador should try to specify what and how the event has changed the possibilities and scope of the project, and create a shortlist of important points for the next event.

Thirdly, a record of all the relevant partners (inside and outside the community), possible activities and resources should be gathered. This will help judge what needs to be done before the next event.

Fourth, a complete and exhaustive action plan should be made. The ambassador should take into account all relevant information, and try to understand as much of the process as possible.

SECOND EVENT - Generating ideas: CoopStarter Hackathon

Specific objectives of the event

Ambassadors will organise a hackathon to stimulate and develop sustainable cooperative business ideas on the basis of the initial idea. The process will consist of short periods of concentrated work, done by small, cross-functional teams that will handle a variety of small, manageable tasks quickly and professionally.

The community will get an opportunity to uncover common goals and needs, and work together for the first time in order to establish a common ground for starting a cooperative business. The process should bring the group together around a common vision and a common goal.

The business idea will be refined during the hackathon enabling the community to work on specific tasks for starting a cooperative business and have a clear idea of the product(s) and workflows that will be part of the next phase of development (event 3).

Target group and duration

A minimum of 10 local participants should be involved, and the event is expected to last 2-3 days. As a mentor, you should support ambassadors in creating teams of skilled collaborators from the existing community, and help bring in new people if needed.

Impact

Mentors will acquire experience and knowledge about how to support the development of business ideas, and the process of building and maintaining a community-based workflow. The mentor should get a deeper understanding of the application of tools and methods in a concrete setting, and how a value-based cooperative mind-set can strengthen collaboration amongst young entrepreneurs and their peers. As somebody outside of the workflow itself, mentors have a unique opportunity to study how professional and social relations form during the hackathon, and use this knowledge for supporting other cooperative projects.

Ambassadors will acquire experience in setting up a work session (hackathon), knowledge about how to apply methods and tools, and a sense of the process of developing (refining) a business idea. The task of facilitating workshops, and working with a community of peers should deepen the ambassadors understanding of what it takes to start a successful business, and create something of value for both customers and collaborators. After the hackathon, the business idea should be ready for the proper starting of a new cooperative business.

Adaptation

The tools that the ambassador should use when organizing and facilitating the hackathon can be found in the learning material (I03), and supporting tools for this same process for the mentor can be found in “The Toolkit for mentors” (I08).

As a mentor, you are expected to give advice regarding the application of method and tools provided for this event, more specifically “the Double Diamond process model”, and the general ideas and concepts of “Design Thinking”. You should try to support the adaptation of tools to the specific local context of the project.

We highly recommend the mentor spends time with the ambassador going through the models, in order to broaden the understanding of how the process can be facilitated, adapt the content, and test exercises and tools. Please be aware that these are well known models that have already been adapted for your specific purposes, and the material can be used in many different ways.

We encourage the use of “Purposeful Questions”, “Inclusion Games”, “Open Minded Games” and “Positive Communications” to handle group dynamics, and value an autonomous approach to the application of all tools.

Preparation

During the first event, the ambassadors have gathered a community on the basis of an idea for a cooperative business. The second event (hackathon) has the simple objective of qualifying the initial concept for starting a business (at the 3rd event). The preparation for this work process should recap information and experience from the first event, in order to put together cross-

For “Purposeful Questions”, “Inclusion Games”, “Open Minded Games” and “Positive Communications” – see I08

functional teams for maximum performance at the hackathon. As a mentor, you should be able to support the transition from one event to the next.

The format of the event is chosen with the aim of building social and professional relationships

within the community immediately: Collaborators will develop the initial idea into a proper business proposal by working on it in high-pressure mode for two days. This process aims to turn collective needs into a cooperative business, AND establish working relationships between collaborators at the same time.

As a mentor, you should work with the ambassador to map the social and professional skills of participants, and decide on exercises, timeframes and general plan for the workshops of the hackathon. Please familiarize yourself with the terminology of “Design Thinking” and the “Double Diamond process model” contained in the learning material for this event¹¹, and make sure that the ambassador does the same. The facilitation and workflow of the hackathon will benefit greatly

¹¹ For “The Double Diamond and “Design Thinking” see Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador - I03

from good preparation and adaptation on your part¹², and please be aware that the business idea should more or less be ready for launch once the workshops are over. The following questions can guide your work:

- Has the general project objective become clearer?
- What is the objective of the event itself? (besides from the above)
- Is there a plan that documents how to reach the objective of the event?
- How will you make sure that the right ideas are selected?
- Is there a checklist of simple practical tasks?
- Do you need additional tools (for event management?)
- Did the ambassador try to reverse engineer the process?
- How will the event be advertised?
- Are collaborators with the right skills taking part in the hackathon?
- Does the ambassador understand the learning material, and how to apply tools?
- Does the ambassador understand the progression of *research-synthesis-ideation-implementation* that is the structure of the workshops?

