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Training Module for Women Farmers



Women Empowerment in Agricultural Cooperative

2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357



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Index

PROJECT SUMMARY	6
INTRODUCTION	8
CHAPTER 1 – Communication	10
1.1 Social Psychology	12
1.1.1. <i>Space and Relationship</i>	12
1.1.2. <i>Social groups: dynamics and roles</i>	15
1.1.3. <i>Prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination</i>	17
1.1.4. <i>Altruism and pro-social behavior vs. aggression and anti-social behavior</i>	20
1.2 Industrial Psychology	26
1.2.1 <i>The organisational culture</i>	26
1.2.2 <i>How to create healthy cooperative organisations</i>	27
CHAPTER 2 – Digital Competence	30
2.1 Negotiation and mediation	31
2.1.1. <i>Definition of conflict</i>	31
2.1.2. <i>Classification of conflict in the business sphere</i>	32
2.1.3. <i>The phases/steps to problem solving</i>	33
2.1.4. <i>Definition of negotiation and its components</i>	35
2.1.5. <i>Negotiation Techniques and Strategies - Conflict Resolution</i>	35
2.1.6. <i>The negotiation procedure</i>	36
2.1.7. <i>Definition of mediation and models. Conceptualisation; characteristics; Principles of Mediation</i>	37
2.1.8. <i>Mediation models</i>	39
2.1.9. <i>Conflict resolution in cooperatives</i>	41
2.1.10. <i>References</i>	42
2.2 Effective communication Techniques	43
2.2.1. <i>The importance of communication</i>	43
2.2.2. <i>Communication in companies / organizations (internal and external)</i>	44
2.2.3. <i>Elements of Communication</i>	46
2.2.4. <i>Communication styles</i>	48
2.2.5. <i>Communication as a strategic elements in Cooperatives</i>	50
2.2.6. <i>Communication (personal and social) skills</i>	52
2.2.7. <i>Communication for Effective Leadership</i>	60



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Women Empowerment in Agricultural Cooperative
2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

CHAPTER 3 – Understanding Cooperatives	61
3.1 Basic Economics of an Agricultural Cooperative	62
3.2 Marketing Pools	62
3.3 Co-ops in Action	63
3.4 Cooperative Principles	65
3.5 Establishment Procedures of Cooperatives	67
3.6 Tax Exemptions in Cooperatives	67
3.7 Fundamental Rights of Cooperative Partners	67
3.7.1. <i>Individual Rights of Cooperative Partners</i>	69
3.7.2. <i>Rights That Cooperative Partners Can Use Together</i>	73
3.8 Management in Agricultural Cooperatives	74
3.8.1. <i>General Assembly</i>	75
3.8.2. <i>Board of Directors</i>	75
3.8.3. <i>Supervisory Board</i>	75
3.9 Marketing	75
3.9.1. <i>Importance of Cooperative Marketing</i>	76
3.9.2. <i>Need for Cooperative Marketing</i>	76
3.9.3. <i>Sources of Finance</i>	77
3.9.4. <i>Main functions of Co-operative Marketing Societies</i>	78
3.9.5. <i>Marketing in Agricultural Cooperatives</i>	79
3.10. Digital Marketing	79
3.10.1. <i>Digitalization in Cooperatives</i>	79
3.10.1.1. <i>Digitalization Initiatives of Women's Cooperatives</i>	80
3.10.1.2. <i>Problems Faced by Cooperatives in E-Commerce</i>	83
3.10.1.3. <i>Women of E-Commerce Technologies and Digital Economy</i>	83
3.11. Sales Strategies	86
3.12. Organization and Planning (Behavioral Organization)	86
3.12.1. <i>Organizational Attributes—Performance</i>	86
3.12.2. <i>Strategic Attributes</i>	87
3.13. References	88



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Women Empowerment in Agricultural Cooperative
2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

PROJECT SUMMARY

Women Empowerment in Agricultural Cooperatives is an European project co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

The partnership is formed by: **Silivri Belediyesi** (Turkey); **Legacoop Puglia – Lega regionale delle cooperative e mutue** (Italy); **AGACA – Asociacion galega de cooperativas agrarias** (Spain); **Surdurulebilir yasam ve yesil gelecek derneği** (Turkey); **Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi** (Turkey).

The project aims to create opportunities for participation of women farmers in agricultural cooperatives.

It is a valuable occasion of fostering the social inclusion of women from all social backgrounds, in order to increase their employability and entrepreneurial education.

As evidenced by several international research data, the female engagement increases also sustainability in the cooperative movement: when there is lack of understanding of agricultural cooperatives and their functioning mechanisms, participation and sustainability decrease, because members do not have the knowledge of key aspects of businesses such as basic rights, marketing, sales strategy management and organizing planning.

Moreover, if the communication processes are not realistic in the cooperatives, members do not work in harmony and cannot get the sustainability through participation. Since most insiders are not interested in learning these socio- behavioural concepts, learners cannot develop empathy, communication in business ethics, problem solving and critical thinking.

To provide Adult Educators with innovative tools to address to women's needs of knowledge and education, all the partners worked together in order to bring the most innovative method and perspectives.

The project seeks solutions to **improve the profile and competencies of women farmers by means of specific intellectual outputs:**

- **IO1:** Innovative Methodology for Agricultural cooperatives training;
- **IO2:** Training module for women farmers;
- **IO3:** AgroSis (e-platform).

Thanks to the chosen methodology, adult educators will provide female farmers with a content-rich training by transferring their knowledge and experiences of adult educators.

In addition of this first IO, a training module is another tangible output of the project, as learning material for women farmers and a teaching material for adult educators.



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The third and last output – the Agrosis e-platform – will be prepared for adult educators and women farmers to gain experience and development as well as theoretical education. By using this platform the trainees will put their digital skills into practice, through simulations.

Thanks to the dedication of all the partners, the outputs will be used not only at local level but also at national and international ones.



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INTRODUCTION

This intellectual output was created as the result of an active collaboration between the project partners. To achieve the project's goals, all the partners contributed to this educational booklet in order to instruct trainers in rural areas to improve female engagement in rural activities.

The lack of understanding the procedure of agricultural cooperatives has increased inequalities between men and women in the agricultural sector.

Thanks to this output, adult educators will increase the quality of agricultural cooperatives training and will train women farmers with more effective methods.

The output contains content from understanding cooperatives to adult communication.

The following chapters try to analyse some important topics using a methodology to analyse relevant issues, providing solutions and practical tools to be used in the cooperatives.

The main faced topics are as follows: Communication, Digital Competence, Understanding Cooperatives

Without these skills and the proper knowledge of cooperative participation and professional development, women farmers cannot be successful in understanding the organizations they work for, in their managerial aspects.

This tangible project's output is freely available and usable without any restriction.



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1.CHAPTER

Communication





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CHAPTER 1. Communication

Module name: **Social Psychology**

The organisational environment is the context of human relations: how much is it able to influence them?

TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1 - Space and Relationship

1.1 Activity: My office tour – what is in my work space?

SESSION 2 - Social groups: dynamics and roles

Activity: Getting to know each other

- ...with colours and candies
- ...with two truths and a lie

SESSION 3 - Prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination

Activity: How to handle conflicts: The Anger Worksheet

Activity: The changing shoes

SESSION 4 - Altruism and pro-social behaviour vs. aggression and anti-social behaviour

- Empathy building and active listening
Activity: "Draw my house"
- Communicating with others
- Burn out in interpersonal relations
Activity: Emergency Relief Kit
Activity: Positive self-talk wheel
- Dealing with stress, time and deadlines
Activity: the Eisenhower matrix



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Module name: **Industrial Psychology**

What is an organisation and how does it work?

TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1 - The organisational culture

- Sharing mission, vision and values

SESSION 2 - How to create healthy cooperative organisations

- Analysis of the current organisational environment
- Encouraging participation through positive thinking

Activity: The flower power

- Motivating through feedback

Activity: The sandwich method

- Stimulating team working skills

Activity: Solve a problem on a napkin

1.1.Social Psychology

TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

1.1.1. Space and Relationship

In the age of technology and innovation, ties are now possible to handle regardless of distance, because transport and telematic technologies help to maintain meaningful relationships even with people who live and work at great distances.

However, when it comes to establishing a specific workplace, the geography of spaces certainly affects productivity and relationships too.

There is a culture of 'space as a vehicle for wellbeing in companies and a stimulus for professional growth' that has given rise to a real discipline called 'Wellbeing Architecture'.

Experts say that relationships can change by means of simple interventions within work spaces, considering that a large number of hours are spent in those spaces.

Therefore, in addition to technical interventions related to "safety in the workplace" or "fire prevention regulations", it is also necessary to focus on other important – and often underestimated – aspects such as the possibility of moving easily in the rooms, thanks to a functional design of the workstations, or the colour of the rooms, which has a significant impact on the management of personal emotions.



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★ *Activity: My office tour – what is in my work space?*

A first step to explore the topic of space and relationships is to ‘investigate’ one’s own space. Which of the following objectives do we want to achieve?

Greater Collaboration?

Controlling what goes on around?

Collaborate with others?

Regaining vitality and energy?

Carve out more moments of relaxation?

These simple questions will guide the design of environments according to our goals.

Let’s start from the very beginning: **the layout of spaces!**

Each participant fills the following worksheet in order to explain to the others which one of these layouts he would feel most comfortable in, and why.

- **Cellular layout office:** floor plan divided into many individual offices, suitable for one-to-one work. They are characterised by a corridor onto which the various separate rooms face. Suitable for working independently and with concentration, they are intended for a single person, or very small groups, who need to have continuous exchanges of information.
- **Open layout space:** large common open space with a multiplicity of workstations. They are suitable for large groups of employees, whose work is divided, for routine tasks with a low level of concentration.
- **Combined office:** it presents a flexible space that allows group work along with individual spaces for concentrated work. It therefore provides both individual and group facilities, which can be used temporarily – depending on the activity – thanks to the possibility of changing workstations throughout the day.

Chromotherapy in the workplace: have you ever thought that colours can influence moods and relationships?

Besides the arrangement of furniture and spaces, it is also very important to consider the colour of the rooms.

The most commonly used colours in working environments are **white and grey**. Maybe not the best ones. However, when choosing more **vivid colours**, it is important to pay attention to specific characteristics in order to understand which one is preferred for the effect we want to create.



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Which colour would you choose for your personal workplace? Why?

Here are some useful hints on the “function” of the most well-known colours.

- **Total white:** often used as a universal colour. It refers to the idea of an environment with strong control and lifelessness, conveying a feeling of coldness to the body, thus making it more difficult to be open to relationships and communicate with colleagues.
- **Grey:** whose effect is to make the environment gloomy and the atmosphere heavy, thus creating a feeling that everyone would like to avoid in the workplace.
- **Light blue:** associated with meditation, it generates a relaxing effect, a sense of peace and serenity. Ideal for common areas and relaxation zones.
- **Purple:** it favours inspiration and helps to moderate irritability because it slows down cardiac activity.
- **Brown:** representing earth and wood, it evokes feelings of solidity, durability and stability. It is also associated with strong, solid people with great resilience and patience.
- **Green:** it symbolises nature and balance. Very useful for feeling at peace and regenerating during a break. Also very useful for business meetings, training and laboratory activities.
- **Red:** In an all-red room we easily become nervous because our mind associates this colour with danger. However, if introduced in small quantities or in furnishings, it positively stimulates action. It is not suitable, therefore, in the operational area, while it is perfect for the dining area.
- **Orange:** it stimulates creativity. It is therefore the most suitable colour against efforts and stress in an operational area.
- **Yellow:** it promotes attention and learning, and even reduces drowsiness.

Once we understand how the working place is structured, we can examine the degree of collaboration in the workplace, which is able to have an influence on the working environment too.

This means that by making changes to the working place, the relationships between colleagues will be affected in some way. If you feel comfortable, physically, in your office, it will be easier to open up to others and develop quality relationships.

Collaboration in the workplace is a source of innovation, efficiency and team satisfaction. It is then important to identify what the benefits and challenges of a collaborative work environment are.

A collaborative team, no matter how basic its level, is one that achieves more by working together than individual team members could achieve alone.

➤ *How is the working climate recognised?*

As defined in several online blogs, delving into collaborative work issues: *“Work climate, also known as organisational climate, refers to the overall atmosphere or environment of a workplace. It encompasses the attitudes, company values, and behaviours of employees, as well as the physical and social workplace environment”.*



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In order to work by making good relationships with colleagues, everyone should be willing to ask questions, explore specific points and sometimes even show disagreement in order for work to proceed. Although communicating honestly or openly is not always easy or pleasant, being a collaborative team means co-creating to find better solutions, listening to each other's points of view and all working together to achieve goals.

Working well in a team also requires a happy and stimulating environment. Basing working relationships without knowing each other inevitably limits the performance of the whole team and consequently of the company itself. First of all, you have to get to know each other.

➤ *What about people who work remotely?*

Obviously remote work is much more complicated. Although remote working (or smart working as it has been called lately) seems to be a recent habit, due to the Covid-19 period, it has already become widespread in the IT world, even before the pandemic.

It offers great advantages for both the company and the worker, but among the drawbacks there is certainly a lack of opportunities for sharing moments with colleagues and being a real part of the whole working system.

Sure, in this way, the process of knowing each other will be slower but by means of online calls and chat jokes people can get to know each other, in any case. Moreover, there are new forms of digital team building that encourage people to get together in front of the screen, not for the usual company meetings but for a moment of play and distraction with other colleagues.

➤ *Have you ever been in a group with people who don't know each other very well?*

It is certainly an awkward experience, but it is possible to resort to some small games or so-called 'ice-breaking' activities, to increase connections or to make the newcomers get to know the working group and vice versa.

1.1.2. Social groups: dynamics and roles

2.1 Activity: Getting to know each other...

...with colours and candies

We can use colours to redesign the wall of our working space, as said before, but we can use this topic also to create a simple activity that allows us to socialise and learn more about our personal stories, desires and curiosities.

You can use the famous M&M's candies or any other brand of candy that is available in several colours. The availability of the different colours is the only important thing to consider in order to play this game.



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Below you will find an example and the indications to play:

- each group member receives a package of M&M's candies;
- the first member of the group starts the game by taking an M&M from its own package;
- each colour corresponds with a question written on a poster visible to all;
- he/she answers a question about him/herself according to the colour of M&M he/she chose;
- Repeat with each person in the group, with the same logic.

