

Spirits and Logistics

How Grantmakers, Universities,
and Arts Institutions Start Working with
the BIPOC-Led Cooperative Movement
to Build the Future of Art Education

Prepared for
The Center for Cultural Innovation



Research Collective
Caroline Woolard, Dan Taeyoung, Eric Triantafillou,
Jonathan Lee, Luana Marques Soares, and
Sruti Suryanarayanan
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When we achieve educational justice in the arts, every person will be able to engage in creative learning that is holistic, authentic, rigorous, and fun.

Thank you for taking time to read our research, and for being open to learning, transformation, and action. As you read this text, we* invite you to sense the gatherings happening right now. A neighborhood assembly is voting on grants for BIPOC and working-class artists in Boston;¹ a Creative Co-op

Academy is being born;² a group of local arts agencies are collaborating with small business services on technical assistance programs for culture-bearers who are creating co-ops;³ a Zoom room is filled with money managers who are making commitments to reparations and non-extractive investments in the Solidarity Economy.⁴ A network of financially sustainable and racially just arts educational models are emerging right now.

*We are an intergenerational research collective—Sruti, Dan, Luana, Caroline, Jonathan, and Eric—writing to you because we believe that you are ready to take bold action in the arts and culture sector.

We are aged 23 to 53 and are students, faculty, and lifelong learners who are all engaged in the generative contradictions of higher education. We are queer and the majority of us are BIPOC. All of us attended college (or are currently enrolled in college), and most of us were raised in the Northeast (NJ, MA, RI) and have deep ties to communities in these places. We have varying relationships to the US nation-state and institutions of knowledge sharing. Read more about us on page 178.

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Acknowledgements

We honor our communities' caregivers, maintenance artists, visionaries, healers, community weavers, radical administrators, cultural organizers, storytellers, and disruptors everywhere—these agents of change and care are who we dedicate this report to, and who we pay homage to for resisting exploitation and building economies of collective cooperation right now.

We also acknowledge and thank all those who have struggled for racial, economic, workers' and environmental justice and emancipation across the lands. Our place in building economies of collective cooperation relies on the centuries-long work of our siblings at the forefront of Black⁵ liberation, Indigenous sovereignty, and decolonial movements around the world, including but not limited to: the Movement for Black Lives, the Native people of Turtle Island, the Palestinian people resisting Israeli occupation, and the Kashmiri people resisting Indian occupation.

We also acknowledge that, as a research collective, we primarily live and work on the occupied Lenapehoking, the land of the Lenape people, with respect to our Shinnecock, Wampanoag, Haudenosaunee neighbors. We pay respect to Indigenous elders past, present,

and future, and thank them for their continued stewardship of the lands we sit upon, while recognizing that land acknowledgment is simply one small step, not the end of the work towards reconciliation. We acknowledge that building collective cooperation necessitates building a right relationship with Native people and Native land that includes reparations and the #LandBack campaign, as well as reparations and justice for the Black communities whose ancestors were enslaved, abused, and murdered to build the nation-state we sit within. We acknowledge and stand in solidarity with those who continue to labor without just compensation and those who struggle for Black liberation and just economic systems—we honor this work as we work together.⁶

Most crucially, we acknowledge that we find ourselves bearing witness to boiling, fluctuating crises, each of which exemplify the importance of recognizing and undoing the minute and major ways in which White supremacy has exploited communities; in turn, we acknowledge that we stand more primed than ever to be united in how we rethink our relationships with this nation-state's violent past.

As we honor those who have lost their lives or developed long-term illness from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the pandemic within a pandemic rooted in this capitalist system and culture around the world, we present this report and ask: in a time when the world has cracked open to wear its faults on its face, how will we patch it back together—and how do we ensure that no such wound will be infected and untreated again?

Prepared for: Center for Cultural Innovation—AmbitioUS

AmbitioUS is an initiative of the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) encouraging the development of burgeoning alternative economies and fresh social contracts in ways that artists and cultural communities can achieve financial freedom.

For More Information and Resources Visit

<https://ambitio-us.org/>

The Center for Cultural Innovation
1446 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
P: 415.288.0530

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Disclosure

This report has been compiled for informational purposes only and should not be construed as a solicitation to support or invest in any entity in the research report. Dan Taeyoung has a close relationship to Soft Surplus, and Caroline Woolard became the Director of Research and Partnerships at Open Collective Foundation during the creation of this report.

Research Collective

Jonathan Lee, Luana Marques Soares, Sruti Suryanarayanan, Dan Taeyoung, Eric Triantafillou, and Caroline Woolard

Original Essays by

Leigh Claire La Berge, Eric Triantafillou, Janelle Orsi

Research Support

Zora Pang, Vicky Virgin

Content Editor

Helen Hofling

Footnotes

Amalia Petreman

Peer Review

Nina Berman, Esther Choi, Steve Dubb, Noemi Giszpenc, Ebony Gustave, Leo Hwang, Lena Imamura, Amanda Parmer, Maliha Safri, Nathan Schneider, Matthew Slaats

Diagram and Mapping Patterns and Models

Luana Marques Soares and Dan Taeyoung

Case Studies, Arguments, and Synthesis

Sruti Suryanarayanan and Caroline Woolard

Document Design

Manuel Miranda Practice

The background is a solid purple color. It features several decorative elements: a large white number '1' in the top left; several overlapping circles of varying sizes, some solid purple and some outlined; and several arrows of different styles (solid, dotted, and curved) pointing in various directions across the page.

1

Executive Summary

A scan of the arts and culture landscape in 2021 reveals a growing demand for education and training about cooperative forms of enterprise.⁷

Cooperatives (or co-ops) are democratic enterprises that are designed to meet people's economic and social needs.

In cooperatives, creatives can learn technical artistic skills alongside racially just and solidarity business practices by following internationally recognized principles. BIPOC-led co-ops have been proven to offer low-cost models for learning, high-quality jobs, and to build intergenerational wealth.

The cooperative and art sectors are uniquely positioned to advance education for creatives about cooperative enterprises.

To succeed, grantmakers and leaders in higher education, the public sector, arts institutions,

and Co-op Developers must support collaboration across sectors and follow the lead of BIPOC creatives who are innovating the co-op model now. Nonprofits and public sector agencies must reimagine grants and investments beyond the 501c3.

NOTE: The phrase "cooperative education," in higher education often refers to programs that combine classroom-based education with practical work experience in traditional non-cooperative businesses and nonprofits.

This report focuses on education about cooperatives as well as work-integrated learning in directly democratic workplaces, including collectives, worker self-managed nonprofits, and cooperatives. A BIPOC-led Creative Cooperative is an autonomous association of majority BIPOC creative people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.⁸

We recommend 3 discrete pathways for arts and culture grantmakers, higher education, public sector workers, arts institutions, and cooperatives to build educational justice in arts and culture:

- 1** Support and learn from BIPOC creatives who are innovating the co-op model now;
- 2** Reimagine how grants and investments can be activated to nourish cooperatives, recognizing that the IRS does allow charitable nonprofits to fund worker-owned businesses through grants and program-related investment;
- 3** Cultivate collaborations between the arts and cooperative sectors to offer cooperative education for creatives.