Facilitation

The facilitation of the hackathon should be prepared in accordance with the four workshops presented in the learning material and focus on executing work in small teams.

Having explored the learning material, the ambassador will prepare a plan for working on the development of the business idea through the exercises he or she finds most interesting. The general idea is to have four clear steps of facilitation that reflect the double diamond model:

- Research
- Synthesis
- Ideation
- Implementation

These steps can be executed in a form that suits the needs and wants of the community and the ambassador, as long as a clear plan of developing and executing on a business idea is being followed. The ambassador can support this process with the three basic steps of facilitation used for the previous event.

Design and plan how to generate ideas: Building on findings from the first event, the ambassador chooses and tests tools for “generating ideas” based on the learning material, prepares each of the workshops (presentations), and creates a general plan for facilitation that is in line with the desired outcome. The mentors will provide support for all of the above.

¹² For “Purposeful Questions”, “Inclusion Games”, “Open Minded Games” and “Positive Communications” see Toolkit for mentors - IO8

Points of interest:

- Setting up cross-functional teams
- Having a realistic agenda
- Gathering results from workshops: how will you record what was produced?

The mentor should support the ambassador to structure a facilitation plan that will help participants understand how the workshops are related, and how the objectives of each workshop is related to the general objective of developing a cooperative business proposal.

Guide and control the event: Having tested tools and exercises for the workshops, the ambassador should be able to guide the event towards a successful outcome, following the three-fold task structure in the learning material. The mentor should help encourage engagement and participation within working teams, and otherwise support the working process where needed.

Points of interest:

- Setting the scene: four workshops (four specific objectives) leading to one specific objective: Generating a starting point for a cooperative business
- If suitable, facilitation can be based strictly on learning material (Theory/Practice – Task & Exercises)
- Focus on removing obstacles for teams: make the objective and work process of each session very clear
- Listen, engage and include: The ambassador and mentor should listen actively, and remain interested and engaged. This sets a good example
- Make sure work is recorded

The ambassador can help broaden the general understanding of the project, and make sure that collaborators obtain a degree of ownership of the project as the work is progressing. This obviously entails being open to feedback and being aware of the different skills and levels of engagement of participants.

As with the first event, the mentor should support division and delegation of work where possible, and try to understand how these sub-groups can work on different tasks in order to help develop the project quickly. As somebody outside of the working process itself, the mentor should support general collaboration, and great working relationships between participants. Please be aware that the hackathon could be the forming event of a new cooperative business.

Record and action: If facilitation is done well, the community will now have a clear and viable business idea that can be the starting point of an exciting new cooperative business adventure. Once again, it is important to let the forming cooperative know that the CoopStarter methodology contains tools for the next (last) step of developing the cooperative business, and to inform eager participants about this.

By now, concrete plans for actually forming a cooperative business (or at least continuing to collaborate on the project) should be supported, and pointed in a direction that can compliment the coming steps of CoopStarter 2.0 project. The community should finish the working process by reviewing what was recorded, and make sure that the material that is going to be the starting point

of their cooperative business is as good as possible. The following questions can be used as guidelines:

- Why are we starting a cooperative business? (vision)
- How are we going to do this? (mission)
- What concrete tasks does this entail? (development strategy)

This will provide a general overview of how the business idea can be realized, and be useful for the development of a concrete action plan for starting a cooperative business. Furthermore, it sums up the common needs and aspirations within the community.

Evaluation

The evaluation will focus on the work that has been done, the teams and skills that have produced the overall result, and the possibility of moving the project forward on the basis of this second event. The general success of the process is obviously related to the quality of output from the last phase of the Hackathon, and the quality of the teams that have formed within the community at this point.

Having already prepared some steps of action planning as the last part of the facilitation process, the community can shortly turn attention to a recap of the event itself.

First, the community should recap the event with respect to our four central questions of evaluation.

Secondly, the community should try to specify what and how the event has changed the possibilities and scope of the project, and create a shortlist of important points for the next event.

Thirdly, a record of all the relevant partners (inside and outside the community), possible activities and resources should be gathered. This will help assess what needs to be done before the next event.