Using treats, candies and chocolate, is a great (and sweet) way to get to know one another.

...with two truths and a lie

Another easy and quick way to get to know each other could be trying to guess events that actually happened to the people next to us. This activity is very simple, you can read the instructions below and get started right away.

Everyone sits or stands in a circle. One by one, each person in the circle says three statements about him/herself. Two of these statements must be real facts, or "truths," and one must be a lie. The other members then try to guess which statement is the lie.

e.g. (1) "When I was 10 I lived in France"; (2) "I have two dogs and one cat"; (3) "I play basketball every Sunday morning".

The person who described them remains silent, while the others try to discover the lie. Everyone will know the others' vote, because the discussion is public. The person reveals the lie, e.g. #2, then he/she can also explain the circumstances of the other two real facts, in order to tell some stories and give more information about his/her personal life. The "listener" can also discuss how it was not expected or how easy it was to understand. "Scoring" – Scoring is optional. If you want to increase the competition and add some fun, you can add a score in the game: one point to the 'storyteller' for each person cheated; one point for each person who guessed the lie.

The only existing rule is not to provide 'facts' that make someone uncomfortable.



1.1.3. Prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination

In the working environment, the valuing of people – both women and men – is necessary to improve the quality of that place, to provide new opportunities for professional development, to promote stronger internal relations capable of producing real values too.

It is essential to valorise the diversity of people together with the expertise as a starting point to offer all workers equal opportunities for personal and professional growth and to promote a working environment that respects people's dignity.

The main criticisms concern discrimination in access to employment, bullying, demotion, blocking of career progression, multiple discrimination linked to sexual orientation, and political opinions.

It is widely known that women face greater difficulties than men, in entering the labour market, in gaining access to good quality jobs and in career advancement. They have a lower income for the same job than their male colleagues and are still considered the exclusive carers, both for children and the elderly.

There is a great need to change the behaviour, attitudes, norms and values that define and influence male and female roles in society through education, in order to reduce this gender gap, which is one of the most important challenges for public policy.



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But prejudices are inevitable in any relational system and continue to operate, often silently, even in organisational systems in which the number of women exceeds that of men. It depends on their being “unconscious and automatic”. We can define them as “unintentional mental processes that enable us to process information quickly and prevent the brain from being overwhelmed by information”. Biases, therefore, simplify the way we perceive and interpret the world around us, without spending too much time and mental resources on.

Classifying people can lead us to make assumptions and even unintentionally alienate colleagues and co-workers.

There are hundreds of cognitive biases that can influence our evaluations and trigger discrimination processes that can become bullying and stigmatisation practices.

Here are some of the most frequent and widespread biases:

Confirmation Bias: drawing conclusions about a situation or a person based on prior desires or beliefs instead of objective, fact-based elements.

Horns Effect: viewing another person negatively if we have learned something about them that goes against our beliefs.

Beauty bias: considering people who are more attractive to us, more competent at work.

There are common areas of work where unconscious bias can do significant damage to your performance and make your colleagues feel excluded or belittled.

How can we reduce the impact of bias on our behaviours at work?

The answer is quite simple: by identifying the most common biases and reflecting on possible actions that can reduce misbehaviour, driven by biases, and possible discrimination.

1. if there is a tendency to assign the most desirable tasks to favoured team members and the least desirable assignments to others...

... we could map tasks following the strengths, interests, and development areas of team members.
... we could randomise or rotate task assignments.

2. If we give lesser (and less detailed) feedback to members of minority groups or those from whom less is expected... if we give more critical feedback to women than men;

... we could **distribute feedback equitably**, also considering a quota of feedback to be released to each team member, during a specific period of time.

...Release **specific and constructive feedback**, explaining what you mean by **using specific formulas**.

3. If we are unable to imagine how a message might be interpreted by a certain group of people...

...we could take **time to review written communications**: a few minutes is enough time to review a social media post or reread our e-mail, as if we were the recipient, before sending.

...we could **ask for support from a colleague with a critical eye**, or maybe outside our project team, in order to give honest and impartial feedback to others.



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4. if we neglect or give less credit to those who do not openly seek attention or are less visible in the workplace...

...Whenever possible, we could **invite others to express their ideas** directly.

...we could **publicly acknowledge the achievements** of a number of colleagues.

And when conflicts happen, even if we prevent every possible mistake, prejudice and discrimination, everybody should handle the situation and try to restore balance in the work environment.

★ *Activity: How to handle conflicts: The Anger Worksheet*

Conflict happens when two or more people disagree and one of them – or even worse, all of them – decide to make an issue of it.

These issues arise from the fact that we are human beings and each of us has our own opinions and a different approach to the situations we face. It is not simple to live together and it is more normal, unfortunately, to clash.

It is appropriate for each of us to manage and resolve conflicts at work, cultivating healthy, empathetic relationships among colleagues, and trying to adopt some simple rules:

1. **Learning how to listen;**
2. **Knowing how to be impartial;**
3. **Mediating to resolve conflicts;**
4. **Being always kind.**

Inside your group you can use an “Anger worksheet” to discuss some recent anger episodes, in order to find good and peaceful solutions to real problems.

The Anger Worksheet contains some specific questions in order to realise how the past conflict affected people involved and how other people listening to the speaking person would have done instead.

- *What happened that made me feel angry?*
- *What feelings did I experience?*
- *How Did I respond to the conflict?*
- *What can I do differently next time?*

Everybody fills its own worksheet, then reads the content to other people and they give him/her their version about what they would have done differently.

★ *Activity: The changing shoes*

Print out four different pictures of shoes. Write a different scenario underneath each one such as:

- *“my colleague offended me”*
- *“someone pushed me over”*
- *“someone gave me a cake”*
- *“my colleague asked me to go out this evening”*
- *“someone made fun of me”*

Then, have different participants stand over each captioned shoe picture and say how they would react if they were in that position.



1.1.4. Altruism and pro-social behaviour vs. Aggression and anti-social behaviour

➤ *Empathy building and active listening*

The basis of effective communication is empathy, the ability to understand the moods of others. How is it done? Listening. "Listening" does not mean simply "hearing". This is the first step toward a genuine and quality relationship.

Experts speak of "Active Listening" or "Empathic Listening" as synonymous. They thus refer to an active state of mind, of curiosity, toward the other, with a willingness to learn something new, and absence of prejudice and external conditioning.

When we are distracted and thinking about something else while someone is talking to us, we are "passively listening".

Active listening requires clearing the mind of thoughts and worries, immersing oneself in the other person's story, and not being in a hurry to speak. It is also important to show the other person that you are actively listening. It is clearly possible to ask questions, as long as they are phrased in a nonjudgmental way.

Active listening is a skill that needs to be trained, so it is useful to practise it in order to improve the connection with other people. There are people who are naturally predisposed to active listening, while others can take coaching courses, for example, that help develop this skill.

Anyway, it is also possible to exercise our listening skills by making simple group exercises as the "Draw a house" activity.

★ *Activity: "draw my house"*

The group of people involved in the training activity is divided into pairs.

Each person sits in a chair and has his or her back to his or her partner in the pair. One of them describes to the other what his or her ideal house would look like, giving details about the structure, the people in it, the environment, etc. The other, while listening, draws the house described in a notebook. The exercise is repeated with each of the two members of the pair.

The listening and writing activity takes about 10 minutes in total. At the end of it, each person describes to the whole group what his or her feelings were after seeing the drawing (e.g., whether it reflects his or her thoughts or whether he or she felt not listened to carefully).





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➤ **Communicating with others**

The basis of a good work team is always good communication. Communicating with colleagues can be difficult, no matter what role you hold or what industry you belong to: it is not enough to put people in the same room to consider them as a team.

Trust and a sense of belonging are the two essential ingredients for effective communication that must be nurtured by creating opportunities for discussion.

The secret then is not to avoid each other but to seek each other out. If these two ingredients are missing, time and energy can be wasted.

The so-called “soft skills” have become increasingly important in the workplace, and, among them “the ability to communicate with others” is perhaps the most important.

Speaking and communicating with people includes eye contact, appropriate body position and language, and the act of asking questions, summarising, and not interrupting. These are essential skills to start a proper way of communicating in the workplace.

➤ **Burn out in interpersonal relations**

Maybe sometimes people are going to ask for help, and that's ok!

★ *Activity: Emergency Relief Kit*

Duration: 20 minutes

A relief kit is a collection of physical objects, reminders, or activities to help you remain calm and alleviate some stress symptoms and worries. It is small and personal, ready to use when you feel stressed enough. Try to include in it some common items easy to find around the house, or in some shops in your city, or even in your office!

Now, think about it and make your own Emergency Relief kit, with cards and markers and newspaper clippings. On cardstock, cut out useful figures and letters to identify the 5 items that will become part of your kit. Share your choice with others and describe your reasons.

★ *Activity: positive self-talk wheel*

Duration: 30 minutes

Positive self-talk can help reduce stress, increase confidence and resilience.

If people feel bad about themselves, their task, and role, the wheel of positive self-talk can be a great help in order to get out from a spiral of bad feeling and sadness. Use the positive self-talk wheel to use the wheel to think about the times when you felt stronger, capable, satisfied, and what you achieved. The key is to focus your mind on what was positive, to get out of the spiral of negative thoughts. By sharing their experiences, participants will quickly realise how skilled they were in certain contexts and situations.

Positive self-talk wheel





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➤ *Dealing with stress, time and deadlines*

Stress can be defined as something that does not function as it should in our organism, body and mind, and this depends on an overload of stimuli and environmental pressures. It is the result of a mental and physical imbalance.

The positive or negative stimulus causes a stress response (alarm signal) that leads to an adaptation to the environment in which one finds oneself. A way to re-enter the “comfort zone”.

The element/agent that causes stress is called “Stressor”. Work environments can be easily a “stressor” because of boring tasks, lack of professional growth, deadlines, the need to deal with colleagues, overlapping multiple activities and also travelling a lot.

“**Time** is precious”. Especially after the pandemic period, people prefer to dedicate more time to themselves, needs and hobbies. Selfcare is very important, especially for the younger generation.

When it comes to choosing between more money and more free time, people tend to prefer free time because of the chance to be with their family and loved ones, enjoy moments of relaxation and rest.

Despite being essential to carrying out work activities, **deadlines** ruin workers’ lives and often put them in high-stress situations.

In any case, deadlines are important to ensure the completion of the work activity and to set expectations about it.

It is therefore important to put our deadlines on paper, to organise the work, especially if other people are expected to be involved.

Reasoning about deadlines will help us to collaborate with others to achieve a shared goal.

★ *Activity: the Eisenhower matrix*

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th president of the United States and five-star general during World War II, once said: “I have two kinds of problems: the urgent ones and the important ones. The urgent ones are not important and the important ones are never urgent.”

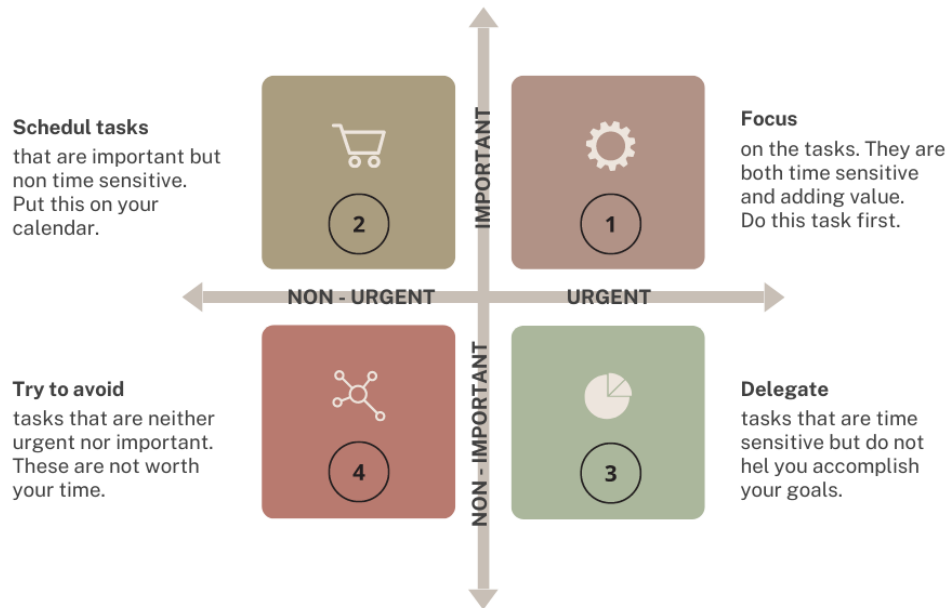
“Urgent activities” need immediate attention, while “important activities” may not require immediate attention, but they are needed to achieve your long-term goals.

A long list of tasks to be done may seem stressful, but the Eisenhower matrix is intended to analyse them one by one and put them in specific quadrants. As soon as people see their tasks placed in the designated categories, they will be able to plan them and carry out the most important ones.

Duration: 15-20 minutes for personal work and then 20 minutes to share

The Eisenhower matrix is a great way to decide which task to prioritise. It is a task management tool that helps people organise and prioritise tasks based on urgency and importance. After explaining the functioning of the matrix, each member of the group works on it thinking about the activities carried out in the last working month. After filling the matrix, the whole group reflects on the work done.

The Eisenhower Matrix





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1.2.Industrial Psychology

TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

1.2.1. The organisational culture

An organisation is an association of people who interact with each other and use resources of various kinds in order to achieve certain goals or objectives.

Organisational culture is the set of values, people, structures, processes, customs and norms that develop within a given business and organisation and are transmitted to all stakeholders inside and outside the organisation. When we speak of organisations, we are not only referring to macro-organisations but also to micro-organisations. It is therefore a multi-disciplinary discipline that considers various influences, but also factors relating to the culture, environment and socio-cultural scenario in which the organisation is located.

Every organisation has basic or essential components, such as a group of people interacting with each other, a set of tasks or activities to achieve a goal, some resources and materials, goals and objectives.

To all these things we must add “rules or conventions” that define the relationship of people and their role in the organisation.

From the organisational point of view, it is therefore essential to design the organisation, the goals to be achieved and the actions on the basis of the corporate culture. Having a clear understanding of the heritage and values on which the organisation is based will make it easier to align the interests of the organisation and its members, increasing efficiency and effectiveness over time.

The sharing of values, beliefs and meanings defines the culture of an organisation.

Internal and external communication systems have built a new organisational culture that consolidates - among internal people - the identity of the organisation, but it allows to convey the organisational image then to the outside world, as well.