Specific action steps are outlined under Recommendations starting on page 119.



they know that this is tied to the greater good and systemic transformation, so they are not insular.”¹¹

Cooperative Economy

There are 64,017 cooperatives across the US operating within a range of diverse industries including banking (credit unions), agriculture, utilities, and child care.¹² There are currently 465 worker cooperatives and about 450 in formation,¹³ and over 300 marketing (or producer) cooperatives for arts and crafts.¹⁴

More than 1 in 3 Americans are co-op members.¹⁵ Worldwide, over 1 billion people are members in over 3 million cooperatives.¹⁶

Co-ops represent 1% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and account for more than \$654 billion in revenue. These cooperative businesses possess over \$3 trillion in assets, and provide products and services across the country in every sector of the economy.¹⁷



Co-ops at a Glance

A BIPOC-led Creative Cooperative is an autonomous association of BIPOC creative people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.⁹ A Creative Cooperative might take the form of a collective or a worker self-managed nonprofit.¹⁰ Cooperative forms include worker cooperatives (making together), producer cooperatives (selling and marketing together), consumer cooperatives (buying together), and multi-stakeholder cooperatives (a mixture of these). A “Movement” Cooperative is a cooperative connected to social movements for economic, environmental, and racial justice. Movement Co-ops exist to spread power and wealth and are rooted in hyperlocal community. As lawyer Janelle Orsi says, “Movement Co-ops are [more than] groups of people coming together to meet their [own] needs and organize in their communities for their benefit;

Cooperative Principles¹⁸

The cooperative principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

- 1 Voluntary and Open Membership**
Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.
- 2 Democratic Member Control**
Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal

voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

3 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.

4 Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations 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.

5 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 cooperatives. They inform the general public—particularly young people and opinion leaders—about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6 Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

7 Concern for Community

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

Examples of Education in Cooperatives

The 5th principle of cooperation is “education, training, and information,” which means that training and study is a central feature that enables cooperatives to exist.

As a research collective, we know from experience the power that cooperatives and social movements have as educational spaces—these are the spaces that transform us, again and again, and move us to work as we do. And yet, academic research about the collective learning that occurs within social movements and cooperative enterprise is limited.¹⁹

To challenge this, our report draws primarily from thought leaders in the cooperative movement as well as literature about essential 21st century competencies and capacities in art, design, entrepreneurship, and culture—especially the seminal work of Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard. We are heartened to be part of a growing movement for cooperatives that honor her work.

Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard outlines the following educational formats and practices used by cooperative enterprises:²⁰

- **Study Circles**
Formal or informal; weekly group meetings with readings and discussion, like Boston Ujima Project Micro-learning Pod, or Repaired Nations.
- **Curriculum Development**
Formal; adult education (night school and weekend courses), community workshops and training programs, study tours (travel), reading lists, college courses, like YOUCOOPE, LA Co-op Lab, or Uptima Entrepreneurship Cooperative.
- **Pre-Training and Orientation**
Formal; week- or month-long; various degrees of intensity; industry specific as well as cooperative economics and democracy education, like CRUX.coop or E2C.How.

- **In-Service Training**
Formal; ongoing; industry specific and committee level organizational skills; may use a “buddy system”; may rotate specific jobs; board training; self-management training, like Kopma UGM.
- **Networking and Conferences**
Formal or informal; cooperation development among cooperatives and with other like-minded organizations; representation at regional, national, and international forums; conference participation and development for networking and increased skill development and skill sharing.²¹
- **Leadership Development**
Formal or informal; requires member responsibilities and information sharing; rotates leadership responsibilities; involves certain members in networking and/or management, like Kopindo.
- **Public Education (for customers and community)**
Formal or informal; uses flyers, brochures, etc. to educate customers and community about the co-op model and principles, as well as about the co-op services and products; offers workshops, school visits, community activities; uses community service and donations to inform public about the business and the model, like Creative Wildfire, NASCO, or Cooperative Journal.

Appetite for professional training in the arts remains strong; approximately 120,000 people graduate with art degrees every year, and of arts graduates surveyed recently, most report an “excess” in training for artistic technique and a lack of in-depth business and entrepreneurial training despite the fact that, in the early 1990s, art programs in educational institutions began to add professional practices courses to their curriculum.²²

The Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts recently created a framework for student skill and learning competencies which places career and project management alongside collaborative skills. This framework, approved by the National Association for Continuing Education, makes entrepreneurial training part of the Transferable Competencies that are required for creative learners. Foundational Competencies, such as technical skills, creativity, and innovation, are supported by the Transferable Competencies of collaboration, reflection (especially around self-care, power, and ethics), and career and project management, and the cognitive skills of critical and creative thinking, digital technology, and professionalism. We will use this framework throughout the report to identify skills that are learned through practice in BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops, including skills of artistic, collaborative, and ethical entrepreneurship.²³

For examples about the ways that Creative Cooperatives are introducing and reinforcing these competencies with their membership and with the public, go to page 69 for a case

study of Meerkat Media, page 80 for a case study of the Boston Ujima Project, page 89 for a case study of the United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC), and page 98 for a case study of Open Collective. An overview of the Growing Demand for Ethical Business Skills in Creative Education is on page 42.



Creative Pedagogy in Co-ops: Learning Competencies Introduced and Developed in Member-Only and Public Learning Programs

		Skills	Case Study: Creative Co-ops
Transferable Competencies	Cognitive Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital + Creative Technology • Critical/Creative Thinking + Problem Solving • Professionalism + Work Ethic 	Each month, members of Ujima meet in Arts and Cultural Organizing Micro Learning Pods to share skills, start creative projects individually and together, share work in progress, and to reinforce cognitive skills in digital and creative technology, work ethic, and problem solving. See page 80 for more.
	Collaborative Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral + Written Communication • Teamwork + Collaboration • Leadership + Civic Engagement • Global + Cultural Fluency 	The Meerkat Artist Collective makes independent projects (not client facing) and have bi-weekly Critical Feedback Sessions to support one another's growth as artists. These sessions introduce and reinforce collaborative skills in oral communication, cultural fluency, and teamwork. See page 69 for more.
	Reflective Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career + Project Management + Ethical Entrepreneurship • Power + Ethics • Self-Care + Community-Care 	In Ujima's Black Trust: Chuck Turner Arts and Lecture Series, members study materials including poems alongside reports. This initiative is a community space for engagement and celebration around economic, political, and cultural transformation that builds and reinforces reflective skills of power and ethics, career management, and ethical entrepreneurship. See page 80 for more.
Foundational Competencies	Collaborative Skills		In Public Workshops, Meerkat Co-op members who wish to be in the Outreach Working Group co-teach and co-facilitate public presentations and workshops about filmmaking and cooperative enterprise at art schools, art institutions, and at local community events. In these sessions, Foundational and Transferable Competencies in creativity and innovation are reinforced. See page 69 for more.
	Reflective Skills		As a Movement Platform, Open Collective aims to connect groups on the platform that already offer learning initiatives, including Women Who Code, a host on the platform which is an international non-profit organization that provides services for women pursuing technology careers and a job board for companies seeking coding professionals. This provides avenues into the technology world by evaluating and assisting women developing technical skills. See page 98.

Diagram adapted by authors with permission from the Herberger Institute for Design & the Arts, Dr. Stephani Ethridge-Woodson, Dr. Allison Hall, Dr. Megan Workmon Larsen and Xanthia Walker. The National Association for Continuing Education has approved these competencies.

For Students and Learners

- Practical experience.
- Applied learning, including technical artistic skills, racially just business practice, and ethical entrepreneurship.
- More retention of knowledge in context.
- Skill and professional development.
- Community-building and networking.
- Career opportunities.
- An edge in the job market.
- Enhanced transition into the workplace.
- Future career success.
- Personal growth.
- Awareness of self.
- Often lower in cost and more accessible.