Fourth, a complete and exhaustive action plan should be made. The ambassador should take into account all relevant information, and try to understand as much of the process as possible.

THIRD EVENT - Deep dive session: Let's start for real

The general objective of the third event is to provide a successful starting point for a new cooperative business. The event is aimed at providing the forming cooperative with knowledge and tools needed for actually creating a cooperative business. For this event, the execution of business ideas, and the realization of the potential within the community are crucial tasks.

Specific objectives of the event

Ambassadors will organise a start-up session for planning the start-up phase of a cooperative business on the basis of the qualified business idea generated in the hackathon. The process will consist of sub-sessions in which the community (and forming cooperative) will work through different issues such as law, governance, economy, business planning, partnerships and marketing.

The community will now be turning into a cooperative business that will be able to meet common goals and needs, and give collaborators a platform to work together on creating something of value for cooperators and customers alike. Having specified a general direction for the business (vision and mission) the community will now have to concentrate on the formalization of the organisation itself.

The business idea should now be executed on, which means that the testing and prototyping of the hackathon should now be carried into a second phase of planning actual product development.

Mentors and ambassadors will be critical to the formalization of the business. As the starting point of establishing a proper business, the event should facilitate simple and direct solutions to immediate obstacles, and focus on the strengths and values of the collective that has gathered. The mentor role is crucial to the whole of this process.

Target group and duration

A minimum of five local participants should be involved, and the event is expected to last one day. As a mentor, you should work with the ambassador to focus the attention and skills of the community at the task at hand, and be aware of skills that might be lacking in the community at the time of formation.

Impact

Mentors will acquire first-hand experience and knowledge about how to actually start a cooperative business. They will be instrumental to the preparation, facilitation and general outcome of the event, and should prioritize to mobilize skills, knowledge and network to support

the ambassador and the forming cooperative as best possible. In return, they will get a broad knowledge of their own cooperative landscape, and a deeper understanding of how cooperativism can be strengthened there. For this event, the mentor will be a part of the entire workflow of the event, and will have a unique opportunity to study how cooperativism works in practice. This knowledge can in turn be applied to support other cooperative projects.

Ambassadors will have the unique experience of setting up a business based on a simple idea, and knowledge about how to handle the formalization and realisation of a business model. Working with the mentor on preparation and facilitation, they will begin to understand the mechanics of governance structures, business planning, funding, cooperative law and other relevant issues, and get experience in how to communicate these issues to their fellow cooperators.

Adaptation

The adaptation phase for this third event will follow a different track than the previous. The tools and methods for this event will be defined by the mentor and ambassador in alignment, and will be based on the learning material for this specific event (I03). Supporting tools for mentors for this process can be found in “The Toolkit for mentors” (I08).

As a mentor, you are expected to give advice regarding the central issues of starting a cooperative business, but also to work with the ambassador in order to locate critical issues and immediate obstacles to the current work of the cooperative. The mentor and ambassador will work to secure the formation of a new business, by setting up short sessions of relevant topics to be considered by the community, and a process on how to make quick decisions where possible.

Possible topics for the sessions can be found in the learning material, and include:

- Law
- Governance
- The business model
- Business planning
- Financing
- Partnerships

We strongly encourage spending time on handouts 16 and 17 for supporting discussions on governance and marketing, and the use of Business Model Canvas for the continued specification and development of a proper value proposition for both cooperators AND customers. The cooperative balance sheet will provide a small insight into the fundamentals of the day-to-day economy of a business.

Preparation

During the first two events, you supported the ambassador in gathering a community, and arranging a hackathon for preparing the business idea, and now it is time to form a cooperative. As a mentor, you have supported the transition from one event to the next, and this third event should activate all of your expertise within the cooperative field.

The format of the event is chosen with the aim of putting as much power as possible in the hands of the community that is now forming a new cooperative business. Collaborators should feel ownership (and maybe even entitlement) to the idea they have developed together, and they should engage in discussions about how to create the best possible organisation to facilitate this idea.