➤ **Sharing mission, vision and values**

Despite everything, it is crucial for organisations to clearly define two important concepts: Mission and Vision.

A **vision** is a well-defined idea of the desired future state of both the company and the world. A solid vision can inspire employees and stakeholders, motivating them to work harder and focus their efforts towards specific activities. It also provides a clear basis for rewards and guidance within the organisational context. Strategy can serve a similar function: if there is clarity about what the company will and will not do, a well-allocated effort is more likely to be rewarded, and therefore that effort is more likely to be committed. The mission differs from the vision as it indicates the actions to be implemented in the present in order to achieve what is set by the vision.

1.2.2. How to create healthy cooperative organisations

➤ Analysis of the current organisational environment

Cooperation within the framework of the corporate organisational culture means all those behaviours aimed at promoting the well-being and objectives of others. In this context, cooperation and initiative become fundamental. The initiative leads to better performance of both the individual and the organisational unit, contributing to the creation of joint and shared values. Today more than ever we need cooperation, which allows us to consider and manage interdependencies. Internally, cooperation is important for the company in order to avoid excessive internal competition between organisational units and to encourage knowledge sharing.

➤ Encouraging participation through positive thinking

★ Activity: *The flower power*

The group draws a flower. Then people openly discuss things that make them positively unique (not physical qualities). After discussion, they draw one petal on the flower, labelled with their unique qualities. After that, they can also add the positive quality they all share as a group.

This activity allows us to find each participant's unique traits.





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➤ **Motivating through feedback**

Enterprises perform the function of coordinating the actions of groups of people and motivating them to carry out necessary operations. The problems posed by motivation derive from the possibility that personal interests lead to actions that do not correspond to the needs of the firm. From an organisational point of view, it is necessary to model the firm to achieve an alignment of the interests of the organisation and those of its members, thus increasing the efficiency of their choices. Motivation is not just a matter of economic incentives, however important these may be. Achieving this motivation can be especially important when a pay scheme that is directly tied to performance or not is not easily implemented. Employees tend to invest more energy in activities where they believe they can make a difference and where the results they generate are more evident. For this reason it is important to enhance the work of employees by dedicating time to feedback and suggestions. If correctly expressed and motivated, feedback is a moment in which the worker sees his work valued and, at the same time, an opportunity for learning and improvement.

★ *Activity: The sandwich method*

The so-called "sandwich" technique is one of the best ways not to be offensive or hurt someone in case of negative feedback. The Sandwich Method follows a precise sequence, like that of preparing a real sandwich:

BREAD - FILLING - BREAD turns into POSITIVE - NEGATIVE - POSITIVE.

According to this scheme, "filling" becomes the negative feedback.

The group works by dividing into pairs. Each participant receives a card on which is written an activity that the other did incorrectly. Each participant formulates feedback using the sandwich pattern to report to the other what is wrong, paying attention to the manner.

The rules are simple:

- 1. ALWAYS STARTS WITH POSITIVE CONTENT*
- 2. GIVE THE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK*
- 3. END ON A HIGH NOTE*

This last message is perhaps the most important message of the meeting to make things change.



➤ Stimulating team working skills

In general, technical skills (also referred to as *hard skills*) are those needed to perform a certain activity or profession; basic theoretical technical skills that are acquired in education and/or vocational training, while their operational deepening occurs through practical experience in the workplace.

"Soft skills", on the other hand, represent knowledge, skills and personal qualities that characterise each person's way of being in study, at work and in daily life.

This is precisely why they are called "soft" because they do not refer to technical areas or specific knowledge of a subject of study, but call into question all those aspects of personality and knowledge that everyone uses every day in different contexts.

These abilities are all equally important since each can contribute to positive attitudes and thus increase the chances of working at one's best in a satisfying and challenging environment.

One of the most requested soft skills is "problem solving".

★ Activity: Solve a problem on a napkin

How to play: divide the team into groups of two to four people and present them with a series of problems that can be solved in various ways. They should be work-related and they can be real or not. Each group receives a pen and napkin on which to draw or write their solution, after discussing the problem as a group. The solutions will then be presented to the rest of the team.

This activity stimulates the team to work together, communicate to solve problems creatively and find a common solution

2.CHAPTER

Digital Competence





CHAPTER 2 – Digital Competence

2.1. Negotiation and Mediation

Aim and objective: This module aims to give learners a better understanding of digital competence and the basis to use it in training programs

2.1.1. Definition of conflict

A conflict is basically a struggle between two parties who perceive incompatible objectives. Interpersonal conflict is a fact of life and can arise in any setting, from organisations to personal relationships. Learning how to resolve it effectively is therefore important for everyone. People with good conflict resolution skills generally help organisations and groups work more effectively. The main reasons for conflict to occur are:

- Communication problems
- Search for power
- Dissatisfaction with leadership style
- Weak leadership
- Lack of open-mindedness to other options
- Changes in organisational structure
- Mistrust

The conflict includes:

- that which exists within us when we do not live according to our values;
- when we feel that our values and perspectives are threatened;
- processes of social change;
- interpersonal relations;
- different positions in groups trying to work together;
- inability to reach a point of understanding between two parties who are debating an issue;
- groups or individuals seeking to impose their views on one or more others.

Other reasons why conflict is also created:

- Changes in the way things have been done
- Fundamental notions of value systems
- Highly articulate defenders on both sides
- Inability to reach understanding or consensus
- Damaging rumours
- Threats of revenge
- Council or committee elections
- Lack of communication
- Need for power and control
- Lack of a sense of mission
- Survival culture



- Fighting between families and clans
- Frustrated shepherds (wanted to be shepherds, but can't)
- Other (the group will be asked for other reasons)

2.1.2. Classification of conflict in business sphere

There are different classifications of types of conflict in business.

By scope

- Relational: those that do not affect the organisational structure, the hierarchical relations of the company, the distribution of resources or the distribution of responsibilities among staff.
- Strategic: they have an impact at the strategic level, forcing the company to modify its structure, hierarchy, resources or distribution of competencies.

According to the parties involved

- Intrapersonal: these are the conflicts that an individual has with himself/herself and which are a consequence of inconsistencies or dissatisfactions.
- Interpersonal: those that arise between two or more people.
- Intra-group: those that originate within a work team or department of the company.
- Intergroup: these occur between different areas or departments.
- Organisational: these conflicts occur between individuals, work groups or departments due to situations linked to work performance or tensions arising from different interests of organisational units and/or management.

Depending on the content

- Relationship between people: these are caused by strong emotions, false perceptions or stereotypes, poor or false interpersonal communication and repetitive negative behaviours, generally leading to unrealistic, unnecessary or false controversies.
- Informational: they occur because of misinformation, miscommunication or differing views on what is important.
- Interest-based: emanating from a competition between perceived incompatible needs among various individuals or groups, whether over substantive elements (money, physical resources, time, trust, respect, etc.) or procedural (the way an issue should be resolved).
- Structural: these are generated by the hierarchical structure of labour relations, giving rise to role conflicts, inequality of power, unequal access to resources, geographical limitations or poor time management.
- Values: when disagreements are caused by incompatible belief systems in which one tries to impose itself on the other.



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Positive value of conflict:

Conflict should be seen as a challenge, as a process in which new positions are reached to achieve needs and objectives.

It allows us to do things differently in the future and to overcome our personal relationships with others, as long as it is seen from a constructive point of view as the result of the great diversity of perspectives.

What is our responsibility?

It is the responsibility of everyone, and of course of the leaders, to ensure that if conflicts arise, they not only do not harm the organisation, but also serve to improve the effectiveness of the group.

Some indicators of conflict in cooperatives

- Body language
- Systematic disagreement, irrespective of the issue at stake
- Retaining important information
- Sudden surprises
- Strong public statements
- Airing disagreements through the media, bar....
- Conflicts in value systems
- Longing for power
- Increase in disrespect
- Open opposition
- Lack of clear objectives
- Lack of discussion of progress against objectives

2.1.3. The phases/steps to problem solving

To begin with, let's talk about the 12 skills needed for conflict resolution.

Skill 1: The Win/Win Perspective - Opponents or Partners

- Focusing on needs
- Recognise and accept individual differences
- Openness to adapt our position and attitudes in the light of the information shared.
- Attack the problem, not the person

By using this skill, both parties win, and therefore both parties are committed to the solution.

Skill 2: Creative Response - Problems or Challenges

- Changing problems to possibilities
- Difficulties: problems or challenges?
- Perfection vs. Discovery
 - The quest for perfection brings winners and losers
 - Discovery process invites winners and learners



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Skill 3: Empathy. Active listening

- Empathy: connection and openness between people
- Active listening is an indispensable element in effective communication and refers to the ability to listen carefully not only to what the person is expressing directly, but also to the feelings, ideas or thoughts that underlie what is being said, paying attention also to non-verbal communication.

Skill 4: Assertiveness

- Apply strategies to attack the problem, not the person.

Skill 5: Cooperative Power. Responding to the Resistance of Others

- Eliminating "power over" to build "power with" others

Skill 6: Emotion Management

- Firstly, to manage one's own emotions in order to be able to positively manage the emotions of the parties so that the conflict is resolved in a way that is satisfactory for the organisation and for the parties.

Skill 7: Willingness to Resolve - Projection and Shadowing

The first question to answer honestly is whether we really want to resolve the conflict or not.

Skill 8: Conflict Sketching

- Objectively define the situations necessary to frame common needs and concerns.

Skill 9: Options Development

- Designing creative solutions together without wanting to impose one's own What are the possible options?

Skill 10: Negotiation

Skill 11: Mediation

- Helping parties in conflict to move towards solutions

Skill 12: Broadening Perspectives

- Assess the problem in its broader context
- Respecting and valuing differences



2.1.4. Definition of negotiation and its components

- Negotiation can be defined as the relationship that two or more people establish in relation to a given issue with a view to bringing positions closer together and reaching an agreement that is beneficial to all of them.
- Negotiation is initiated when there are differences in the positions held by the parties. If these positions were the same, there would be no need to negotiate. Negotiation seeks to eliminate these differences, usually by gradually bringing the positions closer together until a mutually acceptable point is reached.

Basic principles in negotiation:

- Being hard on the problem and soft on the person
- Focusing on needs, not positions
- Emphasising areas of commonality
- Be creative with the options
- Making clear agreements

Negotiation process

- The preparation
- The discussion
- The signs
- The proposals
- The exchange
- Closure and agreement

2.1.5. Negotiation Techniques and Strategies - Conflict Resolution

10 Negotiation techniques:

1. Be courteous, respectful and polite.
2. Speak as if you are going to reach an agreement.
3. Start by having calculated your Most Favourable Point and Most Unfavourable Point.
4. Start trading somewhat above your Most Favourable Point.
5. Assess how many alternatives you have to negotiation.
6. Don't turn against the other party.
7. Cede
8. Information is power
9. Don't get out of your chair unless it's a strategy, stay calm.
10. Everything can be negotiated.



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Strategies for dealing with conflict:

- Separate the people from the conflict. Separate the relationship of the people from the substance by directly confronting the problem.
- Focus on interests rather than positions:
 - **Interests:** This is the essence of the conflict (desires, concerns, emotions, etc.). It is what the parties want. It answers the question: why are you saying it?
 - **Positions:** Constitutes the requirements, demands, claims. It answers the question what does it say?
- Devising win-win solutions, which involves broadening the options rather than looking for a single answer.
- Use objective criteria.

Conflict management:



<https://youtu.be/eT7lt4ESSLo>

2.1.6. The negotiation procedure

The negotiation process involves the following phases:

- The preparation
- The discussion
- The signs
- The proposals
- The exchange
- Closure and agreement



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When facing a negotiation, the people involved in the negotiation must have the following characteristics in order for the process to be successful:

- Likes to negotiate
- Enthusiastic
- Great communicator
- Persuasive
- Very observant
- Sociable
- Respectful
- Honest
- Professional
- Meticulous
- Safe and sound
- Agile and decisive
- Patient
- Creative

2.1.7. Definition of mediation and models. Conceptualisation; characteristics; Principles of mediation.

WHAT IS MEDIATION?

Mediation is an Alternative Dispute Resolution System. Alternative because it is extra-judicial or different from legal or conventional dispute resolution channels.

Mediation is an attempt to work with the other and not against the other, in search of a peaceful and equitable way to deal with conflicts, in an environment of growth, acceptance, learning and mutual respect. It is a voluntary, flexible and participatory process of peaceful conflict resolution, in which two opposing parties voluntarily turn to an impartial third party, the mediator, to reach a satisfactory agreement.

This method promotes the search for solutions that meet the needs of the conflicting parties. It can be used as a way of resolving a conflict from the outset, or as a complement to negotiation, or even when negotiation is stuck.

The fundamental difference between negotiation and mediation is that in negotiation the conflicting parties work to reach an agreement, whereas in mediation, the parties involved enlist the help of a third person, the mediator, who helps them to understand their differences and reach a mutually satisfactory agreement.



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QUALITIES OF THE MEDIATOR

- Impartial and objective
- Creative
- Empathetic
- Patient
- With listening skills
- Tolerant
- Committed to the process
- Observer
- Prudent
- Able not to get involved
- Analytical and synthetic
- Assertive
- Discreet
- Sign

CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDIATION

The goal of mediation goes far beyond agreement. The aim is really to facilitate a new relationship between the parties in conflict based on respect and trust, and to correct false or misinterpreted perceptions and information that may be held about the conflict and/or between the parties involved. In short, it is about creating a framework that facilitates communication between the parties and the transformation or resolution of the conflict so that conflict situations become learning opportunities.

The mediator is not the one who decides what the solution is. He or she only helps the parties involved to work together to reach their own agreement.

Mediation therefore involves:

- Voluntary participation
- Face-to-face discussions between the conflicting parties
- An impartial mediator without any decision-making power to help those involved understand each other's point of view and reach an agreement.
- Equal opportunity for all participants to speak and explain their perspective.
- All relevant information shared
- A shared agreement between the parties



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THE MEDIATION PROCESS

Although each mediation process is different, we can say that the following steps have to be taken_.

- Preparation of the process and establishment of the rules that are going to govern it, such as those referring to the environment, communication, time dedicated to each session, etc. One of the rules must necessarily be confidentiality and its scope must be expressly agreed.
- Reconstruct and understand the conflict by collecting information from both sides (situation, perceptions, goals, expectations...).
- Generate a climate of trust in the process
- Explore the real problem, helping the parties to bring the really important issues of the conflict to the table.
- Support dialogue between the parties, acknowledging feelings and respecting silences.

