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June 1, 2016

Feedback from 2 workshops presented at the Canadian Association of Studies in Cooperation and the Association of Co-operative Educators Joint Conference

Energizing Communities: The Role of Co-operatives in Creating a More Inclusive, Peaceful, & Sustainable World (Cofacilitated by Joy Emmanuel and Linda Hill)

“Peace-building happens in communities not on battlefields,” wrote Dr. Ian MacPherson. “Peace-making is central to the growth of the co-operative movement,” claimed Dr. Yehudah Paz, “and co-operatives are relevant to matters of peace-making and conflict resolution.” This workshop will explore key ideas in the posthumously published book by Dr. MacPherson and Dr. Paz titled: *Concern for Community: The Relevance of Co-operatives to Peace*. The authors examine co-operative practices and peace-building as a continuum ranging from how co-operatives address social inequalities directly in their communities, to how co-ops support inter-agency, people-to-people, peacebuilding initiatives in regions impacted by violent conflict. Participants will identify ways their co-ops already contribute to addressing social disparities, be introduced to inclusive leadership skills for building bridges, and develop an action plan for how their co-op can contribute to creating a more peaceful world.

What did you like most about this workshop?

- *I really enjoyed the game. I think its very valuable to make adults play. It gets us thinking in new ways. Being silly sometimes helps us solve serious issues the rest of the time.*
- *interaction*
- *Opportunity to share co-op experiences with others in a group*
- *Simulation was fun*
- *The simulation. Always a good way to learn by being a bit goofy while still addressing serious issues*
- *tine for discussion and sharing of ideas*

What is one thing you learned through this workshop?

- *How to approach potential conflict.*
- *I learned about some of the history behind this peace preocess which has encouraged me to learn more*
- *My instruction to speak loud and clear as a sign of peacemaking was a stark reminder/learning about my assumptions (I tend toward the opposite as a sign of deference).*
- *peace building takes time but having some guidelines can make for a bit of a basis for a starting point*
- *I had not hear of this specific peace building strategy*

What suggestions do you have for improving this workshop?

- *During simulation, have us engage our co-op stories before we meet as 2 planets so we know those are at play.*
- *I think it would be more impactful to address historical inequalities more directly in the simulation (racism, resource inequality etc) and how that can be made part of the peace process.*
- *If time allows introducing the opposing groups one by one rather than together creates a strong message of how we take our sense of belonging to a group or co-op for granted. (Just add another dynamic)*
- *It's nice to have structure for time, but also trying to be a little more flexible when more or less discussion than expected comes up.*
- *More on inclusion? Thinking about how to include in co-ops/participation*

Nurturing Democracy: How can I help my Co-op be more Co-operative?

Cofacilitated by Linda Hill and Joy Emmanuel

Co-operatives are jointly-owned enterprises and meant to be democratically controlled. By embracing co-op values, co-operatives can contribute to building peaceful communities. To do this, it is important to build safe, respectful spaces that empower members to meet their needs. Inclusive Leadership skills for embracing diversity are tools directors, members and employees can practice to generate more co-operation within their co-op.

The “*Inclusive Leadership*” model will involve you in assessing your skills for connecting with differences, communicating with compassion, and responding effectively to situations of discrimination. Choose one or more skills to develop and practice in the workshop. Consider how co-operation increases when these skills are applied to welcome different approaches as gifts rather than problems and to transform conflicts into opportunities for peace-building. Develop an action plan for how you can apply these skills within your co-operative.

What did you like most about this workshop?

- *A chance to get to know others in a fun, relaxing, educational atmosphere*
- *Everything was perfect. Congrats and thanks.*
- *How power(ful) these tools are*
- *I like all*
- *In the time available it was very effective.*
- *Inclusive Leadership skills*
- *Inclusiveness*
- *Lots of good conversation*
- *None (no suggestions) - great.*
- *Our participation was of great help*
- *Practice as a 'consultant'*
- *The approach*
- *The openness.*
- *Thank you*

What is one thing you learned through this workshop?

- *Being able to work as a group*

- *Facts, feelings, values!*
- *Listening*
- *Skills for connecting with differences*
- *That I could employ these methods*
- *That when you know the skills and values to work with makes things easier*
- *We need to learn how to dialogue with compassion*

What suggestions do you have for improving this workshop?

- *At the risk of derailing the session, we could use current events, leaders, elections as tools to examine the skills we reviewed/learned?*
- *Maybe bringing the situations to be solved to the whole group.*
- *More time*