As a mentor, your role is to work with the ambassador on how to make simple and easy choices when it comes to the general structure of the business. This means working with the ambassador to:

- Find a way to facilitate short and concise information/debate sessions
- Help the community avoid spending a lot of time on irrelevant issues
- Help put different issues and topics into context
- Know when to postpone a discussion/decision-making process
- Facilitate decisions on the next steps for the cooperative

Please familiarize yourself with general legislation and cooperative literature as much as possible, and prepare for relevant discussions on distribution of work, income and governance. Another pivotal role of the mentor is to know where to ask for help, and how. Prepare a simple list of organisations, and the knowledge these might provide. Once again, the following questions can guide your work:

- Is the general objective of the cooperative clear?
- Is there an objective of the event itself? (besides from the above)
- Is there a plan that documents how to reach the objective of the event?
- Is there a checklist of simple practical tasks?
- Do you need additional tools or methods?
- Did the ambassador try to reverse engineer the process?
- Does the cooperative have the skillset they need?
- Does the ambassador understand the learning material?
- How can you help facilitation and evaluation?

Facilitation

The facilitation of the sessions should be prepared in accordance with the topics of the learning material and focus on relevant decision-making prior to the start-up phase of the business. It should help collaborators choose the right path for the business, and prepare work on central issues such as funding, business planning and the resilience of the chosen business model.

The mentor and ambassador should facilitate a process in which community members can ask the right questions and find appropriate answers, in order to boost empowerment and ownership in the aspiring cooperative. The facilitation should encourage working in small teams, so that several issues can be worked on and handled at once, and the capabilities of both the mentor and ambassador can be used as wisely and broadly as possible. Information and learning about central issues at hand should happen collectively, and from here on teams can work on actually coming up with solutions to immediate problems.

The process should encourage a participatory approach, in which collaborators start to understand the general outline of the organisation they are forming, and record decisions in order to form an actual action plan for the business. If possible, this process should draw on skills and capabilities within the community, in order to delegate responsibility of important tasks between the collaborators themselves. Facilitation does NOT have to be only in the hands of the mentor and ambassador.

The topics of sessions will be prepared by the mentor and ambassador (and collaborators), and should try to answer some of the central questions regarding the forming cooperative:

- What legal issues are relevant to our business?
- How should our cooperative be governed?
- How can we continue developing our business model?
- Do we need a business plan?
- Should we get financing, and how?
- What partnerships are crucial to our business?

As with other events, the mentor and ambassador can develop facilitation through this scheme:

Design and plan how to start a cooperative business: Building on the finished business idea, the mentor and ambassador choose topics and test tools for “starting a cooperative business” based on the learning material, and prepares short sessions of information and debate. A general plan for facilitation is made, and some general outcomes decided on.

Points of interest:

- Have a realistic agenda
- Set up small teams/divisions of the business
- Delegate responsibility within the community
- Facilitate decision-making
- Gather results from sessions: how will you record what was produced?

The facilitation plan should include issues of relevance to the entire community, and if possible be reviewed and approved by all collaborators before the sessions. This way, everybody will have their say.

Guide and control the event: Having tested topics and tools before the sessions, the mentor and ambassador will guide a positive and successful debate, that enhances engagement and ownership in the community.

Points of interest:

- Set the scene: The mentor can help provide context and knowledge of the cooperative world in general
- Focus on removing immediate obstacles for the business

Ambassadors: See IO3, IO4, IO5 and IO6

- Listen, engage and include: The mentor and ambassador should listen actively, and keep the focus on the questions at hand
- Make sure work is recorded

The ambassador can still help broaden the understanding of the project as work is carried out, and in making sure that engagement is rewarded, she can encourage participation in the community.¹³

As with the two prior events, the mentor should support division and delegation of work where possible, and try to understand how these sub-groups can work on different tasks in order to help develop the project quickly.

Now, inside of the working process itself, the mentor should still focus on facilitating great working relationships between participants, and be aware of any bias that personal opinions might bring to the table.

Record and action: If facilitation is done well, the community will now know how to actually start a cooperative business, and the records made during the sessions will provide the backbone of an action plan for doing exactly this.

This being the last step of the series of events, it is important to assure the community of the continued support they will receive from the CoopStarter consortium, and inform them of where to find support for the next steps of development.

By reviewing what was recorded during sessions, the community will know how to finish concrete plans for actually forming a cooperative business, and who to contact for assistance on central topics. The result of the sessions should be a roadmap for the business, containing vision, mission, strategy, tasks and an action plan. Three central questions should still guide the overall direction of the work:

- Why are we starting a cooperative business? (vision)
- How are we going to do this? (mission)
- What concrete tasks does this entail? (development strategy)

Only now, they should be followed by this:

- Who will do what, and when? (action plan)

This will provide an immediate overview of how the business will be formed, and be extremely useful for the development of a concrete action plan for starting a cooperative business. Furthermore, it should clarify the role of each collaborator, and sum up the common needs and aspirations within the community.