We insist once again on the need to have listening and analytical skills, to identify what is really important and not to get lost in the details, and to maintain impartiality in order to help the parties identify the real problem, facilitate understanding of the other party's position, and reach a mutually beneficial point of agreement.

2.1.8. Mediation models

In most cases, the mediator will use a mixture of each model, and one or the other may be applied depending on how they fit the needs of the mediation process and the setting.

a) Circular-Narrative Model

Sara Cobb's Circular-Narrative model, named after its main representative, is based on the premise that the source of conflict is not unique, but feeds back, and usually by the communication between the conflicting parties, in addition to other factors. Emphasis is placed on both verbal and non-verbal communication between the people in conflict.

During the mediation process, the parties must change the way they communicate, which will allow them to adopt new positions and understand each other's positions. In this way, alternative situations and stories can be found and agreements can be reached.

We can highlight two relevant aspects within the Circular-Narrative model:

- Communication must be circular and flow throughout the process by all those involved.
- Causality: also circular, as it states that there is no single cause that triggers the conflict.

The mediator should use techniques such as alternative story building and reframing to develop the process correctly.

This model of mediation therefore focuses on the relationship between the parties and the agreements they may reach.



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a) Harvard Linear Model

The linear model or Harvard model can be categorised as a negotiation model rather than a mediation model. It is named after the famous Harvard Business School, and its main representatives include Fisher and Ury, who in 1981, in their book "Get Yes. The art of negotiating without giving in" proposed a new way of approaching a negotiation process, based on the premise that the conflict is caused by a single motive: disagreement between the parties, leaving aside the existing relations between them.

This model emphasises four aspects that are present in the process:

- People: This model differentiates between a person and a problem. It considers that, if we take into account the relationships between people, these could affect the resolution of the problem.
- Interests: these authors argue that the negotiation or mediation process should focus on the interests of the parties, rather than on positions, as each party will try to change the position of the other.
- Options: a range of alternatives should be generated to allow the parties to choose.
- The criteria of choice: objective criteria must be established to choose a solution that satisfies the parties and is independent of their needs and interests.

Harvard's linear model would be appropriate in business disputes, but discouraged in disputes involving problems between individuals, given the fact that it is far from being concerned with the relationships between the parties.

b) Transformative Model.

Promoted by Bush and Folger, this model of mediation focuses on the transformation of the relationship between the parties, with the agreement being a secondary issue. It aims to empower the parties to take ownership of the conflict and their individual responsibility for it. It focuses on the improvement of human relations, leaving the achievement of agreements in second place, with the dispute being an opportunity for growth and improvement in the relations between the parties. Two aspects therefore stand out:

- Empowerment, understood as the ability of people to cope with difficulties.
- Acknowledgement: each party must assume its responsibility within the conflict, and be able to understand the other party's situation, which allows for a change of perspective.

Following this model of mediation, success in the process will be achieved when the parties are able to understand the other party through empathy, put themselves in the other's shoes by being able to see the conflict from the other's perspective, and when the parties' mutual perception changes towards a more positive view.

a) Calcaterra's strategic mediation

In describing the different mediation models, we must refer to Strategic Mediation, presented by Rubén A. Calcaterra as a model that, while having elements of the three previous models, is none of them. One of the essential elements that differentiates this model from the previous ones is that in strategic mediation, the mediator reserves the right to "enumerate, classify, establish a position and analyse" from the beginning and, therefore, has functions that other models do not allow him/her, such as proposing alternatives. L It is therefore interesting to note that different models may be appropriate in different settings or in different types of conflict.



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2.1.9. Conflict resolution in cooperatives

Conflict resolution is the body of knowledge and skills for understanding and intervening in the peaceful and non-violent resolution of conflicts. It is a discipline that contains many other things, from mathematics and theoretical physics to human biology.

Steps to be taken in dealing with conflicts:

- Define the conflict objectively, without assessments, judgements or complaints, and in a constructive, non-defensive manner.
- Analyse the causes, understanding the interests of the people involved (not forgetting the emotional side).
- Define the objectives you want to achieve, i.e. know what you want to achieve, establishing an order of priorities.
- Identify all options for solutions
- Consult the people involved to suggest their own solutions.
- Treat others' ideas with respect
- Avoid evaluating the different options until a sufficient number of alternative proposals are available.
- Evaluate all options to obtain the solution.
- Being honest
- Active listening
- Be open to new options and changes
- Evaluate all options and analyse the outcomes they imply for each party.
- Decide on the most appropriate and feasible solution
- Implement and evaluate the decision taken

Activity: Filtering the relevant information

<u>Materials:</u> As many computers with Internet access as players/teams	<u>Teams:</u> optional	<u>Time:</u> 10-30 minutes per episode (3 episodes in total)
<p>Short description: Quandary is a free online game that promotes ethical thinking and reasoning through a three-episode story that follows the development of a futuristic space colony on a new planet.</p> <p>As the captain of the colony, players have the final say in the multifaceted problems that residents bring up. Once presented with an issue, they must first sort facts from opinion and evaluate stakeholder arguments on the available solutions.</p>		



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Methodological recommendation for implementation and evaluation:

By working through each scenario, players improve their critical thinking, understanding others' perspectives, and decision-making skills.

Players receive more points as they uncover more relevant information while avoiding illogical jumps in arguments.

Documentation :

<https://quandarygame.org/>

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2.2. Effective communication Techniques

2.2.1. The Importance of communication

"Communicating is sharing knowledge".

Etymologically, the word communication comes from the Latin comunicatio, and means to share with. Communication, in this sense, is the action of sharing with others what we think, believe or feel, and also, therefore, of transmitting or disseminating information or messages for the knowledge of others.

Therefore, communication (or sharing with) is the heart of any company or organisation and the instrument used by organisations to relate to all their stakeholders and society in general.

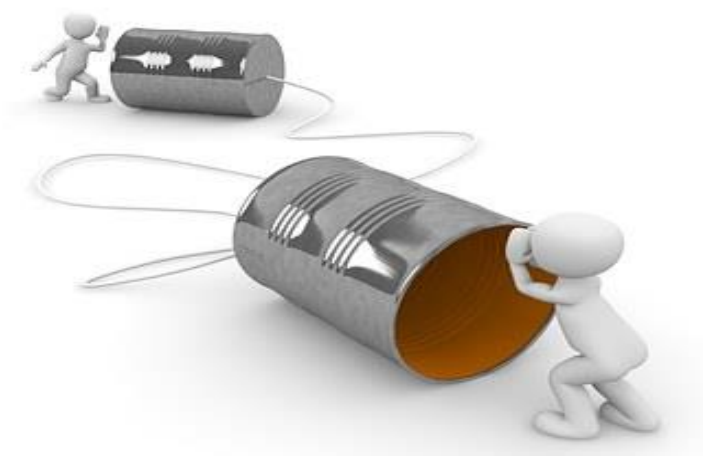
The aim of communication, therefore, is to convey information to a person or group of people, and for that information to be understood.

Good communication promotes understanding, is a motivating factor and an inexhaustible source of energy. Everything can be communicated. But, as we can see on a daily basis, it is not an easy task to transmit ideas accurately from one mind to another, as the same message can be interpreted differently by each person, based on their circumstances, their values and principles, their beliefs and their life experiences.

The phenomena of information exchange, which take place in two steps, are generally referred to as the communication process:

1. Understanding and conveying an idea
2. Choose the different signs that can express it

But communication is not only an exchange of information, but also of meanings, impressions and attitudes.





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2.2.2. Communication in companies / organisations. Internal and external

Communication is one of the most important human activities.

It is the ability of human beings to communicate that sets us apart from other species to a large extent. Business organisations are no strangers to this need, as communication is one of the fundamental keys to achieving business results, in the capacity to obtain a good image and reputation among others and to achieve the unification of the efforts of the different levels and members that form part of the organisation in pursuit of the achievement of the proposed objectives.

Business or corporate communication is the communication that comes from a company or other type of organisation, and which is addressed to its different target audiences, which can be internal (employees, partners...) or external (customers, suppliers, media, public institutions, groups...).

Therefore, business communication serves as a link between an organisation and the environment in which it operates, through public relations and the broadcasting of news, event planning, advertising... to create a good image and an excellent reputation. It is about managing perceptions, effective and timely dissemination of information, a positive corporate image and an appropriate relationship with all stakeholders.

Nowadays, the easy access to information and the immediacy of its propagation make reputation management particularly relevant for any company and, in this case, for cooperatives and social economy organisations.

Effective business communication should promote:

- A strong corporate culture
- A consistent corporate identity
- A sound corporate philosophy
- Appropriate professional press relations, including rapid and reliable communication management in crisis situations.
- Sophisticated use of communication tools taking into account their global impact and the speed at which information spreads.

Keys to how organisations should develop effective business communication based on the following objectives:

- Identify and understand the different elements of the communication process.
- Identify the tools at our disposal.
- Use of language.
- Designing a plan.



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Depending on the source (sender) and recipients (receivers) of the information, the communication can be:

- ◆ **Internal** communication. Sender and receiver are within the same organisation. These are all communications that are specific to the organisation, designed and developed by and for the company, in the case of cooperatives, workers and members, with the aim of creating and maintaining good relations between its members and developing the social and entrepreneurial activities of the business. This is achieved through the use of different means of communication that keep them informed, integrated and motivated to contribute with their work to the achievement of their business objectives.
- ◆ **External** communication. The recipients are outside the organisation. They are all those communications that the company launches to the outside world, to its environment and to stakeholders with the aim of improving relations with them, maintaining-increasing sales volume and improving the cooperative's image.

2.2.3.Elements of Communication

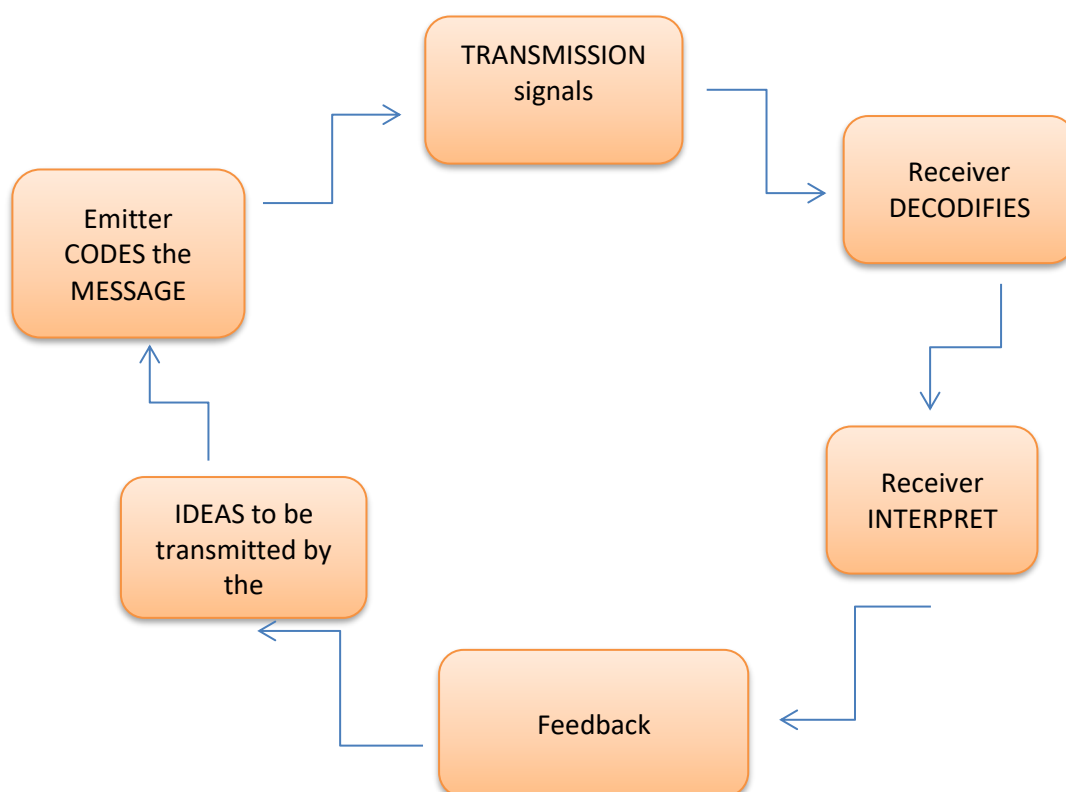
The basic and traditional outline of communication in general identifies the following elements that are part of the process:



- I. **Issuer.** In the case in point, we consider the cooperative as an entity and the people who represent it to be the sender. It is the party responsible for initiating and managing the process, defining the recipients, deciding on the content of the message and the channel or channels to be used for the process.
- II. **Receiver.** This is the person who receives the communication. The organisation must individually identify each and every one of the different groups or persons to whom its messages are addressed, in order to be able to adapt the content of the messages and select the most appropriate channels to ensure that the content of the message reaches the recipients, in line with what it is intended to convey.
- III. **Message.** This is what is transmitted to the different recipients. The sender (the cooperative) will elaborate the message taking into account the content and the form most appropriate to the objectives pursued with respect to the intended recipient.
- IV. **Code.** It is the system of signs that the sender uses to encode the message. It is the language in which both parties, sender and receiver, relate to each other. For communication to be possible, both parties must use the same code or, in the case of using two different codes, ensure that they understand each other.
- V. **Channel.** This is the physical element through which the sender transmits the information and which the receiver picks up through the bodily senses. A channel is both the natural medium (air, light...) and the technical medium used (printing, telegraphy, radio, telephone, television, social networks...) which is perceived through the receiver's senses (hearing, sight...). The co-operative will select, from among all the channels available to it, the one
- VI. **Context.** Temporal, spatial and socio-cultural circumstances surrounding the communicative act or event that allow the message to be understood in its proper context.

Communication is a process in itself, it is a conscious activity of exchanging information between two or more people, with the aim of transmitting or receiving meaning. The basic steps in this process are:

- The intention to communicate
- The composition of the message
- The coding of the message
- Signal transmission
- Signal reception
- Decoding the message
- The interpretation of the message by the person who receives it.
- *Feedback*





Although communicating is a process in itself, we usually do it automatically. The point is that, in general, and at the business level at hand, we must minimise the risk of communicating something we do not want to communicate, which is why we must pay special attention and be conscious of what we are communicating, as well as assessing whether it corresponds to what we really intend to communicate as an organisation.