For BIPOC-Led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers

- Expanded capacity to engage with paid student and learners working with, for, or in co-ops while paid by partners.
- Increased morale for worker-owners who enjoy teaching and training new cooperators, as well as doing outreach.
- Opportunities to recruit strong work-ready graduates and co-op members.
- Opportunities for added reflection, evaluation, and research.
- Development and maintenance of positive reputation with partners.
- Opportunity for more client work with partners.
- Practicing the 5th Principle of Cooperation: Education, Training, and Information.

Benefits of Work-Integrated Learning in Creative Co-ops

For Higher Education, Public Sector, Arts Institutions, and Grant-Makers

- Increased community engagement, and demonstrated commitment to racial and economic justice.
- Opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Opportunities to increase accessibility and support differentiated learning styles through creativity and culture.
- Learning about decentralized teams and co-op models and practices.
- Development and maintenance of positive reputation with partners.
- Application of theoretical knowledge to creative livelihoods.
- Opportunity for added reflection, evaluation, and research.
- Improved morale for employees.
- Opportunities to recruit strong work-ready graduates and co-op members.
- Increased community engagement, including a demonstrated commitment to economic and racial justice.
- Increased communication with government, art institutions, and the creative industry.
- Opportunities for curriculum enhancement and applied content.
- Enhanced student education, satisfaction, and engagement.
- Enhanced student recruitment.
- Opportunities to recruit strong co-op members for positions.

It has been said that cooperativism is an economic movement that is also educational.

We might say the reverse as well: cooperativism is an educational movement that utilizes economic action.

—Fr. Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta, founder of the Mondragon cooperatives²⁴

For Students and Learners

- Risk of learner and worker exploitation and industry-wide lowered wages (creating norms around unpaid work), if work-integrated learning does not support personal growth, or is unpaid or underpaid.²⁵
- Potential lack of time for feedback or support with personal projects, often paired with a potential lack of time for reflection with co-op members.
- Potential for a sharper “learning curve,” considering that assessments of skills and capacities look different per co-op.
- Potential lack of time for introductory skill-building to prepare learners to enter Creative Co-ops.

For BIPOC-Led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers

- Co-ops could have little time to support learners fully, considering a need to focus on internal processes and client-work, or fundraising and development to be sustainable.
- Co-op members may need to learn how to teach different students.
- Need for paid coordinators to bridge needs of learners and co-op goals.
- Potential for interference with client relationships, including for reasons of privacy around client work and internal co-op processing.
- Often needs larger scale up-front investment.

Risks and Challenges of Work-Integrated Learning in Creative Co-Ops

For Higher Education, Public Sector, Arts Institutions, and Grant-Makers

- Lack of awareness about BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops and the principles and values of co-op practices, which may lengthen the transformation process as stakeholders learn to center justice.
- Lack of knowledge about grants and investments for charitable purposes to entities outside of the 501c3.
- Lack of motivation by White art and higher educational institutions to actively engage in transformative racial justice and systems-change work.
- Lack of power analysis in order to conduct collaborations equitably.²⁶
- Lack of commitment to political education, facilitation, and conflict management training.
- Lack of existing relationships between these stakeholders and BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers, which could pose challenges as stakeholders learn how to follow the lead of co-ops.
- Lack of experience of the value that co-ops bring, especially in advocacy spaces.²⁷
- Lack of experience and advocacy for interdisciplinary teams collaborating across sectors.²⁸

Recommended Continuous Commitments²⁹

As supporters of a racially and economically just learning ecosystem, we support BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops by:

(Check all that apply)

Learning and Leadership

- There is no economic justice without racial justice. Commit to racial justice as economic justice (including by supporting co-ops) in our work as institutions, including in diversity, equity, and inclusion work.³⁰
- Make commitments to include learning about other BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops in work spaces, while offering compensation for workers.³¹
- Participate* in workshops and peer-learning programs about best practices to support BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops in our sector.³²

*participation includes our money managers, legal advisors, board members, and public agencies.

Mission and Strategy

- Make a commitment to cooperatives and Solidarity Economies in our mission and strategy.
- Embody cooperation in our governance structures.³³

Procurement and Hiring

- Prioritize BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops for hiring and contracts (leadership, strategy, media, research, training, study, and more).

- Grants, Space, and Investments
- Offer our meeting space, software, and tools to BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops.
- Give regular, multi-year, unrestricted grants and non-extractive loans to BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops.
- Align our investment portfolios with our mission.

Public Policy and Law

- Learn about and advocate for policies, laws, and bills that support the cooperative movement.³⁴

Colleges and Universities Incentivize and Actively Support:

- BIPOC-led student collectives and cooperatives** by funding and following the leadership of housing co-ops, buying clubs, and co-op stores.
- Cooperative enterprise courses as a standard part of the business and arts curriculum** by co-creating with BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers.³⁵

- Major, track, or minor in Creative Cooperatives** for students to take courses in cooperative business, accounting, policy, law, and/or art and design.³⁶
- Collaborations between community members** who focus upon cooperative enterprise across art, design, craft, technology, law, planning, policy, and business.
- Professional development** for faculty, staff, and students focused on studying and supporting BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops.
- Research, events, and media** created by faculty, staff, and students with/for Co-op Developers and BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops.
- MFAs given to Creative Co-op members** for equivalent experience.³⁷
- Paid internships** for students to work with local and regional BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers.³⁸
- A Center for Creative Cooperatives** including cooperative development, research, education, media production, network weaving platforms, and entrepreneurship.
- Endowed professorships** in cooperative praxis.
- Cooperative art schools**, accredited and not, that connect BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops locally, regionally, and nationally.

Cooperative Developers Incentivize And Actively Support:

- Regional alliances and networks** supporting BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers.
- Peer-learning networks and processes** between emerging and established BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers.
- BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops creating culturally relevant training materials**, media, marketing, and education for the co-op movement.
- An incubator for BIPOC-led Creative Co-op Developers** so that the Creative Co-op development community is sustainably BIPOC-led.
- Working across regions and developing/converting micro-enterprises** so more creatives can easily access support.
- Collaborations with professional development arts intermediaries and institutions** including, but not limited to: the Intercultural Leadership Institute, First People's Fund, Artists' U, Eyebeam, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Center for Cultural Innovation, Art World Learning, Creative Capital, Springboard for the Arts, and the Laundromat Project.

- Paid narrative-shift work** in media, podcasts, memes, and more made by BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers.
- Workbooks, training, and development** created by and for BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops and Co-op Developers that acknowledge that many Creative Co-ops will rely upon grants to sustain themselves (supporting worker self-directed nonprofits as well as Creative Co-ops that can be financially self-sustaining).
- Collaborations with spaces that provide technical artistic training** such as art schools, artist-run spaces, residencies, and community arts centers.
- Co-op funds** for BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops.

The creative economy is 5% of GDP and 38% of BIPOC-owned businesses in the US are in the creative economy.

—Laura Callanan, Upstart Co-Lab

Methodology

As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence.³⁹

— bell hooks

Our research collective* is composed of practitioners across art, design, technology, and craft. Our aim in working and learning together on this report is to expand the field of cultural cooperation so that more culture workers can find meaningful work in their chosen creative field, get paid well, and work in alignment with the principles of cooperation.

The report was initiated by The Center for Cultural Innovation to:

- Provide an overview of the landscape of educational offerings for artists and culture-bearers who wish to advance their skills.

- Synthesize emerging patterns in arts and culture education for artists and culture-bearers nationally.
- Identify potential business models associated with these patterns.
- Recommend ways that costs typically associated with higher arts education can be reduced or eliminated through cooperative models to mitigate student loan debt.
- Recommend ways for stakeholders, including policymakers, arts institutions, and leaders in higher education, to advance the landscape of educational offerings.