¹³ Ambassadors: See IO3, IO4, IO5 and IO6

Evaluation

The evaluation will focus on the decisions that have been made during the sessions of the third event, the teams and skills that will produce value for the community as a whole, and the possibility of actually starting a cooperative business on the basis of this last event.

The general success of the process is related to the quality of decision-making and engagement the event has produced, and the overall ownership and willingness to participate within the community.

Having already prepared some steps of action planning as the last part of the facilitation process, the community can shortly turn attention to a recap of the event itself.

First, the community should recap the event with respect to our four central questions of evaluation.

Secondly, the community should try to specify what and how the event has changed the possibilities and scope of the project, and create a shortlist of important points for future work.

Thirdly, a record of all the relevant partners (inside and outside the community), possible activities and resources should be gathered. This will help assess what needs to be done before the next event.

Fourth, a complete and exhaustive action plan should be made. The community should take into account all relevant information, and try to understand as much of the process as possible.

Section 3 - Tools and Events: A Complete Overview of the IOs of CoopStarter

This section contains all of the supporting resources to help mentors support and upskill ambassadors.

CoopStarter 2.0 provides mentors and ambassadors with extensive and diverse resources both pedagogical and non-pedagogical. Here you can find a quick overview of the intellectual outputs (IO) and contents:

IO1	European index of resources for cooperative mentors and ambassadors.	Access to a diversity of resources, pedagogical and non-pedagogical, from cooperative organizations and youth organizations.
IO2	Young leaders, cooperative entrepreneurs	<p>A conceptual framework behind the notion of “youth entrepreneurship”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcasing the diversity, dynamism and innovative initiatives developed by young leaders and young cooperative entrepreneurs across Europe; • Identifying the dynamics behind the creation and development of a youth organisation and a cooperative business by young people, and highlighting similarities and complementarities about both organisational forms.
IO3	Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador	<p>A resource document for cooperative ambassadors, who can use this learning material to develop their own skills and practical experiences as youth leaders whilst also equipping them with the additional knowledge and expertise to become cooperative entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Gives cooperative ambassadors basic information about how people learn and also how to effectively engage communities so that they can make best use of the training sessions, materials and the toolkit resources. It also helps them to understand the process of developing and refining their business ideas and working collectively with others as cooperative entrepreneurs and explains some of the different practical considerations that need to be covered when setting up a cooperative business.</p> <p>Resources – Handouts and activities to support the manual</p>

I04 (including I05/I06)	Coopstarter guidebook	<p>All resources available on cooperative entrepreneurship and support, compiled in CoopStarter 2.0, are here integrated in order to be used in the most appropriate way and for the most efficient purpose, during local events/initiatives.</p> <p>This Guidebook gives coop ambassadors a step-by-step methodology to carry out local initiatives meant to mobilize young people in setting up a cooperative business. It also helps them to organise their time/sessions in the most efficient way, making sure that clear objectives are set out and accomplished during those sessions.</p>
I07	Mentoring cooperative ambassadors and entrepreneurs	<p>The training material is designed to help mentors support and upskill ambassadors, using the resources created for CoopStarter 2.0 and resources available in the Knowledge Base (KB).</p> <p>Gives mentors information about how to mentor, engage in a successful mentoring relationship and how to work with the mentee to develop and refine their business ideas in the framework of the cooperative business model, values and principals.</p> <p>The CoopStarter Mentorship Programme is supported by a toolkit for mentors (I08) as well as the Knowledge Base comprised of all of the materials and resources developed through the other Intellectual Outputs of the CoopStarter Programme.</p>
I08	Toolkit for mentors	<p>Provides an integrated toolkit, enabling mentors to put into practice the training methodology from I07, through practical activities to support cooperative ambassadors and entrepreneurs.</p>
I09	Knowledge Base	<p>A platform to facilitate sharing of experience, knowledge and tools. The platform will serve as a knowledge base for mentors, young ambassadors and will be open to all working within the field of cooperative entrepreneurship.</p>

You will find hereafter an overview of the CoopStarter 2.0 IOs you can use for mentoring ambassadors.

For each of the three events, you will find the objective, the format and the different IO's you can refer to. This overview will help you to find which tools to use before and during the event and where you can find them in the different documents.

We also present you an index of templates called "Mentoring Template".

