A co-operative alternative

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2012 UN Year of Co-operatives

"Co-operatives provide vital health, housing and banking services; they promote education and gender equality; they protect the environment and workers rights. Through these and a range of other activities they help people better their lives and those of their communities."

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www.co-op.ac.uk
www.youngco-operatives.coop

What does co-operation bring?

A globally **shared set of values** and commitment to education enshrined in our principles

A rich **history of working with the education sector** –pioneering vocational distance learning – helping the founding of the WEA

Running education institutions as co-operatives

A shared commitment to **raising expectations and achievement**

A gateway to the **global co-operative movement**

Experience of **democratic member engagement** in governance

- Self help
- Self responsibility
- Democracy
- Equality
- Equity
- Solidarity

- Honesty
- Openness
- Social responsibility
- Caring for others

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Why use co-operative solutions?

- They directly involve stakeholders in the delivery of educational services – stakeholders could include parents, staff and the wider community
- The structures are independent of the public sector – but broadly retain public sector values
- They depend on partnership approaches, – as opposed to competition

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Co-operative Schools

Co-operation works!

- *"The school's specialism of business studies and the Co-operative movement's support chime with its ethos of equality, fairness and sustainability, and permeate all that it does. It has used its specialism strategically to improve opportunities for all its students and the local community".*

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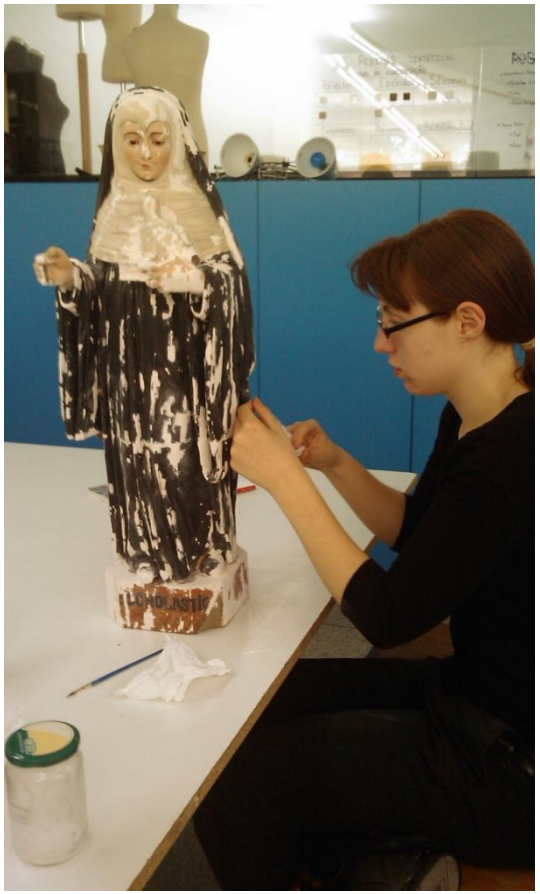
Co-operative models - Portugal

- Provider led – (employee led co-operatives)
- User led – (Student led co-operatives)
- Multi – stakeholder – (employee and student led)
- Local authority partnership model – with the LA retaining a golden share in key matters inc asset disposals



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The challenge

Combining values driven social goals with business efficiency to secure the co-operative advantage

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Stockport College

What are the links between the College and the community?

How does the community inform the mission and strategic objectives?

We have been exploring corporate structure:

Using the Cabinet Office New Mutuals Pathfinder programme – working with Cobbetts and the Co-operative College exploring:

- Role of the Corporation –
  composition, role and function

- Community Benefit Society

Objects of the Community Benefit Society

focused on:

- Education;
- Broader community benefit; and
- (as a means to these ends) strengthening the links between the College and the community.

Ethos

- Ethos based on the globally shared co-operative values and principles
- Working directly and with other mutual organisations to combat social exclusion and deprivation and to build a sustainable and vibrant community and local economy;
- Providing learners with a global perspective rooted in the values, helping them to become responsible and articulate citizens in a global economy affected by rapid environmental and economic change.

CBS member constituencies

- Individual learners (and possibly alumni)
- Individual staff
- (possibly) individual community members
- Corporate education sector partners including schools and sixth form colleges
- Corporate employers
- Corporate regeneration support organisations (generally public sector bodies)
- Other corporate community organisations

Issues to consider

- Are there co-operative alternatives to bigger and bigger corporations?
- Can vertical and horizontal clusters deliver efficiency gains and community engagement?
- Could co-operative alternatives to mergers strengthen stakeholder engagement in governance?
- Which models fit best with Big Society?

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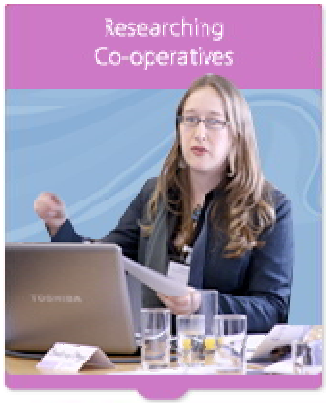
Co-operative College

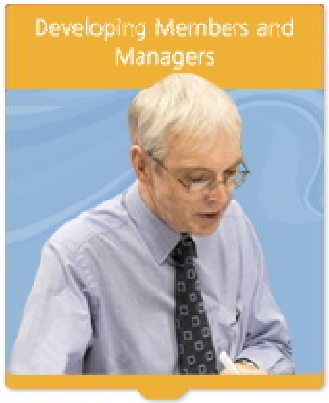
- Established 1919
- Training members and managers
- Looking after our heritage
- International work
- Research
- Schools and young people

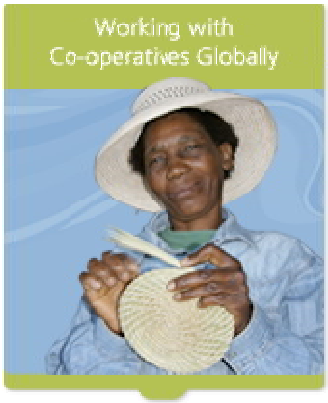
Further information

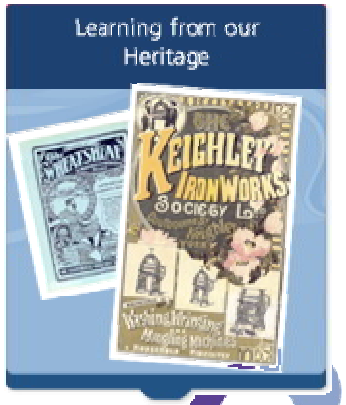
Mervyn @ co-op.ac.uk
www,co-op.ac.uk

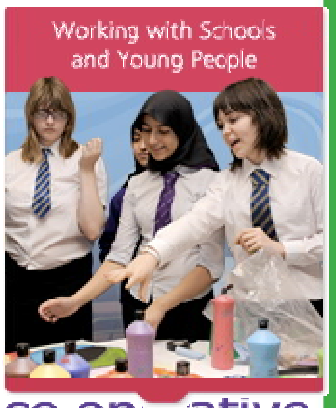
Lynn.Merilion@Stockport.ac.uk
www.stockport.ac.uk











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