Our research collective accordingly organized to center:

- **Participation and Co-Creation**
We value the lived experiences of our collective (individually and in community) and of the cooperatives that we learn with.
- **Ecosystems, Small and Large**
We believe that all actors in any system (individually and in the context of the systems that house them) must work together to sustain a supportive environment for cooperatives.
- **Mutual Aid**
We aim to center the needs of the collectives and cooperatives we learn with, and

ask what research can answer their questions and desires. We offer our skills with design, grant writing, publicity, gigs, and advocacy and talk about what is mutually supportive in this work.

- **Applicability and Practicality**
We want to grow the Creative Cooperative movement and hope that this report can be a tool for the cooperative and arts and culture sectors today. We know that this is a small piece of the larger movement.
- **Each Other**
We work to recognize and support one another across differences and abilities, with an explicit focus on reparative solidarity.
- **Autonomy**
We commit to our autonomy. The report funders cannot determine our research findings or recommendations.

The main phases of this report, conducted from August 2020–August 2021, were:

- **Attending at a range of gatherings and conferences** including The Center

*We are a research collective—Caroline, Dan, Eric, Jonathan, Luana, and Sruti—writing to you because we believe that you are ready to sustain bold action and change in and beyond the arts and culture sector.

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for Cultural Innovation's conference *In-Common: To Exchange, To Survive, and To Sustain*; Casco Art Institute's 2020 Third annual Assembly: *We Owe Each Other Everything*; Cooperation Humboldt's *Artists Dismantling Capitalism*, Art.coop's *Study-into-Action*, and the Asian American Leaders' Table's *Co-Learning Sessions*, among others.

- **Leading a series of interviews**, carried out with over 100 artists, culture-bearers, Co-op Developers, academics, popular educators, arts advocates, and grant-makers as well as in-depth mapping workshops with Meerkat, Double Edge Theater, the Boston Ujima Project, and Open Collective for our case studies.
- **Reviewing literature and media**, including over three hundred reports, books, articles, films, websites, graphics, posters, poems, and other relevant creative outputs and publications.
- **Creating working definitions** of "BIPOC-led Creative Cooperatives" and other related terms.
- **Developing an internal database** and directory in progress of emerging and active BIPOC-led worker cooperatives, democratically organized groups, and organizations, with an emphasis on the arts and culture sector.
- **Facilitating peer review**. This document was reviewed by Nina Berman, Esther Choi, Steve Dubb, Noemi Giszcenc, Leo

Hwang, Lena Imamura, Ebony Gustave, Nati Linares, Amanda Parmer, Nathan Schneider, Maliha Safri, Matthew Slaats, and structural edits were incorporated. The writers were also supported by changemakers, who are credited on page 130.

- **Confirming consent** to ensure that the recommendations, case studies, and quotations have been reviewed and approved by our interviewees. We will amend future versions of this report to reflect ongoing feedback from the people, groups, and organizations who are impacted by this document.
- **Coordinating convening**, as the budget for this report allowed for a small, internal convenings of some interviewees.

Further research is required to study:

- The specific interventions that are required to ensure that training is racially just and culturally relevant for BIPOC creatives across the cooperative and cultural sectors.
- The balance between nonprofit and for-profit work in creating democratically run and financially self-sufficient Creative Co-ops.
- The impact of training and education within cooperatives, with an emphasis on evaluation and learning outcomes.
- The promise of marketing (or producer)

cooperatives in the arts and culture sector.

- Opportunities to connect existing training and facilitators/educators across (1) popular education and organizing, (2) critical theory and analysis, (3) artistic technique and craft (4) professional practice / cooperative entrepreneurship.
- Potential for collaboration between cooperatives and non-monetary and non-profit educational entities, such as: DIY and self-organized learning spaces, online movement schools, curriculum offered by popular educators, government support for workforce development, training offered by unions, and research centers in institutions of higher education.
- The particular role that higher education plays in supporting BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops.

This research could take the form of study groups, internal convenings (not public) of stakeholders across the cooperative and art sectors, and funding for further research.

2

Introduction

Creative Co-ops and the Potential for Artistic Liberation

In the coming days, months, and years, our world will critically reflect not on the havoc this period of compounding chaos and crisis wreaked, but rather on the changes we made in response. At a time of such variant institutional and interpersonal violence, how did we, as ancestors, seed sustainable kindness for those who would come after us?

The crises themselves are clear: the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has left our (im)migrant, displaced, working poor, rural, disabled, elderly, trans, queer, and BIPOC communities financially, physically, socially, and culturally devastated. Multiple debt buckets are overflowing and flooding the lives of many, including young graduates—mostly those of color. The world, quite literally, is burning away due to unmitigated climate catastrophes.

Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) most harmed by our extractive

economic system have continued the courageous work of studying together to heal, imagine, and enact creative futures of shared power and shared wealth. From guru-shishya paramparas in South Asia to Valor y Cambio in Puerto Rico to the Young Lords in Harlem,⁴⁰ collectively BIPOC-led cultural learning spaces are keystones of resistance and innovation in the arts.

BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops continue to build hope and power as “autonomous associations of BIPOC creative people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises.”⁴¹ This work has roots in the Black liberation movement in the United States⁴² and has been developed by cooperatives in an internationally recognized set of principles.⁴³



59% percent of people employed at worker co-ops identify as people of color.⁴⁴

**Worker-owners
have 22% higher
median income
from wages than
non-owner
peers.⁴⁸**

BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops, collectives, and worker self-managed nonprofits advance movements for racial, economic, and educational justice, in, during, and beyond times of crisis.

Worker cooperatives—creative or not—are already BIPOC-led in the United States. A recent survey of worker-cooperatives in the nation found that 59% percent of people employed at worker co-ops identify as people [of] color.⁴⁵ More than half of worker co-ops in the US today were designed to build wealth in communities most directly targeted and affected by inequality, helping vulnerable workers build skills and earn income.⁴⁶ For example, worker-owners are four times less likely to be laid off, and they receive ownership shares in the cooperative business, leading to 17% greater median household net worth and 22% higher median income from wages than non-owner and low-income peers.⁴⁷ See a list of the benefits of co-ops on page 13 for more.

Support for cooperatives is on the rise, with advocates for worker-ownership ranging from the rapper NoName to Mayor de Blasio. The first pro-employee ownership law that was passed by Congress in over two decades—the bipartisan Main Street Employee Ownership Act of 2018—makes employee-owned businesses eligible for Small Business Administration Section 7(a) loans for the first time in history and mandates that Small Business Services support cooperative development and education.⁴⁹ An enabling environment for worker cooperatives in the United States has been deepening for over a decade and a half, and is now starting to have beneficial network effects, as a range of stakeholders dedicated to worker ownership and cooperative enterprise are co-creating norms, infrastructure, laws, and markets.

Creatives often turn to collective and cooperative models because they want to equitably capture and share the monetary value that they create. It is also a valuable mechanism for artists and creatives to protect themselves against a capitalist market that is highly exploitative and extractive. The US arts and cultural sector exports are enormous, with a surplus of \$32.7 billion in 2019 that has been growing since 2006.⁵¹ Artists account for 1.4% of the labor force and the arts contribute to 4.3% of the GDP, which, in 2019, amounted to \$919.7 billion⁵²—more than agriculture, transportation, or warehousing.⁵³ But most creatives are still struggling to survive,⁵⁴ in part because the nature of work is shifting,

with more than 94% of new creative industry jobs created in the United States in the past 10 years occurring outside the formal employment category—this means these jobs were for independent contractors, freelancers, and other contingent workers.⁵⁵

Despite a strong presence of arts and culture workers in the cooperative sector of the economy—with an estimated 1 in 5 worker-owned businesses in the arts and culture sector⁵⁶—presently there is no cooperative training program designed by and focused on the particular needs of BIPOC creatives, artists, and culture-bearers—the same communities who hold and shepherd healing for the entire ecosystem.