We also have to take into account disturbances in the communication process, which can be summarised by the terms "noise" and "redundancy", and which are natural components of the process.

Noise is any obstacle that hinders communication in such a way that the message content is lost.

Redundancy is the repetition of information that does not contribute anything because what it means has already been expressed. It is sometimes used as a strategy to intensify the information contained in the message, but it must be done with caution, because it can be very negative.

We are immersed in a world characterised by information overload and many "distorting" elements. In the midst of all this jumble, our message has to make its way through so that it reaches the recipients as clearly as possible. This will be easier if the information is:

- ◆ relevant to the recipient, i.e. the target audience;
- ◆ comprehensible, i.e. it is formulated in such a way that the receiver is able to decode it and understand it in the sense in which we formulate it, and
- ◆ interesting, exciting, seductive, in other words, it generates feelings in the receiver.

2.2.4. Communication styles

The communication styles that people usually adopt can fall into one of three categories:

- I. **PASSIVE** style. Characterised by adopting an attitude of conformity with everything that is said. Avoids confrontation and/or attracting attention. With this style of communication, the person is inhibited, does not externalise their thoughts or feelings for fear of generating rejection, misunderstanding or feeling pressured.

This style can be identified by the following behaviours:

- ◆ His verbal expression is hesitant, clipped, and the tone of his voice is low, almost inaudible.
- ◆ Their non-verbal language is characterised by not maintaining eye contact with their interlocutors, nervousness, withdrawn posture.
- ◆ Non stands up for his rights and is not respected by others, does not achieve his goals, and feels frustrated.

- II. **AGGRESSIVE** style. This is the other extreme, characterised by adopting a dominant attitude and achieving one's own objectives, without worrying about whether others see theirs achieved. In this style, the person stigmatises the emotions of their interlocutors (feelings of guilt, emotional blackmail, etc...), shows anger bordering on intimidation, overvalues their own opinions and despises those of other people.



This style can be identified by the following behaviours:

- ◆ His verbal expression is imposing, he uses a high tone of voice and interrupts others.
- ◆ His non-verbal language is characterised by staring at his interlocutors, gesturally threatening, with a forward stance.
- ◆ He generates tension and enjoys it, does not respect the rights of others, indeed, in order to achieve his goals he is capable of riding roughshod over others with no other argument than the mere disqualification and/or humiliation of those who oppose him, and he feels frustration and anger if he does not get his way. He chooses for others.

III. **ASSERTIVE** style. This is the most efficient style, it is direct, clear and repetitive. It values and takes into account the opinions of others as well as one's own. It defends its own points of view and opinions without trying to impose them on others, assuming the diversity of points of view and that in order to reach an agreement all parties must work towards a solution that satisfies everyone. If the two previous styles live on conflict, this one seeks agreement.

This style can be identified by the following behaviours:

- ◆ His verbal expression is direct and firm, his tone of voice moderate, and he respects the turn of others.
- ◆ Their non-verbal language is characterised by direct eye contact with their interlocutors, firm gestures and a relaxed attitude.
- ◆ Stand up for your rights and respect the rights of others.

2.2.5. Communication as a strategic element in cooperatives

EVERYTHING COMMUNICATES IN AN ORGANISATION. Specific communication tools generate an image, but they are only part of the overall communication of the organisation. All the actions and actions carried out in the cooperative have an impact in terms of communication, with results that may or may not be satisfactory for the cooperative.

But not only that, the people who are organisation also communicate. The represent the co-operative with their image, style, manners, expressions and are giving a dimension of the they represent. Therefore, the people represent must be aware that with their words they are not only representing but also the organisation on behalf of are acting, and therefore, all the people of it.



part of the people who own personal behaviour, organisation who actions and themselves, which they who are part

The cooperative's members and workers are also very important elements in the process of building the cooperative's image. Their appearance, their professionalism, seriousness and commitment, their honesty in their relations with the different interlocutors (customers, suppliers, public administrations, etc.) give an image of the organisation they work for and represent.

On the other hand, the physical elements of the organisations also communicate and generate images, such as, for example, the facilities, in terms of design, layout, order, cleanliness...

In short, **EVERYTHING** communicates in an organisation and it is the responsibility of its leaders to manage the image they want to give, both externally and internally.

For this reason, business communication is the tool used to properly manage the business image and reduce the distance between the image perceived by the different target audiences and the desired image that the organisation would like to have, being an intangible asset of the company.





What can we gain from managing communication in cooperatives? From an internal perspective, it facilitates the direction and management of the cooperative, creating a suitable environment that enhances the good functioning of the cooperative.

From an external perspective, it helps to build the image that the entity wishes to have among its different interest groups and society in general, as well as being a fundamental tool in the commercialisation of its products in the market.

One of the key objectives of business communication is to reduce the level of uncertainty, both internally and externally. This is why it is important to be very clear:

- The objectives of communication
- Key ideas to be communicated

In co-operatives, almost everything is the result of the will of all the people who make up the co-operative: the members. We cannot ask for will if there is no communication between people.

In agri-food cooperatives, the power, power with a capital letter, lies with the member, who is almost always a user of the cooperative in the activity of his or her farm, his or her professional activity. In addition, members are sometimes also suppliers and customers of the cooperative itself. The fact that members, customers and suppliers of the co-operative are all part of the same person/holding means that the co-operative is obliged to carry out a constant and important task of communication.

Therefore, internal communication in cooperatives tends to rely on different key elements in order to be useful, effective and agile:

- Good internal communication needs a lot of specific information that is well evaluated and refers to the key aspects of the agri-food cooperative enterprise. Information in cooperatives should be based on the technical and economic situation of the cooperative's members.
- In this sense, the so-called technical-economic management of the partners' farms represents and brings together a set of key information for the design of continuous improvement processes and, consequently, for the communication strategy, so as to avoid the negatively repeated elements of the farms with tail-end results and to boost the positive improvements of the farms with top results.
- For this purpose, computer programmes are increasingly being used to help with the correct technical and economic management of the farm. However, CRM software programmes are also beginning to be used in such a way that they provide all the information relating to a member and make it easier to provide a swift and accurate response in cooperatives with numerous members and different departments operating, even to the point of having up-to-date social information in the CRM.

However, cooperatives have already begun to incorporate the new digital channels into their internal communication strategy: newsletters, facebook, twitter, whatsapp...

Little can be added about the external communication of a co-operative in relation to the communication of a capital company. There is only one aspect that we consider key to use in the external communication of the co-operative: its corporate social responsibility report. There is no doubt that it will include differentiating elements in relation to the contributions that a capital company can make: agri-food traceability, the direct connection of the farmer/livestock farmer with the end consumer, reducing intermediaries, its relationship with the territory, with the improvement of the society of which it forms part, democratic participation in decision-making,... these elements nowadays have great social value for external communication.



2.2.6. Communication Skills (personal and social)

A. ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is a technique and strategy specific to human communication, which refers, as its name suggests, to listening actively and with full attention. Therefore, it is not listening to another person, but being totally focused on the message he or she is trying to communicate.

It is a generic term for a series of behaviours and attitudes that prepare the receiver to listen, to focus on the speaker and to provide feedback. It also involves, among other things, making oneself available and showing interest in the speaker.

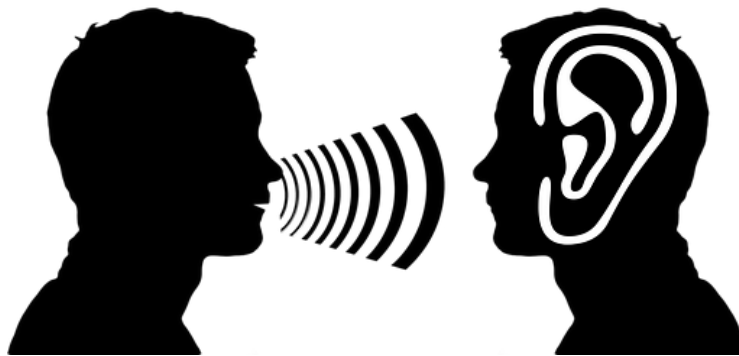
Active listening is a form of communication that demonstrates to the speaker that the listener understands him/her. It refers to the ability to listen not only to what the person is expressing directly, but also to their feelings, ideas or thoughts that underlie what they are saying.

Active listening is understood as an indispensable part of any communicative context.

Although it may seem that active listening is an easy task, this type of listening requires an effort of our cognitive and empathic abilities. Listening is very important in communication, but we often spend much more time thinking about what we think and what we say, rather than listening to the other person. In reality, we listen more in order to respond and give our opinion.

There are some obstacles that prevent us from listening effectively and we need to be aware of them in order to overcome them:

- Having divided attention. Trying to do several things at the same time puts us in an inadequate position to really listen.
 - Focusing attention on ourselves, which compromises our ability to listen to the other party and, in reality, we are more concerned with preparing our responses.
 - Pretending to listen, when in fact we are not.
 - Downplaying what the other person says because we have different beliefs or because we see the situation differently.
 - Interrupt the speaker.
 - Making judgements about what the other person is expressing and wanting to impose our ideas.
 - Rejecting and not validating what the other is feeling.
 - Disqualify by giving our opinion.
- Telling our own story rather than listening to theirs, which puts the focus on us rather than on the person who is trying to talk to us.





So, what to do to really listen?

- First of all, be predisposed to listen and really want to listen.
- Use non-aggressive and non-defensive language.
- Maintain eye contact with the person or persons we are talking to.
- Knowing and interpreting people's verbal and body language.
- Give signs that you are listening to the other person with expressions such as "uh-huh..." "ah..." "sure...", nodding and appropriate and coherent body expressions (if we are not really listening, the other person will perceive the inconsistency between our appearance and what we are conveying with our non-verbal language).
- Show empathy, i.e. the ability to understand the other person, to "put yourself in their shoes" ("I understand what you feel", "I notice that").
- Validate what the person feels, show that you accept what they say even if you don't agree. You understand each other, and no judgement is made. If necessary, you can show your disagreement as your own opinion. Telling a person that they should not feel the way they feel, or that "that is nothing", implies reproach and rejection.
- Paraphrase, i.e. summarise what the person said. If something catches our attention, we can highlight the words that struck us most. This is a way of directing the conversation, because the speaker will expand on what we highlight/underline. This shows that you are listening and understanding what is being said ("so, what happened was that..." "you mean that...").
- Ask for clarification of what was not understood.
- Propose partial syntheses to help focus the issue and the conversation.
- Respect the silences that occur naturally in the conversation. Be patient and respect the other person's time.

B. Empathy

Empathy (from the Greek *έμπαθής*, "moved") is the ability to perceive, share and understand (in a common context) what another may feel. It is also described as a feeling of affective participation when one is aware that others may see and think differently. In short, it is knowing how to put oneself in the other's place, having a feeling of affective participation in the reality that affects another person, knowing how to "read" the other.

Empathy refers to an individual's cognitive as well as emotional or affective ability, in which the individual is able to put him or herself in the emotional situation of another person. This is very different from previously used ideas such as the term's predecessor "sympathy".

Empathy is usually divided into two main components:

- **Affective empathy**, also called **emotional empathy**, which is the ability to respond with appropriate feeling to the other's mental states. It is assumed that our capacity for emotional empathy is based on emotional contagion, the affectation by the emotional state or arousal of the other.
- **Cognitive empathy**, which is the ability to understand another person's point of view or state of mind.



In order to become empathetic, it is necessary to be understanding knowing how to share be flexible

knowing how to listen to pick up on non-verbal communication, to know how to read the gestures, tone of voice and emotional states of the other person; and be respectful of other people's feelings, beliefs and behaviours

A. Emotional validation

Emotional validation is the process of learning, understanding and expressing acceptance of another person's emotional experience. Emotional validation is a process of learning, understanding and expressing acceptance of another individual's or oneself's emotional experience (emotional self-validation). The opposite of emotional validation is "emotional invalidation", which refers to the rejection, ignorance or judgement of another person's emotional experience.

Emotional validation improves interpersonal relationships as the other person feels understood and acknowledged, and encourages increased verbalisation of what they think and feel, leads to increased trust between both parties, and lays the foundation for building a good relationship and good communication.



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Learning to validate emotions correctly can take practice. Validating an emotion consists of making explicit the emotion we believe the person has (for example, this makes you feel...?) and implies that the other person feels understood, valued and accepted.

Here are some suggestions for improving emotional validation:

- Being present, being mindful is the first step to emotional validation.
- Listening and reflecting: objective reflection refers to making an objective summary of what the other person said, paying attention to their reactions and emotions, in order to understand them more deeply by looking at situations from different perspectives.
- Understand other people's reactions: We often get carried away by the intensity of our emotions and do not stop to think about the cause of other people's reactions. It is essential to understand what the other person may be feeling or thinking. Although we cannot read minds, we can try to find out what led the other person to act in that way.
- Understand the situation: It is important to have knowledge about the other person's culture and context. Therefore, reading emotions implies that, with a few elements, you can formulate a hypothesis about their emotional reaction. This hypothesis should be communicated to the other person so that he/she can tell us if we are right.
- Normalise emotions: Understanding emotional reactions as normal helps everyone.
- Having an open mind to the other person's emotional experience. Acceptance and open-mindedness to the other person's emotional experience is conducive to any interpersonal relationship. Whatever emotion the other person is feeling, it is their emotion and should be respected. It is important to give a place to all emotions, as they all have a meaning.

C. *Non-verbal language*

As we have already seen, it is not our words that say the most about us, nor our intentions. It is the different kinds of non-verbal language that carry the most information.

Non-verbal language comprises several aspects:

- Body movement, postures and facial expressions.
- Timbre, intensity, pitch and style of voice.
- Intonation, rhythm and word stress.
- Vocalisations beyond words, such as moans and sighs.
- Language related to touch.
- Use and perception of physical space.
- Use of time.
- Use and movement of objects such as pens, papers, mobile phones.



In written language, non-verbal language is reflected through other characteristics, such as writing style, distance between words, size of letters, use of capital letters, symbols, emoticons...

The messages sent by our non-verbal communication are much more sincere and hence the importance of knowing what our body and that of others says, especially in business. Great leaders understand how successful people behave, and pay special attention to their own non-verbal language and that of the people they interact with.

A. Verbal language

Understands spoken signs and spoken or written words, by means of graphic representation of signs.