We hope it will be useful. Don't hesitate to add new ones to the index resources and to give use feedback on the website.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Three events: 1. Let's Cooperate - 2. Let's Generate - 3. Let's start for real

For each one, you can refer to

- **I08 Toolkit for mentors**
 - in the left column, you have your goal
 - in the right one, the name of the tool you can use
- **I04-5-6 Coopstarter guidebook**
 - in the right column the name of the chapter and the objective
- **I09 Knowledge Base + I01 European index of resources for cooperative mentors and ambassadors.**
- **I03 Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador**
 - in the left column, you have the name of the learning material you can use
 - in the right where the tool is located

LET'S COOPERATE

Objective: Promote an idea and create a community to be involved in
 Format: Information session (0,5 day)

IO8 Toolkit for mentors	
to identify key needs	Business Model You
to identify talents and skills	The Game a learning tool
to help to define the objective	Purposeful Questions
to monitor a project	Structure a project
to express the needs and mobilize	Storytelling
to give feedback	Positive communication

IO4 Coopstarter guidebook	THE BASICS introducing cooperative principles
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IO9 Knowledge Base	IO1 European index of resources for cooperative mentors and ambassadors
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IO3 Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador	
Engaging with communities	Section 1 - p.19-28
Training Methods Factsheet	handout 2 - p.69-71
The jigsaw method	handout 3 - p.72
The World Cafe	handout 4 - p.73-74
Personal Action Plan	handout 5 - p.75
Clarify your aims	handout 6 - p.76
Responding to need	handout 7 - p.77
Visioning exercise	handout 8 - p.78
Giving feedback	handout 9 - p.79
Active listening exercise	handout 11 - p.85

LET'S GENERATE

Objective: Generate ideas

Format: Hackathon (2-3 days)

IO8 Toolkit for mentors	
to identify talents and skills	The Game a learning tool +Cooperation Games
to help to	Purposeful Questions
to entertain link and	Positive communication
to ensure group cohesion	Inclusion Games
to manage conflict	Open minded Games
for keeping positive attitude	Energizer Games

IO4 Coopstarter guidebook	GENERATING IDEAS
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IO3 Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador	
A hackathon	Section 2 p.29-32
First workshop "Discover"	Section 2 p.32-36
Second workshop "Define"	Section 2 p.36-40
Third workshop "Develop"	Section 2 p.40-44
Fourth workshop "Deliver"	Section 2 p.44-49
Responding to need	Handout 7 - p.77
Organising a cooperative hackathon	Handout 10 - p.80-84
Decision-making exercise	Handout 12 - p.86
Icebreaker : People Bingo	Handout 13 - p. 87
Icebreaker/energiser : two truths and a lie	Handout 14 - p.88

ADDITIONAL tools to support discover, define, develop, deliver	Handout 15 - p.89-90
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I09 Knowledge Base	I01 European index of resources for cooperative mentors and ambassadors
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LET'S START FOR REAL

Objective: Finalize the business model

Format: Local event (1 day)

I08 Toolkit for mentors	
to give feedback	Positive communication
to determine whether the cooperative model fits your business idea	Checklist/questionnaire
to visualize a Cooperative Balance sheet	Balance sheet

I04 Coopstarter guidebook	BRICK AFTER BRICK making the cooperative a strong and stable house + ANNEXES
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I09 Knowledge Base	I01 European index of resources for cooperative mentors and ambassadors.
I03 Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador	
Legal considerations	Section 3 - p.50-52
How to set up a cooperative business Governance	Section 3 - p.52-54
Key difference between cooperatives and other models	Section 3 - p.54-55
Financial Model	Section 3 - p.55-56
Understanding the surplus of a cooperative	Section 3 - p.56
Business Plan	Section 3 - p.56-57

The market survey	Section 3 - p.58
The budget	Section 3 - p.59
The cooperative member's nature	Section 3 - p.59
Support structure and network	Section 3 - p.60
Personal Action Plan	Handout 5 - p.75
Decision-making exercise	Handout 12 - p.86
Governance challenges and solutions	Handout 16 p.91
Template Marketing plan	Handout 17 p.97

MENTORING TEMPLATES

IO8 Toolkit for mentors	
Questionnaire determining whether the cooperative model fits your business idea	Template 1
Quality assessment survey	Template 2
Self-evaluation tool	Template 3
Record of mentoring sessions/notes	Template 4
Mentoring action plan	Template 5
Ambassador feedback form	Template 6

IO3 Becoming a cooperative entrepreneur and ambassador	
Validation tips and tricks	introduction - p.16-17
Reflection on Evaluation	introduction - p.18
Learning styles questionnaire	Handout 1 - p.63-68
Personal action plan	Handout 5 - p.75