Grantmakers, academics, and local agencies are often unaware of the value of cooperative training or the tools that are available to them to support worker-owned initiatives. As arts institutions seek to engage in equitable systems-change, they can work with Co-op Developers who want to support BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops but do not have deep ties to the arts and culture sector.

This report presents key findings about the role of BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops in advancing educational justice and offers practices and tools for institutional leaders to support this work. When Creative Cooperatives are connected in networks, federations, and platforms, models for low-cost and free education

emerge. A grassroots and community-engaged approach is required to heal and move forward—from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and other yet-to-be-known crises—wisely. This means that leaders must follow the lead of communities that have continuously experienced the greatest extraction and exclusion from the dominant economy: the rural South, Indian Country, and BIPOC cultural workers in all locations.

In turn, we invite grantmakers and investors, institutions of higher education, policy-makers and public agencies, and other stakeholders to learn about the promising solutions offered by BIPOC-led cooperatives and alternative infrastructures through which they can re-distribute grants and investments toward a worker-owned arts and culture ecosystem.

Nearly 1 in 5
worker-owned
businesses are in
the arts and
culture sector.⁵⁰

A Vision for Creative Cooperative Education

Imagine arts education supporting a cultural industry and sector where **collective governance and ownership*** are normalized.⁵⁹ We can work towards a future where:

- **Artists, culture-bearers, and creative entrepreneurs** consider cooperative business structures alongside other business forms.
- **Economic development agencies** and regional arts agencies encourage worker ownership for creatives through policies, services and incentives.
- **Arts nonprofit directors and arts business owners** see employee- ownership and self-management as a viable option when they are ready to retire or cash out of their business.
- **Art programs and art schools** “normalize” worker ownership as an acceptable business structure and offer courses in cooperative success factors and decision-making structures.
- **Community members** interested in Creative Co-ops have access to high quality resources to determine feasibility and to build cooperative businesses.⁶⁰

***Collective governance and ownership** refers to who makes decisions about shared work and shared surplus created by workers.

For example:

A **Creative Cooperative** is an autonomous association of creative people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. A Creative Cooperative might take the form of a worker self-managed nonprofit.⁵⁷

A **worker self-managed nonprofit** is a nonprofit organization in which all workers have the power to influence the programs in which they work, the conditions of their workplace, their own career paths, and the direction of the organization as a whole.⁵⁸

A **collective** is a group of people working together to achieve a common goal, often without a legal entity.

What is a Creative Cooperative?⁶³

A **Creative Cooperative** provides benefits that are specific to its members, but can function similarly to other types of cooperatives, such as worker cooperatives, producer/marketing cooperatives, or purchasing cooperatives. For the purposes of this report, we say that a co-op is BIPOC-led when the majority of cooperators are BIPOC. Creative Cooperatives are often created to serve marketing needs, which may include sharing retail or gallery space, selling via online platforms, or publishing media and distributing a catalog. Creative Cooperatives can also be formed to purchase expensive equipment that can be shared (e.g. kilns, printing presses), rent studio space, or obtain discounts on materials that can be purchased in bulk. In other words, a cooperative is a group of people who create more equitable social and financial flows through collectively owned ventures that are able to feed back to the cooperative.

Some Creative Co-ops make a lot of earned income, most often because they operate in geographic regions and creative disciplines and industries such as in marketing, health and wellness, graphic design, filmmaking, web development, and new media that compensate workers at moderate and high rates. However, many other Creative Co-ops that operate in disciplines and industries such as poetry, dance, sculpture, craft, theater, and book arts

are not well compensated, due to the current culture of undervalued production costs and labor. For this reason, many Creative Co-ops run as a worker self-managed nonprofits, relying upon grants, kind donations, and public support in order to survive.

But, as the cooperative changemakers we spoke to for this report note, the potential for their work and impact expands with surplus resources, supporting the ecosystems that house them.

Benefits of Creative Cooperatives

The Urban Institute created the “ABC’s of Cooperatives” framework⁶⁴ to more accurately assess cooperative benefits across sectors:

- **Access**
Increased availability and affordability of business supplies, services, and processing options, leading to lower costs and greater access to value added processing and markets.

A **Creative Cooperative** is an autonomous association of creative people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.⁶¹ A Creative Cooperative might take the form of a worker self-managed nonprofit.⁶²

- **Business Sustainability**
Improved marketing and distribution, increased productivity and production, lowered costs for supplies and services, increased market share, improved profitability, decreased revenue volatility, and increased firm survival.
- **Community Commitment**
Expanded engagement via education, financial supports, facility use, and business practices that reflect the values of the community.
- **Democratic Governance and Empowerment**
Strengthened membership that actively participates and shapes the mission and decisions of the organization and is empowered to engage the broader community.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**
Equitable membership that reflects the community, and centers leadership of historically excluded communities and individuals.

- **Financial Security**

Increased provision of living-wage jobs with benefits, and opportunity for wealth building, career advancement, training, and leadership development with lower turnover and higher job satisfaction. The Rutgers School of Management Center for Employee Ownership states that employees at employee-owned companies are four times less likely to be laid off, they receive 5 to 12% more in wages, and have retirement accounts that are 2.5 times greater than at comparable companies.⁶⁵

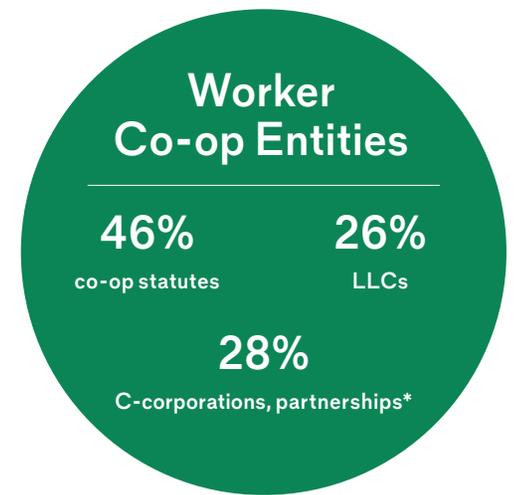
- **Growth**

Localized sourcing, localized employment, and improved supplier labor and environmental standards.

drafting of related documents establishing the entity. Additionally, just as many corporations are incorporated in Delaware regardless of whether they do business in Delaware, it is legally permissible for Creative Co-ops to be incorporated under the more permissive laws of another state.⁶⁷ LLCs, however, are a common choice because of their flexibility.⁶⁸

It is important to remember that organizations can implement democratic governance regardless of tax status and legal entity type. Worker cooperatives choose a variety of legal entities based upon their collective needs and the cooperative statutes available in their state: 46% of worker cooperatives incorporate under cooperative statutes; 26% operate as LLCs; the remainder are C-corporations, partnerships, and other entities.⁶⁹

Cooperative organizing has often offered space for healing, but it's important to note—before reading any further—that cooperative spaces are just as capable of replicating harmful systems as others are. That being said, our collective chooses to focus on the cooperative structures and communities that are committed to healing through critical compassion.