Oral language takes many forms. Shouting, crying and laughing can express different moods and is one of the most primal forms of communication. The most evolved form of oral communication is articulate language, the structured sounds that give rise to the syllables, words and sentences with which we communicate with others.

The forms of written communication are also very varied and numerous (ideograms, xeroglyphs, alphabets...) From primitive ideographic and xeroglyphic writing to the more modern syllabic and alphabetic phonetics, there has been a significant evolution. In order to interpret written messages correctly, it is necessary to know the code, which must be common to both the sender and the receiver of the message, for communication to exist.

B. Respect

Respect is the consideration and valuing of someone or something, which is recognised as important or valuable. It is also one of the fundamental values that human beings should always bear in mind when interacting with other people and their environment.



In this sense, we can talk about ASSERTIVITY, which consists of expressing opinions clearly and respectfully to others, without being aggressive or passive. Speaking assertively does not transform the message into the truth, but it does transform it into your truth.

At the same time, it is very important to talk about objective facts, not personal assessments, and from the first person "I", not from the other person "you", as this helps to express our opinions without making the other person feel attacked or defensive.

D. Persuasiveness

Persuasion can be said to be the ability to effectively describe the benefits of an idea or product while generating consensus. In other words, it means being convincing. It is the art of getting others to see things your way.

This ability is really important in the business world. Here are some of the keys:

1. First, it builds consensus on the small details.
2. Power gives confidence
3. Being authentic



4. Search for contact points
5. Ter en conta os tempos da outra persoa
6. Mention opposing points of view
7. Choose the most appropriate means of communication, depending on the target audience and the message to be conveyed.

E. Credibility

It is the quality of being credible, that can or deserves to be believed. The term comes from the Latin word *credibilis*.

Credibility is not linked to the truthfulness of the message, but to objective and subjective components that make other people believe it or not. To be credible, the person or information must be trusted by others.

The degree of knowledge can be perceived subjectively but also includes objective characteristics related to indirect indicators of expert knowledge (e.g. academic or professional accreditations, prestige, track record) or of the rigour of the message (quality of information, completeness, references...).

Credibility goes hand in hand with truth, so a person or source will have a higher degree of credibility if he or she has not been involved in episodes where he or she was exposed or suspected of lying. As suspicions about their honesty arise, credibility gradually diminishes. In addition, credibility can also be lost through an accumulation of errors or inconsistencies in the dissemination of information, opinions and interpretations.



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2.2.7. Communication for Effective leadership

Aspects of communication: promote participatory democracy and supervise the operational team of employees

The ability to communicate is without a doubt one of the essential qualities of a good leader. A person can only exert influence if they can communicate with others.

Some argue that communication is at the very center of management. Good communication involves expressing one's ideas (vision, mission, values and goals) in a clear and orderly way. In order for common goals to be realized, the leader must first share his knowledge and experience. Those who know how to communicate attract the respect of others and manage to convince them. Communication is a powerful management tool that needs to be constantly improved.

Communication with stakeholders is an issue in all projects. The cooperative characteristic is that the stakeholders are very numerous and often intersect. For example, customers (members) are usually also the owners. In addition, the general public is, in large cooperatives, an essential stakeholder. The leader must therefore possess communication skills in a complex environment.

Co-operatives work in several networks. Here again, our project manager will have to distinguish himself by his skills to communicate with all these networks which will be able to influence the project development. In this context, accountability is a big issue.

The ability to communicate is without a doubt one of the essential qualities of a good leader. A person can only exert influence if they can communicate with others. We expect our leader to be a good communicator, which includes a good negotiator. He will need to influence a lot of stakeholders. He must know how to do it with skill so that all these transactions do not drag the project length.

3.CHAPTER

Understanding Cooperatives





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CHAPTER 3. Understanding Cooperatives

3.1. Basic Economics of an Agricultural Cooperative

Looked at from the outside, there isn't much difference between a cooperative and a commercial business. The main difference lies in the way a cooperative works. A cooperative business is set up by those whom it serves and is controlled directly by them.

The earliest American cooperative businesses, the mutual fire-insurance companies, attempted only to meet costs after a fire occurred. Each member was assessed for his share of actual fire losses. Members of the early mutual irrigation companies shared the cost of irrigation services in the same way—after the bills were in.

Service cooperatives still operate largely in this way—for instance, mutual telephone companies, rural electrification associations, health and burial associations, and cold-storage locker service plants. But such cooperatives now, instead of assessing their members at the end of a period, generally estimate costs and make charges in advance. This provides current funds to support the organization and meet expenses as they occur. If the amount of assessments exceeds costs, the assessments for the following year are reduced, or the excess is refunded to members proportionately. Thus, these associations operate on a nonprofit basis.

The first cooperative stores in this country tried to figure out costs in advance and to fix their retail prices so as just to cover the cost of merchandise and running expenses. But it proved hard to determine merchandising costs in advance. Gradually these stores adopted the Rochdale method—selling merchandise at prevailing prices and returning savings to members in proportion to patronage.

3.2. Marketing Pools

Many marketing cooperatives operate through “pooling.” The member delivers his product to the association, which pools it with products of like grade and quality delivered by other members. After doing whatever processing is necessary, the co-op sells the products at the best price it can get and returns to the members their share of total proceeds, less marketing expenses.



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The products of members may be pooled for short periods. In the case of a creamery, egg marketing, or fruit association, the period may be a month. For crops that can be stored, it may be a year. If the pooling period is a long one and the product can be financed by commodity loans, part payments are generally made in advance. All this is provided for in marketing contracts between the member and the association.

Cooperative livestock commission associations charge for their services on the understanding that the difference between the commissions charged and the actual cost of rendering the service will be returned to members in proportion to the amount of commissions they have paid. The method is also used by many regional grain associations. Cooperative auction associations for poultry, cogs, and fruits and vegetables also operate in much the same way, and so do bargaining associations for milk or sugar beets.

It is this cost-of-service feature—providing members with necessary service and charging them only for the service received—that makes cooperatives different from other businesses. It becomes clear, then, that a “patronage refund” is not a return of profits in the ordinary sense of the word. It is nothing more than an adjustment made in charges for service so that the price paid will be the true cost of service. In the case of a consumer or purchasing co-op, the patronage refund may be looked upon as the return of an overpayment for service, since the gross margin taken usually turns out at the end of the business period to be more than the actual cost of the service. In the case of a marketing association, a patronage refund payment corrects an underpayment, because the association is able to get more for the product after deducting proper costs than it paid to the member.

3.3.Co-ops in Action

Suppose that a group wishes to market wheat cooperatively. They form a local cooperative association for the purpose. They must, of course, get an elevator and employ a manager.

When a member wishes to sell his grain, he brings it to the elevator where he is paid in cash the “going” price for wheat in his community. The cooperative elevator then tries to sell the grain—perhaps to a flour mill—for a somewhat higher price. Since it is a cooperative venture, the elevator pays back to the farmer his part of any income made from the sale, or it may credit him on his share of ownership in the elevator. In either case, his return is measured not by the number of shares he may own in the co-op, but by the proportion of grain he sold through it.



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If there were a way by which members could be paid at time of delivery exactly what the elevator could sell the wheat for, less costs, there would be no need for patronage refund payments. But this cannot be done, since the local elevator must assemble wheat and sell it in wholesale lots over a period during which the market price goes up and down.

In the case of a commercial elevator, any difference between the price paid the farmer when he delivers the wheat and the price the elevator gets from selling the wheat is *profit* or *loss*. This is taken by the owners of the elevator in proportion to their ownership. This method of returning net income is the chief difference between a commercial and a cooperative elevator.

Now suppose the local cooperative elevator sells its wheat to a cooperative terminal elevator partly owned by the local elevator as a member of a federation. If there is a saving at the terminal end, it comes back to the local member elevators in patronage refunds paid by the terminal to the locals. In this way, savings both from the terminal and the local marketing operations are sooner or later returned to the individual members of the local associations.

Let us now look at the working of a cooperative creamery to see how pooling is carried on. Here the farmers deliver their butterfat to the creamery in the form of milk or cream. The produce delivered by the patrons is "pooled," each patron being credited with his contribution to the pool, according to how much and how good his milk or cream is. The period of each pool may be fixed monthly, or semimonthly, or for any other definite period.

As butter is made by the creamery, it is sold on the basis of prevailing quotations, either through a federated sales agency, such as the Land O' Lakes Creameries of Minneapolis, or other sales outlets. At the end of each pooling period, the co-op's net income from sales during the period is divided up among its members. The share each member gets is figured according to the amount and the quality of product he put into the pool. The payment he receives, therefore, is in proportion to his patronage, but it is not a refund since no previous payment took place.

This method of marketing, which gives an association rights over the supply of its members, is widely used by marketing cooperatives handling fruits and vegetables, eggs and poultry, and similar products.

Here is how a typical purchasing cooperative works. Let's take as an illustration a local petroleum association through which a number of farmers get gasoline and oil for their tractors, trucks, and automobiles. The association generally delivers gas and oil to its members by truck and charges competitive prices. At the end of the year any difference between the amount paid in by the farmers (retail price) and the amount paid out by the association (wholesale price), after deduction of expenses, is returned to the farmers as patronage refunds.

Purchasing cooperatives handling feed, seed, farm machinery, or any combination of these, and city consumers' cooperatives work the same way. Patrons purchase goods at the prevailing retail prices. At the end of the year, the difference between sales prices and the cost of sales is paid to patrons, in proportion to their purchases.

3.4.Cooperative principles



Voluntary Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to persons willing to accept the responsibilities of membership. The relationship can be voluntarily ended at any time.

Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote)



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Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

Education, Training, and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working.

Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

3.5. Establishment Procedures of Cooperatives

The establishment procedures of cooperatives can be learned from the relevant Ministries. The conditions that must be fulfilled before establishing a cooperative are as follows:

- Cooperatives are commercial entities.
- A cooperative must be established with at least 7 partners.
- The type of cooperative to be established must be decided.
- A founding articles of association signed by the partners is required.
- Before establishing the cooperative, at least one-fourth of the founding capital must be deposited in a bank and blocked.

3.6. Tax Exemptions in Cooperatives

In order for the cooperatives to benefit from the corporate tax exemption;

Not to distribute profits on capital,

The chairman and members of the Board of Directors are not given a share of the earnings,

Not to distribute the reserve funds to the partners,

Only to do business with partners and these terms and conditions must be complied with.

The documents required according to the types of cooperatives can be accessed from the relevant web addresses of the Ministries or from the Provincial Directorates in the province.

Cooperative establishment transactions are carried out over KoopBis (Cooperative Information System, <https://koopbis.ticaret.gov.tr/>).

3.7. Fundamental Rights of Cooperative Partners

Ordinary Members:

Ordinary members are usually Individual farmers, cooperative societies, and service societies of the locality. Membership would provide them the right to participate in all the discussions within the society, get a share in the profits, and have a voice in the decision-making process.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

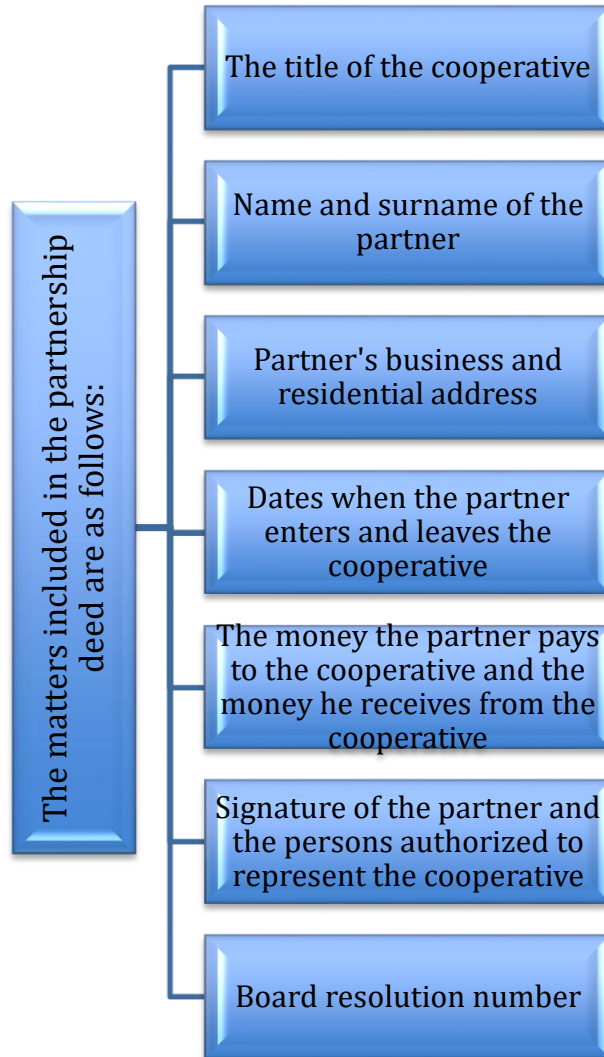
Nominal Members:

Nominal members are those with whom the society has reasons to interact. However, they do not get to participate in any decision-making, nor do they get a share in their profits.

Cooperative partners; In accordance with the articles of association, they acquire the partnership rights with the establishment of the cooperative or as of the date they become a partner in the cooperative, but they also accept debts and obligations. In this context, the rights and obligations of the partners and the principles on how to use them are regulated in the Cooperatives Law No. 1163 (<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.1163.pdf>) and the cooperative articles of association. According to the basic principle; The cooperative is obliged to treat all its members equally, and the members are obliged to fulfill their debts and obligations towards the cooperative fully and on time.

Partnership deed

In the partnership deed, which is defined in Article 18 of the Cooperatives Law and prepared by the cooperative management, there are records showing the personal information of the partner and the work and transactions he made with the cooperative (such as the dates the partner entered and left the cooperative, the money paid or received). This promissory note, which has the feature of proof, is not a valuable document, but serves as a kind of evidence in the use of the rights granted to him by the law and the articles of association, and in the settlement of disputes that may arise between the cooperative and itself.



3.7.1. Individual Rights of Cooperative Partners

Cooperative members can use some of their rights against the cooperative together and some individually. These rights can be extended by the articles of association.

The rights that can be exercised individually by the cooperative partners are as follows:

- The right to exit the partnership,
- The right to transfer the partnership share,
- The right to object and file a lawsuit against the decision to withdraw from the partnership,
- The right to obtain information and request samples,



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

- The right to examine commercial books and documents,
- The right to attend the general assembly, to elect and to be elected,
- The right to receive a share of the positive income-expenditure difference,
- Voting right,
- The right to represent in the general assembly,
- The right to file a lawsuit against the resolutions of the general assembly,
- The right to attract the attention of the auditors and request clarifications,
- The right to receive a share of the remaining assets as a result of liquidation,
- Right to claim and petition.

