Building a strong membership
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Mission

• To put education at the heart of co-operation and co-operation at the heart of education

• Since 1919, the College has been providing education for co-operatives (members and staff) in the UK and internationally

• There are 20+ Co-operative Colleges globally
Making membership meaningful

- A two way process between members and their co-operative
- Varies from co-op to co-op but will involve both financial + associative aspects
- Requires ongoing commitment and engagement
Governance Matters

- Requires members to have an understanding of, and the skills to participate in, the governance processes of the co-operative
- Governance failures are at the root of commercial failures
- Accountability between board and members is a critical relationship
Education and learning

• Key factor for building strong membership
• No one size fits all approach
• Importance of recognising both informal and formal learning processes
• Recent research has identified how youth co-operatives provide a vital learning space for youth in Uganda and Lesotho
Education and development

• Education is the key driver for co-operative development
• The Rochdale Pioneers, Antigonish movement in Canada, Mondragon in Spain
• Current successful tea smallholder co-operative development in Kenya started with education programmes
Knowledge and skills

• Needs to include more on governance as well as ‘business’ related aspects such as marketing, finance
• Skills development is vital – where are the links to vocational programmes – example of Zambia
• Modes of delivery important – attuned to needs of the learners
Animation
Making connections

• Need for much more knowledge and skills exchange between co-operative educators globally
• Build on and develop our existing co-operative education institutions such as Co-operative Colleges
• And develop some new ones....
New directions

- In the UK, there is not only an expanding co-operative curriculum for schools ....
- but also the growth of a new co-operative schools sector with over 250,000 students and over 300 schools
- Co-operative schools are funded by the state but operate with a co-operative governance model
Co-operative schools

• Are the fastest growing co-operative sector in the UK
• Their members are parents, students, staff and local communities
• A new challenge for membership development
Making co-operators

- ‘Making co-operators’ has been central theme of co-operative education in the UK

- In the UK and in East Africa, young people are taking up the opportunity to become active members in a co-operative

- They will go onto be the next generation of strong members and leaders in co-operatives – to become co-operators