Structures of Creative Cooperatives⁶⁶

Most Creative Cooperatives are generally established in the state in which they will operate and therefore are subject to that state's business statutes. While some states have cooperative-specific statutes, they may be specific to certain types of cooperatives such as agricultural cooperatives. If a Creative Cooperative does not fit within a state's cooperative statutes, a Creative Cooperative may be formed using other structures such as the corporation, limited liability company (LLCs), or nonprofit, but may be subject to some limitations (e.g. use of the term "cooperative") and may require more creative

Three Layers of Organizational Structure

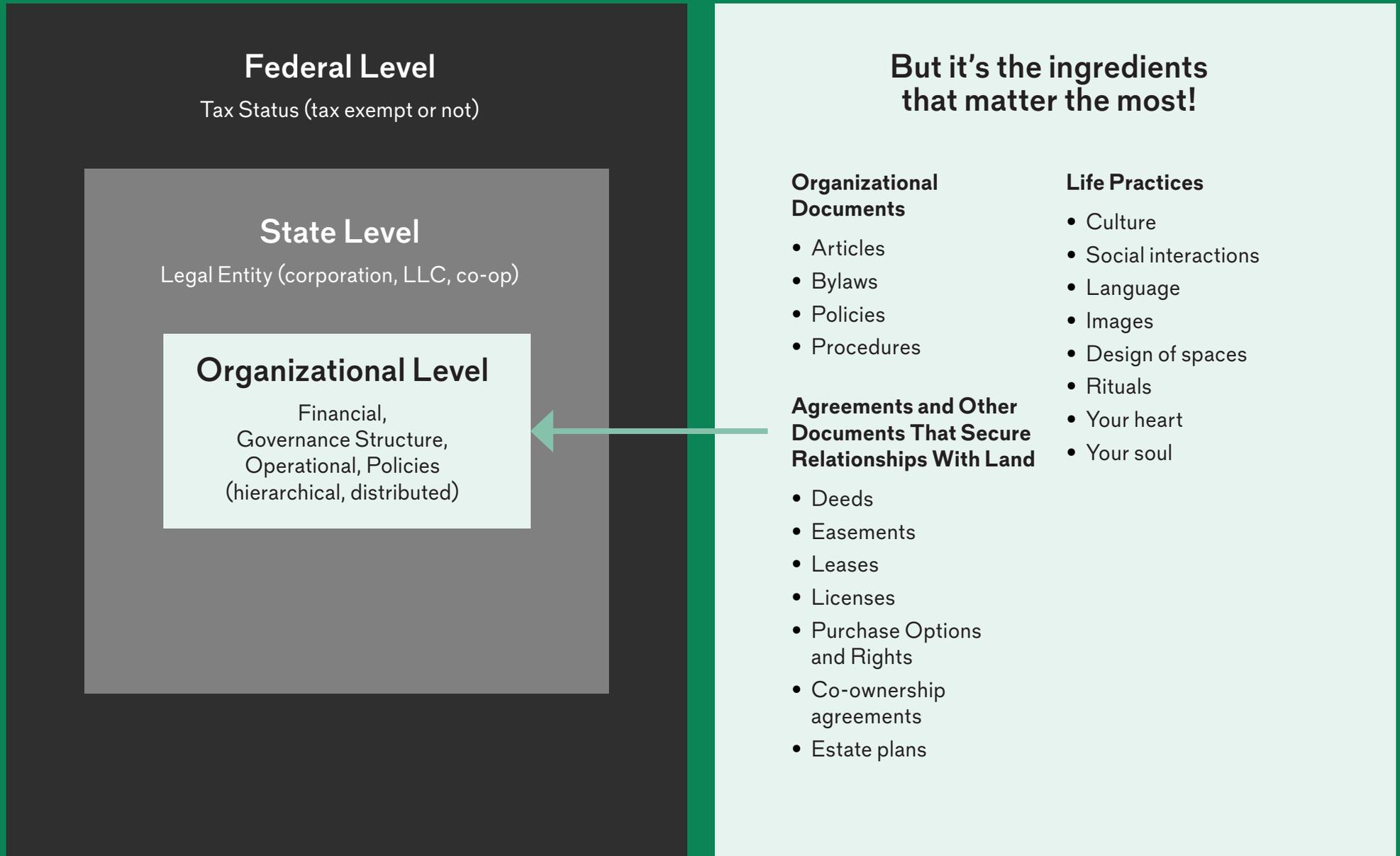


Diagram adapted with permission from the Sustainable Economies Law Center.

Co-ops and Other Businesses Compared

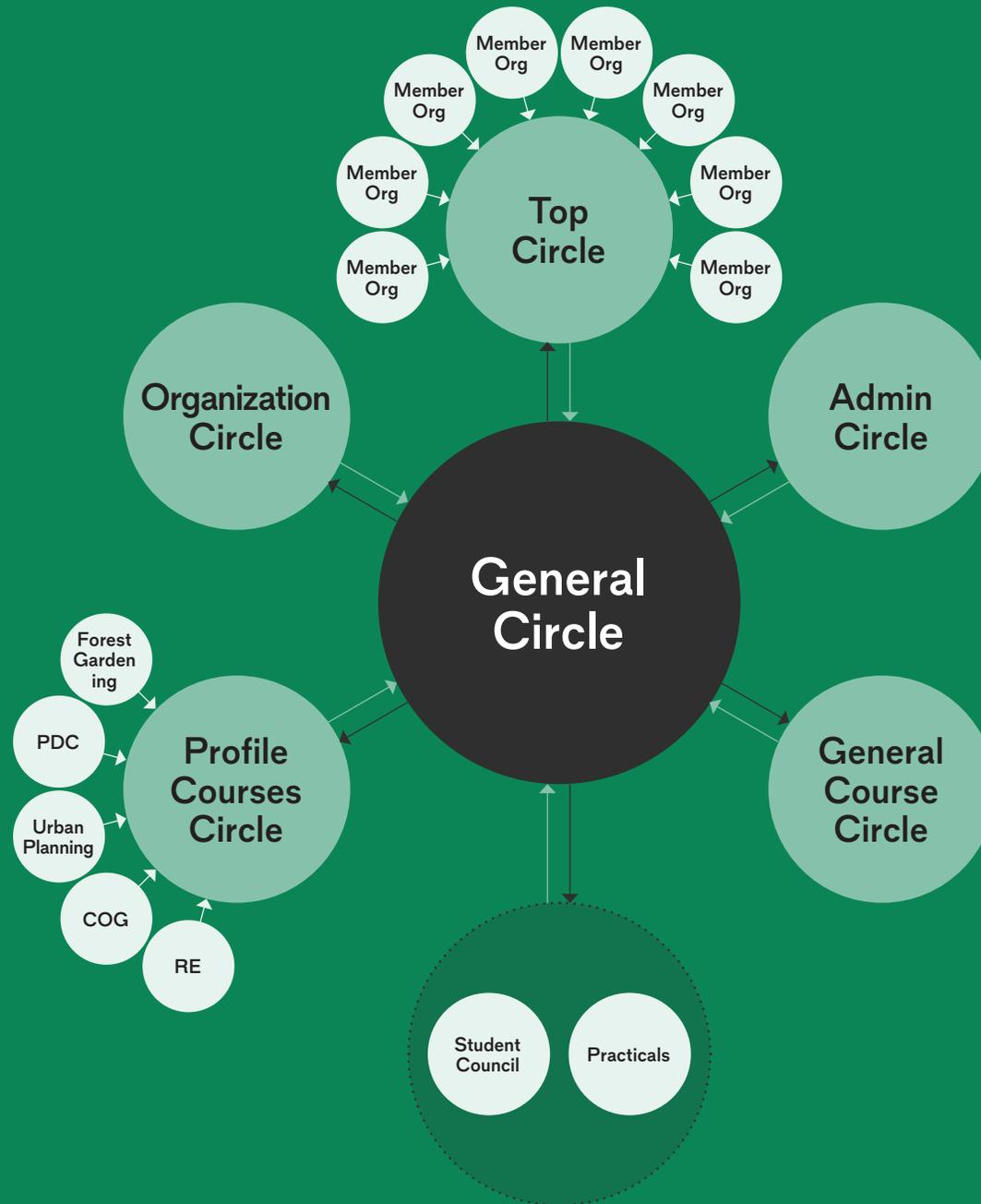
	Cooperative	Non-Cooperative Corporation (C or S)	Indv Prop(r)/ Partnership	Nonprofit
Who are the owners?	Members who are also patrons (users)	One or more shareholders; # is limited in an S corp	Individual(s)	No ownership
What is the business purpose?	To meet members' needs for goods or services	To earn a financial return on owners' investment	To provide income for the owner(s) and a return on owner(s) investment	Provide charitable or educational services for the public
Who governs it?	Board of directors elected by member-owners	Board of directors selected by shareholders	Individual or partners	Board of directors selected by member/ donors or existing board members
Who manages it?	Hired general manager or CEO or other (e.g. team) structure selected	CEO	Individual owner(s) or hired management	Executive director selected by the board
How is the business financed?	Member shares; retained earnings; sometimes preferred shares; debt	Sale of stock; retained earnings; debt	Owner(s) investment; retained earnings; debt	Grants; individual contributions; fee for services
Who receives profit?	Members in proportion to use (patronage); preferred shareholders in proportion to investment, up to 8% return	Shareholders in proportion to investment, no limit on return	Owner(s) in proportion to investment or agreement in the case of partnership	Not applicable; all net income is retained.
Who pays taxes on profit?	Members when they receive patronage rebate; co-op on retained earnings	C corporation on earnings before dividends; shareholders on dividends and gain on sale	Owner(s) at individual rate	Not applicable
What is the owner's legal liability?	Limited to members' investment	Limited to shareholders' investment	Unlimited, except in some cases of LLPs	Limited to assets of the organization