Right to Exit Cooperative Partnership

A cooperative is a business established by people coming together voluntarily. For this reason, the partners can leave the partnership at any time within the framework of the law and the articles of association.

The application to exit the partnership must be made in writing to the board of directors for the end of an accounting year and at least six months in advance. However, if a shorter period is specified in the articles of association, exit may also be allowed within the accounting year.

Right to Transfer Cooperative Partnership Share

Cooperative partners can transfer their partnership shares. If the person who takes over the partnership has partnership qualifications, the board of directors accepts this person into the partnership. The partnership to the cooperative is transferred and taken over with all its rights and obligations. As a result of the transfer, all rights and obligations of the old partner pass to the new partner.

The Right to Object to the Decision of Expulsion from the Partnership and to File a Lawsuit

Those who lose the conditions stated in the Cooperatives Law and the articles of association are excluded from the partnership. In this context, the partner has the right to object and file a lawsuit against the dismissal decision at the general assembly within three months from the date of notification.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

Right to Obtain Information and Request Samples

One of the most fundamental rights of partners is the right to information. In this context, the board of directors; It is obliged to submit the annual report, balance sheet, income-expense difference accounts and reports to be prepared by the audit committee and the external auditor, at least 15 days before the annual meeting of the general assembly, for the review of the partners in the cooperative center, if any, its branches and electronically in KOOPBİS for a period of one year. Cooperative partners are authorized to access the list showing the partners who have the right to attend the general assembly via KOOPBİS.

The shareholders' right to information cannot be eliminated or limited by the articles of association or by the decision of one of the cooperative bodies.

The personal data obtained within the framework of the right to information can only be used for the purpose of making the members aware of the cooperative's business and operations and for the candidates who want to take part in the cooperative bodies to reach the cooperative members. The data obtained cannot be used, transferred or processed in any other way in violation of the Law on Protection of Personal Data No. 6698 (KK art.24).

Right to Examine Commercial Books and Documents

The commercial books of the cooperative are possible with the express permission of the general assembly or the decision of the board of directors. Except for the secrets to be learned from the books and documents that are allowed to be examined, no partner is authorized to learn the business secrets of the cooperative. Every partner has to keep confidential the business secrets of the cooperative that he has learned in any way, even if he loses his right to be a partnership later on. Otherwise, criminal liability will arise (KK m.25).

Right to Participate in the General Assembly, Election and Election

The general assembly, which is the most authoritative organ of the cooperative, is formed with the participation of all partners. Except for those who were not partners three months ago, each partner has the right to attend the general assembly. This condition is not required in order to attend general assembly meetings in building cooperatives. Each partner has the right to participate in the general assembly, to vote, to elect and to be elected (KK art.26).



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

Right to Get Share of Positive Income-Expense Difference

According to the Cooperatives Law, in order for the positive income-expenditure difference to be distributed to the partners, there must be a provision in this direction in the articles of association and a general assembly decision must be taken (KK art.38). If the articles of association stipulates the distribution of the income-expenditure difference to the partners, this distribution is calculated according to the transactions of the partners with the cooperative.

Suffrage

Regardless of the share amount owned by the partner, each partner has only one voting right at the general assembly.

Right to Representation in the General Assembly

If there is a provision in the articles of association, a partner can only have another partner use the vote at the general assembly meeting by giving permission with a written letter (KK article 49). A partner cannot represent more than one partner at the general assembly. In cooperatives with more than “1,000” members, it can be stipulated by the articles of association that each partner can represent more than one other partner, “at most nine”. In the organ elections of the cooperatives, each partner can vote to represent at most one partner (KK art.48). Partnership is not required for representation for spouses and first degree relatives.

Right to File a Lawsuit Against General Assembly Decisions

Persons listed in Article 53 of the Law may apply to the court in the place where the cooperative headquarters is located, against the general assembly resolutions, with the allegation that they are in violation of the articles of association and the principles of goodwill, within one month, starting from the day following the meeting.

The Right to Draw the Auditors' Attention and Request Clarifications

Partners are authorized to attract the attention of the auditors and request explanations on matters they deem necessary (KK art.66). This right can be exercised at any time during or after the general assembly.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

The Right to Get a Share from the Remaining Assets as a result of Liquidation

After all debts of the cooperative, which has been in liquidation, are paid and the common share prices are returned, the remaining goods can be shared between the partners only if this issue is stipulated in the articles of association (KK article 83). Unless a different form is foreseen in the articles of association, the distribution is made equally between the registered partners or their legal successors at the time of dissolution.

Right to Claim and Petition

Within the scope of Article 36 of our Constitution; cooperative partners have the right to claim and defend before the judiciary by taking advantage of legal means. In addition, partners have the right to apply in writing to the Turkish Grand National Assembly or the competent authorities regarding their wishes and complaints regarding themselves or the public.

3.7.2. Rights That Cooperative Partners Can Use Together

The rights that the partners can use together are as follows:

- The right to call the general assembly meeting
- The right to request an item to be added to the agenda

Right to Convene the General Assembly

At the request of at least one tenth of the number of members of the cooperative, provided that not less than four members are present, the general assembly may be called for a meeting (KK art.44). Requests in this direction should be forwarded to the cooperative board of directors. If the Board of Directors does not fulfill this request within at least ten days, the General Assembly may be called for a meeting upon the application of the requesters or directly by the relevant Ministry.

If the cooperative general assembly is not called for a meeting by the relevant Ministry, the requesters may apply to the local court and obtain permission to call the general assembly for the meeting in person.

The Right to Request an Item to be Added to the Agenda

Article 46 of the Cooperatives Law regulates that adding an item to the agenda of the general assembly can be done in two ways. Matters to be notified in writing by at least one tenth of the cooperative members, not less than four, and at least 20 days before the general assembly meeting, must be put on the agenda.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

On the other hand, if at least 1/10 of the members registered in the cooperative make a written proposal, limited to the issues listed in Article 46 of the Law, before the agenda items are discussed at the general assembly meeting, an item is added to the agenda with the acceptance of more than half of the participants in the general assembly.

Equality in Rights and Obligations (Absolute-Relative Equality)

Article 23 of the Cooperatives Law states that “Partners are equal in rights and obligations within the principles accepted by this law”. In this context;

All partners are equal in terms of all rights, debts or obligations related to the cooperative, no different treatment can be made. This basic principle is handled as absolute and relative equality.

absolute equality; It means that all members benefit equally from the rights regardless of the degree and content of their relations with the cooperative and that there is no discrimination in terms of obligations.

relative equality; It refers to the different treatment of the members according to the works and transactions of the members with the cooperative, in other words, according to the contributions made by the members to the cooperative activities.

3.8. Management in Agricultural Cooperatives

Agricultural cooperatives have a long history of successes and failures both in the developed and the developing world. In some European countries the formation of agricultural cooperatives has made a major contribution to the development of agriculture over the last 150 years. These cooperatives were usually initiated by small scale farmers, as a response to their weak position in the market. By joining forces they could improve this position and obtain better prices and services for the purchase of inputs and the marketing of produce.

In developing countries the experience has been more mixed. One reason for failure has been the misuse of the cooperative concept for ideological or political purposes. This resulted in many poorly developed or unsustainable cooperatives being created. Some developing countries are still left with the remnants of these state-controlled “pseudo-cooperatives”. However, under the influence of current trends in market oriented reform, privatisation, decentralisation and participation, cooperatives are being rediscovered as a suitable organizational structure for farmers to improve their livelihoods. Agricultural cooperatives in which the members both participate and contribute can become powerful instruments for the development of the rural economy.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

3.8.1. General Assembly

The general assembly is the most authoritative body formed with the participation of all partners. It meets regularly every year and all important decisions are taken here. Each partner has one vote.

3.8.2. Board of Directors

The board of directors consists of at least three members. It is elected by the general assembly for at least one and at most three years. It is responsible for managing and representing the cooperative.

3.8.3. Supervisory Board

The supervisory board consists of two or more members elected by the general assembly for at least one year. They are responsible for supervising the cooperative.

3.9. Marketing

In order for cooperatives to be able to conduct e-commerce and achieve success in the digital realm, they must first determine where they stand in the digital transformation process. Utilizing the necessary resources and technological skills developed by digital services, which are the face of cooperative enterprises' digital operations and skills, and prioritizing resource needs and structures to support each other are key factors in achieving digital success. Therefore, cooperative enterprises must develop and consider their work models, processes, and technological capabilities to support them simultaneously in order to achieve digitalization of the products and services they offer. The critical point that cooperative enterprises need to pay attention to is to prioritize digitalization strategies by creating a roadmap that is part of this strategy, and setting necessary performance targets throughout this strategy. Cooperatives that achieve all of this are ahead of their competitors in this race (Accenture, 2016).



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Women Empowerment in Agricultural Cooperative
2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

This self-study manual was published by ILO as a MATCOM Learning Element in 1984. It introduces the core economic principles that underpin the operation of farmers' marketing and supply co-operatives. All farmers need to buy "inputs" for their farms – things like seeds and fertilisers – and at harvest time, they want to sell their produce. Forming an agricultural cooperative can be an effective way for farmers to ensure they receive the services they require in terms of input supply and produce marketing. Some agricultural co-operatives offer very good services to their members. Others do well at first but soon get into trouble. Marketing and supply services can be provided effectively only if the cooperative leaders understand the "economics" of running a co-operative business. If they do not, the cooperative will soon find itself out of business. In the lessons that make up this manual, readers will first learn about the marketing business and how it works from an economic point of view. Then they will go on to supply services and the importance of the net surplus. Finally, three case studies are provided to show how problems can arise and what actions can be taken to avoid or overcome them. In the document section, there is a summary of the core principles, a poster and a set of questions to help readers assess how well they have understood the points being made.

3.9.1.Importance of Cooperative Marketing

In cooperative marketing, where multiple players work in tandem, creating valuable benefits to all parties, what is ensured is that the combined endeavors produce a synergy, and this makes superior products, and the whole eco-system results in immense value-addition, for the members as well as the end customers.

3.9.2.Need for Cooperative Marketing

- It ensures better results because everyone collaborates and adds their bits, both ideas and produces. In addition, the ability to place bulk orders makes the costs go down substantially.
- Advertisements of products and the availability of each other's marketing network can be done jointly, resulting in more market penetration. Usually, the typical advertising could be direct mails, online marketing, or even print media. As a result, the total cost of products for all parties involved can be reduced substantially. They also get better bargaining power and can negotiate a price better.
- Eliminating malpractices – all manner of malpractices that prevail, from very arbitrary deductions to unfair and illegal price manipulation, can be reduced, if not eliminated. There is rampant manipulation of weights and measures, which can be substantially reduced.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

- Establishing appropriate reward for the endeavors put in – the veritable army of intermediaries is very interested in collecting, storing, insuring, and financing rural produce. Their charges are hugely inappropriate and disproportionate. Any cooperative marketing strategy that is efficiently organized reduces the price spread, providing fair returns to all stakeholders.
- Concomitant of Integrated Programme – cooperative marketing has brought in the system of a vast expansion of credit. Marketing societies act as the agents to collect and recover loans given by the cooperative credit societies.
- To Stabilise the Agricultural Price – left to its own devices, the will of the private intermediaries would only cause more destabilization and uncertainty. Cooperative Marketing ensures that does not happen, along with price stabilization, and results in a very balanced economic development that does not veer towards a single side. The profit motive stops having the upper hand, and usual market conditions do not deviate from fair practice to uncertainties of pointless speculation, leading to hoarding and architected crisis.

Some Features of Cooperative Marketing Societies

These societies have features that are pretty unique and distinguishable from other organizations involved in rural marketing produce. First, their very existence is to assist in increasing their incomes.

3.9.3.Sources of Finance

The following are the significant sources of finance of a co-operative marketing society:

Share Capital

All the members and even the state government subscribe to the share capital. Members can purchase any number of shares they want and are even encouraged to invest as much as they want and buy as many shares as they wish. Like all share markets, they can also support their dividends, etc.

Loans

These societies are authorized to take loans and stabilize or raise their finances. They can do the same from commercial banks; they accept pledging and clean credit.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

Subsidy

The marketing societies all get subsidies to buy grading machines and other infrastructural needs. In addition, subsidies are also provided to take care of at least a portion of the cost of staffing etc.

3.9.4. Main functions of Co-operative Marketing Societies

Purchase and Sale of Produce – These societies buy and sell members' produce, and they do it in bulk. This makes it easy to reduce marketing costs, earning good returns substantially.

Distribution – Main ingredients – seeds, material, etc., are all provided at reasonable rates. Members can also get credit to procure their material.

Storage facility – Many societies typically have their own or hired warehouses for members to store their material, providing much-needed security.

Supplying implements – Cooperative societies often provide infrastructural needs to their members. This helps in raising both the quality and quantity of their produces. *Market information* – Often, individual members do not have the money to access the latest news and techniques to increase production or benefit in other ways. This information helps members properly assess and ensure they get the correct price of their products.

Stability of prices – The societies can adjust the supply of items based on market demand. This is an excellent way of stabilizing prices and ensuring the members do not face the adverse effects of price fluctuations based on external factors.

Taking part in foreign trade – Participation in export trade initiatives of the country can happen more quickly, promising better prices for the members. The marketing cooperatives open the markets wide for both the members and their customers.

3.9.5. Marketing in Agricultural Cooperatives

In our country, marketing through agricultural cooperatives is done in almost all agricultural cooperatives. Agricultural sales cooperatives already process and market their partners' products as part of their duties. Agricultural credit cooperatives market consumer goods through the markets they have opened recently. Other agricultural cooperatives market their products to their partners.

Cooperatives should direct their partners in accordance with the demand during marketing, follow the changes in the final market, create the most appropriate physical distribution channels to deliver the products to either industrial buyers or final consumers, and ensure that market information is transferred to the partners.

3.10. Digital Marketing

3.10.1. Digitalization in Cooperatives

Along with the developing technology, digitalization not only caused changes in the daily life of individuals, but also changed the way work and work was done in businesses and brought an interconnected structure. The concept of digitalization refers to digitization, that is, to encode information. Digitalization is the use of technology to transform business processes (Yankın, 2019). Digitization is also a country, organization, industry, etc. It also means the adoption of computer technology and its widespread use in all processes (Kökhan, 2021).





