

# Growing the Co-op Economy:

## Co-ops Seeding Co-ops

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# Seeding New Co-ops?

☀ Why?

☀ Strategies

☀ Resources & Commitment

☀ Go Garden!





# Why Grow the Co-op Economy?

- ☼ Co-op Principles & Values
- ☼ Mission
- ☼ Vision
- ☼ Member needs
- ☼ Benefits to organization

# Growth





# Growth



Co-op growth in members, sales, market, services, etc. means **more**:

- \* members served
- \* people employed
- \* dollars circulating
- \* skilled cooperators



# Growth:

## Nurture a new co-op

- ⚙ What **needs** could best be met by a new cooperative?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ⚙ What **opportunities** could be realized by a new cooperative?



# Go Up & Down Supply Chain



- ⚙ new co-op potential
- ⚙ more member service
- ⚙ improved bottom line for original co-op



# Spin off a business function

- \*form new co-op
- \*support other co-ops
- \*healthier parent co-op





Meet related or unrelated  
member/community/  
customer needs



# New product with same technology





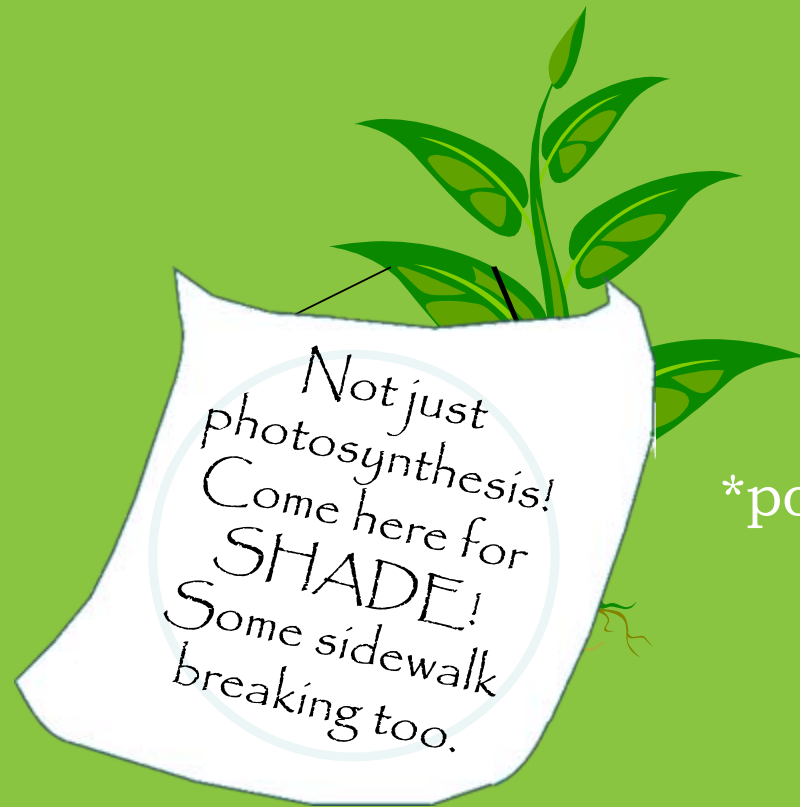
# New product with same technology



\*potential for a new co-op



# New uses for same product



\*potential for a new co-op



# Reproduce



- \*new co-ops have model
- \*original co-op has peers
- \*share talent, services, etc.



# Resources for Seeding Co-ops

- ⊗ What's available for supporting new co-ops?
  - ⊗ Pre-business financial support
  - ⊗ Capital
  - ⊗ Management and technical expertise
  - ⊗ Industry knowledge and networks
  - ⊗ Reputation
  - ⊗ Space
  - ⊗ Community/member support
  - ⊗ Services
  - ⊗ Act as a friendly buyer/supplier
  - ⊗ Education about options
  - ⊗ Feasibility studies
  - ⊗ Used equipment
  - ⊗ And so on!

# Grants, loans and technical assistance

- ☼ Fund feasibility studies
- ☼ Invest your money in a cooperative loan fund
- ☼ Donate to a cooperative foundation
- ☼ Support cooperative development organizations
- ☼ Endow a chair of co-op studies
- ☼ Provide staff expertise to start-ups



# Cultivate Commitment...

- ☀ Leadership and vision
- ☀ Does seeding new co-ops fit within the existing mission?
- ☀ Understand how building a cooperative economy supports the success of the individual co-op and benefits its members
- ☀ Understand potential problems and concerns; address them

# Cultivate Commitment...

- ☀ Discuss at Board, strategic planning and member meetings; invite speakers.
- ☀ Communicate: Share inspiring stories at meetings, on posters, in newsletters and more.
- ☀ Cite research about the success of cooperatives that operate in clusters and other supportive environments
- ☀ Engage members, board and staff in listening sessions, feasibility assessment, exploring partnerships, gathering resources and making decisions as to which seeds to sow
- ☀ Make sure managers, members and directors are supportive—address concerns and reservations
- ☀ Adopt as policy; integrate into mission; articulate as vision

# Go Garden....

- ☀ Who needs to be involved?
- ☀ What resources does your co-op have? will you need? where to find? how to engage?
- ☀ How will your co-op build commitment to seed new co-ops?
- ☀ How will your co-op discover possible seeds?
- ☀ How will your co-op choose which seeds to nurture?

# Thank You!

Give us a call or drop us a line to discuss  
how to start your cooperative garden and  
make it grow.

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