See page 5 in *Working with Small Business Cooperatives: A Guide for Public Sector, Private Sector, and Nonprofit Allies* (Democracy at Work Institute, December 8, 2020), <https://institute.coop/resources/working-small-business-cooperatives-guide-public-sector-private-sector-and-nonprofit>.

Cooperative Community Members, Contributions, and Considerations⁷⁰

- **Capital Investment**
Some Creative Cooperatives may require members to provide capital to finance the cooperative in proportion to their anticipated use (i.e. projected sales).
- **Commission Fees**
Some Creative Cooperatives may charge a member a specified percentage of a sale to be retained by the cooperative for expenses.
- **Fees/Annual Dues**
Some Creative Cooperatives may require members to pay an annual membership fee.
- **Staff/Volunteering Time**
Some Creative Cooperatives may require members to contribute a specified amount of time to a retail store or gallery operated by the cooperative, although there may be limitations on this practice under relevant employment laws.
- **Quality**
Some Creative Cooperatives may jury a prospective member's work before offering membership.
- **Entrepreneur Members**
Some Creative Cooperatives may prioritize members who are also entrepreneurs and have worked with the programs they run, such as an academy or advising programs, as is the case with Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative.
- **Worker Members**
Some Creative Cooperatives may have instructors and mentors, who support learners in building a thriving business, in addition to the support staff, who run day-to-day operations of the programs.
- **Investor Members**
Some Creative Cooperatives engage investors who provide capital for the cooperative to grow and expand into other areas.

Sociocratic Diagram to Explain Co-op Governance⁷¹



Examples of BIPOC-Led* Creative Cooperatives⁷²

*For this report, we define “BIPOC-led” as collectives and cooperatives with more than half of the founders, worker-owners, and/or members are BIPOC. We welcome adjustments, edits, and suggestions. This is a cursory overview that requires further research and support.

Shared Work: Worker Cooperatives

News and Media

[Cafeteria Radio*](#)

[Means TV](#)

[Media Reparations*](#)

[Associated Press](#)

[Devil Strip](#)

[Discourse Blog](#)

Architectural Design and Construction

[Earth-Bound Building*](#)

[Oxbow Design Build](#)

Craft

[Adams & Chittenden](#)

[Scientific Glass](#)

and so many more, including over [300 craft cooperatives](#).⁷³

Fashion

[Custom Collaborative*](#)

[Friends of Light](#)

Printmaking

[Cards by Dé*](#)

[Story 2 Designs*](#)

[JustSeeds](#)

[Radix Media](#)

Graphic Design

[Story 2 Designs*](#)

[Surplus Plus*](#)

[TESA](#)

[Partner & Partners](#)

Film + VR + Tech + Audio + Video Games

[CRUX*](#)

[Emma*](#)

[The Sound Co-op](#)

[MOXI](#)

[Meerkat Media*](#)

[GlorySociety](#)

[Agaric*](#)

Beauty

[Mirror Beauty Cooperative*](#)

[Brown Beauty Co-op*](#)

[Salon Cooperative](#)

Music, Dance, Theatre

[Ujima Theatre Company*](#)

[Obvious Agency*](#)

[Rhythm Conspiracy*](#)

[The Team
the COOP](#)

Orchestra

[Pro Arte Orchestra of Boston](#)

[Orpheus Chamber Orchestra](#)

[Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra](#)

Shared Work: Collectives

Musicians

[Sol Collective*](#)

[Association for the Advancement
of Creative Musicians*](#)

[Local-MU12*](#)

[ProArte Chamber Orchestra](#)

Playwrights / Theater Ensembles

[The Welders*](#)

[The Team](#)

[The COOP](#)

[The Black Conference*](#)

[Double Edge Theatre](#)

Design

[Assemble](#)

[Beehive](#)

Contemporary Art

[Yakpo*](#)

TV + Film

[Black TV & Film Collective*](#)

and so many more

Shared Space: Consumer + Producer Cooperatives

Making + Practicing

Cooperative Co-working Space

[The Artist Co-op](#)

[Soft Surplus](#)

[Prime Produce](#)

Cooperative Studios

[Talking Dolls](#)

[Adaapt](#)

Cooperative Recording Spaces

[Live Musicians Co-op](#)

Cooperative Darkrooms

[Lone Star Darkroom](#)

[Bushwick Community Darkroom](#)

Cooperative Ceramic Spaces:

[ClayArt Pottery Co-op](#)

Presenting + Selling

Cooperative Venue

[Tianguis de la Raza*](#)

[U Street Music Hall \(closed\)](#)

[Network of Ensemble Theaters](#)

[Happy Family Night Market*](#)

Cooperative Store / Gallery

[Dutch Alley Artists Co-op](#)
[A.I.R Gallery](#)
[Ujamaa Collective*](#)
[ARTZ \(Ancestral Rich Treasures of Zuni\) Cooperative*](#)
[Qualla Arts & Crafts*](#)
[Art Center Cooperative](#)
[Aarhus Makers](#)
[Ulicna galerija](#)

Cooperative Platform

[Stocksy](#)

Resting + Healing

Cooperative Housing

[East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative*](#)
[Greene Street Artists](#)
[Emeryville Artists Co-op](#)