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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

Cooperatives play a very important role in the adoption of these technologies. The digitalization of agricultural cooperatives and unions is of great importance for smart agricultural practices and digitalization in agriculture. As a result of digitalization in agriculture, high efficiency advantage can be provided for the producer in effective irrigation, spraying and fertilization processes. Land productivity, cultivation processes, development stages, pest and yield estimation can be made. In unsuitable conditions for land exploration, the land situation can be examined by easily taking images from above with the help of an unmanned aerial vehicle. In recent years, with unmanned aerial vehicles (drone) in a very short time, without traveling the land, information is obtained (Keskin et al., 2018).

Within the framework of digital transformation, cooperatives restructured their business processes in order to communicate more easily with their producer partners, and aimed to break out of the traditional line by implementing applications such as common information system (OBS) and corporate resource planning. With the further development of information technology, cooperatives have become internationally competitive by using the tools brought by technology, turning today's opportunities into an advantage, and are on the way to integrate the possibilities of new technology into their structure. Digitalization in agricultural cooperatives and unions not only reduces the expenditure items of the partners and cooperatives, but also helps to reduce the environmental damage caused by traditional agriculture (Kilavuz & Erdem, 2019). In short, with the completion or harmonization of the digitalization process in cooperatives, problems related to many components such as cost, time, food health, sustainability will have a lasting effect for both the producer and the consumer.

3.10.1.1. Digitalization Initiatives of Women's Cooperatives

If information is given about the e-commerce initiative of women's cooperatives, the new economic order that emerged during the pandemic period is of great importance for women entrepreneurs. As long as there is no digitalization in the process of diversifying sales channels, the probability of getting a share of the pie decreases. One of the golden rules of competition is to face the digitalization process. Social solidarity economy has a growing ecosystem. This is more common in women's cooperatives in Turkey.

While encouraging and supporting the process with capacity building activities, it should also be addressed in a way that expands market access and alternative sales channels, especially the private sector, civil society and even the fourth sector, the social entrepreneurship ecosystem.



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

The digital age, in which everyone lives today, is an important turning point for gender equality. This process strengthens, liberates and prepares the future for both institutions and individuals by using technology and digital platforms well. While the increase in digital literacy rates of women makes a positive contribution to their working life, it also provides additional employment opportunities for women.

Digital transformation is actually a process that brings different perspectives and innovations, so when issues such as empathy, multitasking and design-oriented thinking are added to the nature of women, it will enable women to take a more active role in this process, and this will bring the desired number of women along.

In the near future, it is expected that digitalization will provide advantages in terms of bringing many women to the desired level in business life, increasing their participation in social life and strong motivation. In this sense, it is very important for women to have more role models in working with technology, using technology effectively and achieving success. In order for women to increase their numbers in business life and management levels, it is important that they move forward by thinking that the future is more technology-oriented, follow their goals and dreams, focus on technology, focus on opportunities and opportunities and talents more than ever before in this regard.

More and more women's cooperatives in all regions of Turkey strive to be included in the e-commerce ecosystem. Programs prepared by various organizations for women's cooperatives that want to take part in the ecosystem are a compass for women's cooperatives. Awareness of being cooperative among women entrepreneurs who gain financial literacy through the trainings given is increasing day by day.

Cooperatives, which bring women entrepreneurs together under one roof, are becoming more and more widespread with the effect of e-commerce. According to the data of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, which works to empower women, 530 new women's cooperatives were established in 2021 alone. The pandemic period has accelerated the digitalization of women's cooperatives. After gaining sufficient financial literacy, women entrepreneurs rapidly expanded their corporate identity in the e-commerce ecosystem. In particular, training on budget planning and management is of great importance for women's cooperatives to strengthen their e-commerce operations and achieve a sustainable structure.



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Women Empowerment in Agricultural Cooperative
2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

T.R. By contributing to the production and employment of women's cooperatives by the Ministry of Commerce, some of the project costs are covered in the form of grants, and their capital has been contributed through the KOOPDES program(koopdes@ticaret.gov.tr). This program aims to increase efficiency and productivity in the activities of women's cooperatives, to financially support cooperatives with insufficient equity capital, and to encourage them to become entrepreneurs and exporters in new fields, and to direct individual savings to cooperatives. Grant support of up to 150,000 TL was given to women's cooperatives, up to 75% in regions with priority in development and up to 50% in other regions.

T.R. In addition to the training and grants provided by the Ministry of Commerce to women's cooperatives and women entrepreneurs to participate in e-commerce, digital entrepreneurship platforms such as Hepsiburada and Trendyol have also created support programs to strengthen women's cooperatives and women entrepreneurs with e-commerce. It started to support women entrepreneurs by adding special incentives to the Technology Power Program for Entrepreneur Women, which Hepsiburada started about four years ago. Women who want to grow in e-commerce and who are just starting out are supported by Hepsiburada's technology and marketing power. Therefore, as women entrepreneurs get stronger faster, Türkiye has also started to be affected positively by this economic change.

Being a signatory of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), a joint initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact, Trendyol supports women in all regions of Turkey with special programs so that they can take an active part in economic life and contribute to their digitalization. Trendyol aims to bring many women into the digital economy with the 'Women of the Future' and the women's SME support program 'Strong Women', which it started in 2021. From the first day, she provided trainings on technology, marketing, financing and operation studies to women entrepreneurs and women's cooperatives participating in these platforms. Trendyol supported women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses by helping them reach consumers from all regions and countries with its marketplace model.

3.10.1.2. Problems Faced by Cooperatives in E-Commerce



3.10.1.3. Women of E-Commerce Technologies and Digital Economy

Women's cooperatives are established and run by women. At the same time, they operate for the benefit of the societies in which they live. Various activities are carried out to encourage the meaningful and equal participation of women. For this reason, they constitute a very important tool in terms of increasing women's resilience. Cooperatives also play an important role in achieving sustainable development goals. Cooperatives provide women with access to resources and economic opportunities. Female members play a very important role in increasing production levels. In this way, women can handle new technologies early. The participation of both women and men in cooperatives and their participation in cooperative workers strengthens the business environment and helps to obtain results in much more diverse perspectives.



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Women Empowerment in Agricultural Cooperative
2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

When we look at it, 1 billion people work within the framework of 3 million cooperatives in the world. Cooperatives employ 280 million people worldwide. Considering the world population, this corresponds to 10% of the working population.

As of 2021, Turkey is in this process with 85,000 cooperatives and 8 million members. The ever-increasing system adds value globally and also supports the economic development of women. Efforts are made to raise awareness of women's cooperatives by running a number of programs in Turkey. In this sense, solutions are put forward by establishing strong collaborations with the relevant parties and attention is drawn to the problems that may arise in this area. T.R. Within the framework of the 11th Development Plan (2019-2023) of the Ministry of Development, cooperatives were supported by providing some training, entrepreneurship and consultancy services. Moreover, cooperation protocols on the strengthening of women's cooperatives were signed.

T.R. With the General Directorate of Women's Status of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, sales of women's cooperatives were supported and relevant places were opened. As of 2021, 40,000 women have been reached and this number has been reached by holding 825 workshops and training and information meetings. In total, 525 new cooperatives were established and 378 visits were made. By reaching 3500 people, women's cooperatives were explained and supported. At the same time, activities were carried out to increase communication among women's cooperatives, to increase knowledge about local government and to spread practices. As of 2021, there are 702 women's cooperatives operating in Turkey and there are 12.000 women members.

According to the World Economic Forum "Gender Gap 2017 Report"; While there is some improvement in every country, gender inequality is widening around the world. It is expected that it will take 83 years for the 106 countries on the list since the first edition of the report to close the gender gap in 2016. However, in the study conducted at the end of 2017, it was stated that it would take 100 years to close the gender inequality in the same countries.

It is important for women to take more part in science, research and development activities in order to eliminate the gender discrimination and support their technological development. According to the data processed by the Institute for Statistics affiliated to UNESCO, there are only 28.8% female researchers worldwide (UNESCO, 2017).



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Women Empowerment in Agricultural Cooperative
2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

The gap in economic participation and opportunities between women and men is widening and it is believed that the gap will only narrow in the next 217 years. However, it is known that there is a positive relationship between women's participation in the labor market and sustainability. According to a project conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute in 2015, it was determined that if women participated in the economy on an equal basis with men, the annual global gross product would be \$28 trillion or 26% by 2025. Therefore, women's participation in economic life is very important for economic growth (Woetzel, et al., 2015).

Technology is one of the areas where gender roles are most dominant. According to the NPR STEM Gender Gap report (2016), only 17% of applied math operations such as technology and programming are performed by women (Vedantam, 2016). There are significant differences in Internet use and access between different parts of the world; however, women all over the world have less internet access than men (Sanou, 2017). The Gender Equality and Sustainable Development Report, prepared by UN Women in 2014, published policies on sustainable development, primarily food safety, green economy, environmentally friendly consumption and production, efficient and correct use of agricultural land, reproductive health and sustainable development in the population. and emphasized the importance of women's participation (Women, 2014).

Factors such as floods, landslides and droughts caused by climate change predominantly affect women and girls. It has been stated that ecosystems lost due to climate change have irreversible consequences especially for these groups. In order to achieve this, it should be emphasized that within the framework of environmental policy, a special budget should be allocated to women, appropriate education should be provided, and women, who are the primary users of technology and digital, should be informed and encouraged by investing in technologies.



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3.11. Sales Strategies

This article develops a classification scheme for mutual gain cooperative strategies between and among different organizations. The cooperative strategies considered are pool, exchange, de-escalate, and experiment/contingency. These cooperative strategies are considered in four types of game/market environmental life cycle situations: positive-sum growth, zero-sum mature, negative-sum decline, and transformable to positive-sum growth. Cases from domestic and international business, nonprofit and government organizations are illustrated. Literature examples from strategic management, evolutionary biology, game theory and ecosystems theory are synthesized and used as foundation and explanation. Positive and negative public policy implications of cooperative strategy are also considered. In most, but not all, cases, cooperative strategy appears to improve value-added efficiency in a wide variety of environments and situations

3.12. Organization and Planning (Behavioral Organization)

3.12.1. Organizational Attributes—Performance

Control arrangements pertain to decision control rights and decision management (Chaddad & Iliopoulos, 2013). Restructured decision rights like proportional voting may motivate members, especially large-sized producers, whose capital and patronage is instrumental in business success, to invest further in cooperative activities (Kyriakopoulos et al., 2004). In other words, large-sized members (in terms of produce marketed and firm size) often own the resources to invest in cooperative activities and projects that require a significant capital contribution and/or have a long-term pay-off. Their membership is, therefore, essential to the continued cooperative success (Reynolds, 1997). However, cooperative practice has shown that they often feel their economic interests not being represented by the traditional “one-member one-vote” rule (Royer, 1995).

Moreover, cooperative members of any size often lack market expertise and management capabilities to exercise decision management (Bijman, Hendrikse, & van Oijen, 2013). As cooperatives expand and diversify, the need to employ professionals for making strategic, tactical and operational decisions increases (Cook, 1994; Iliopoulos, 2001; Hueth & Marcoul, 2009). Increasing the responsibilities assigned to professional management makes cooperatives more viable and efficient, allowing them to serve their members’ needs better (Adrian & Green, 2001).



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-00002

3.12.2.Strategic Attributes

Strategic attributes refer to fundamental choices of cooperatives regarding their marketing approach (Meulenbergh, 2000; van Dijk, 1999). To be successful, a firm's offer (i.e. positioning and marketing mix) should be aligned with the needs of the markets served (i.e., market segmentation and targeting) (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Two prominent strategic attributes that describe a firm's marketing approach are market- and brand orientation (Urde et al., 2013). *Market orientation* is a central concept in the marketing literature (Gebhardt, Carpenter, & Sherry, 2006; Ozkaya, Droge, Hult, Calantone, & Ozkaya, 2015), representing the implementation of the marketing concept, an important cornerstone of the marketing discipline (Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001). Academics first began connecting the marketing concept with market orientation in the 1990s (see Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990) and developed a substantive body of research ever since (Kumar et al., 2011). This research illustrated that market orientation leads to improvements in customer value (Slater & Narver, 2000), customer satisfaction (O'Cass & Ngo, 2011), employee commitment (Matsuno et al., 2002), financial performance (Kirca, Jayachandran, & Bearden, 2005), even business performance under high competitive intensity (Kumar et al., 2011). It comes as no surprise that market orientation has received scrutiny from marketing scholars and has become increasingly relevant to scholars in other fields such as management (e.g., Morgan et al., 2009).

We follow the Narver and Slater (1990, p. 21) definition conceptualizing market orientation as "the organizational culture and climate that most effectively encourages the behaviors that are necessary for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continuous superior profit for business." The objective of delivering superior customer value is based on the knowledge derived from customer and competitor analyses and the process by which this knowledge is gained and disseminated throughout the organization (Gebhardt et al., 2006). Thus, market orientation is best viewed in terms of a *culture* that effectively and efficiently creates the—necessary for organizational success—firm behaviors, the components of which are customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination (Narver & Slater, 1990).



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2021-1-TR01-KA220-ADU-000029357

This culture is in essence determined by an outside-in strategic thinking process. This implies that the formation of organizational structure and strategy has to be informed by marketsensing capabilities which leverage the firm's ability to create superior value for customers (Day, 1998; Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001). Hence, a robust market orientation enables a firm to anticipate market threats and opportunities, and thereby enhances its ability to adopt and implement a winning strategy ahead of competition over time (Day, 1998; Kumar et al., 2011; Ozkaya et al., 2015). Consequently, market dynamics, such as changes in customer needs and competitive behavior, guide a firm's marketing strategies and tactics.

Brand orientation is a younger paradigm than market orientation (Louro & Cunha, 2001). It refers to the creation, development, and protection of brand identity for the achievement of positional advantage in the market in an ongoing interaction with target customers (Urde, 1994). Customers use brands as a guide for their buying decisions, especially in environments of increasing information flows and product assortments, e.g., the agri-food industry (Hanf & Kuhl, 2005). Thus, brand orientation increases both customer loyalty and entry barriers for competitors (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Adopting brand orientation is a strategic choice (Urde, 1999). The management of brand identity should take a long-term perspective because consumers' knowledge about brands changes slowly. As a result, brand identities also guide marketing strategies and tactics over time (Davis, 2002; Urde, 1999; Urde et al., 2013).

3.13. References

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