Cooperative Co-working, Retreat, Residency, or #Landback Network

[ZEAL*](#)
[Activation Residency*](#)
[Flux Factory](#)
[The Weavers Project*](#)
[Soul Fire Farm*](#)
[Yo Mama's House*](#)
[Black \[Space\] Residency*](#)
[Land Relationships Super Collective*](#)

Shared Finance + Funding Cooperatives

Democratic Loan Funds and Grants

[Boston Ujima Project*](#)
[NDN Collective*](#)
[Runway*](#)
[First People's Fund*](#)
[Black Artist Fund*](#)
[Seed Commons](#)
[Common Future](#)

Cooperative Billing and Accounting

[Freelancer Guided*](#)
[ArtsPool](#)
[Open Collective](#)

Cooperative Insurance

[Freelancer Guided*](#)
[Open Collective Foundation](#)
[ArtsPool](#)

Cooperative Marketing

[200 Million Artisans*](#)
[BlacSpace Cooperative*](#)

Patronage Cooperatives

[Ampled](#)
[Resonate](#)
[Catalytic Sound](#)

Unions and Guilds

[Screen Actors Guild/American Federation of Television and](#)

[Radio Actors](#)
[Freelancers Union](#)
[Art Guild of Tellico Village](#)

UBI / UBA / GBI

[Creatives Rebuild New York](#)
[Springboard for the Arts UBI](#)
[Yerba Buena Center for the Arts UBI](#)

Shared Resources + Time Cooperatives and Collectives

Cooperative and Collective Study Groups

[Repaired Nations*](#)
[GEEX*](#)
[Anti-capitalism for Artists*](#)
[Architecture Beyond Capitalism](#)
[Dark Study*](#)
[Dark Matter University*](#)
[Dark Laboratory*](#)
[Artists Dismantling Capitalism](#)
[Cooperation Humboldt](#)
[School of Art, Culture, and Resistance](#)
[Arts, Culture, and Care in the Solidarity Economy Working Group*](#)
[TradeSchool.coop \(closed\)](#)
and so many more that we want to learn about.

Cooperative Critique and Feedback Groups

[Valley Art Share](#)

Cooperative Tool Shares

[Chicago Tool Library](#)
[Artist Resource Community*](#)

Cooperative Timebanks

[Kola Nut Collaborative](#)

Shared Material Sourcing Cooperatives

Making and Practicing — Soliciting Materials

[Scrap Exchange](#)
[Fab Scrap](#)

Presenting and Selling

[Artist & Craftsman](#)

Historical BIPOC-Led Creative Co-ops

[Keskeidee Centre*](#)
[Freedom Quilting Bee*](#)
[Black Theatre Cooperative*](#)
and so many more.⁷⁴

NOTE: Noémi Giszpenc, Ebony Gustave, Nati Linares, and Caroline Woolard compiled these examples of cooperatives or collectives and welcome edits and adjustments. Please email carolinewoolard@gmail.com so that we can update this report with your edits or add them to the [Art.coop](#) directory of examples.⁷⁵

Co-operative models allow those of us to engage in a prefigurative politics, one that develops new skills and prepares the way for a transformation of our economy and social fabric.

—Chris Myers, founding co-organizer, Anticapitalism for Artists⁷⁶

**When artists say to us:
there are too many crabs in
the bucket, fighting each
other for scraps.**

—Jeffrey Devereux and Joshua Jenkins, Co-Founders and worker-owners,
Cafeteria Radio, Hartford, CT

**When an entrepreneur
has an idea, someone says:
“Get money from your
friends and family.”**

**But that’s not going to work
when you think about the
racial wealth gap.**

—Rani Langer-Croager, Co-Founder at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative

**We say:
Why don’t you work together
to climb out of the bucket?**

**Entrepreneurs of color
need the kind of capital that
is flexible and integrated
and would have support
like a family member would
give them.**

**Within [art] institutions
with such expertise in
imagining the future,
why is it impossible
to acknowledge—let
alone reimagine—other
institutional frameworks?**

—The Antiracist Classroom Organizers⁷⁷

**Every African American-
owned cooperative of the
past that I have researched,
and almost every
contemporary cooperative
I have studied, began as
the result of a study group
or depended on purposive
training and orientation of
members.⁷⁸**

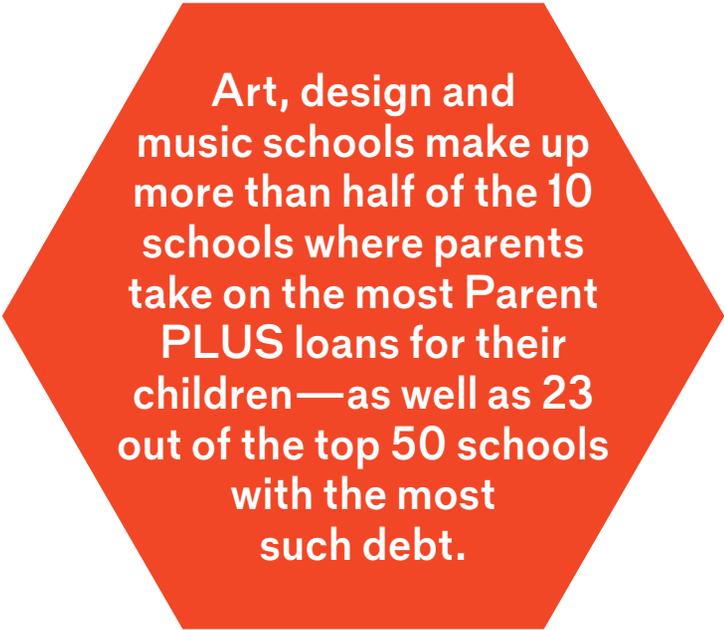
—Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard

3

Inequities in Art Education

Looking at the logistics of arts higher education lays plain how unsustainable traditional models for arts education are, i.e. in college and university settings, especially for our most marginalized community members: seven of the top ten most expensive institutions of higher education in the United States (after financial aid is taken into consideration) are art schools,⁷⁹ and these same institutions are actively recruiting BIPOC and low-income students, despite the fact that few infrastructural tools exist to support these students through and beyond student debt.⁸⁰

Over the past four decades, public universities have turned to a tuition-driven model to balance their books because federal and state subsidies for public universities have been eviscerated.⁸¹ It's unsurprising, then, that art, design, and music schools make up more than half of the 10 schools where



Art, design and music schools make up more than half of the 10 schools where parents take on the most Parent PLUS loans for their children—as well as 23 out of the top 50 schools with the most such debt.

parents take on the most parent PLUS loans for their children⁸² — as well as 23 out of the top 50 schools with the most such debt. More than 84% of college-educated Black households in their 30s have student debt,⁸³ up from 35% three decades ago.⁸⁴ For students from low-income families, working hard and going to college has not led to the success students have been promised.⁸⁵

And partially due to this debt-based financial gap, few art school graduates remain in the field after college. A recent report from the Strategic National Art Alumni Project (SNAAP) notes that “controlling for all other factors, the odds of women alumni staying in arts-related occupations (after entering a career in the arts) are lower compared to men, and the odds of people of color staying are lower when compared to White alumni. In addition, alumni with large amounts of student debt (over \$50,000) are significantly more likely to leave the arts than individuals who report lower levels of debt.”⁸⁶

For the few art school graduates who do stay in the field of arts and culture, research has shown they experience disproportionate levels of inequity, because of the sector’s struggle to be inclusive of communities of color. Studies in numerous markets have revealed that the general profile of the arts and culture workforce under-represents the racial and ethnic diversity of the communities where the organizations are located, despite an uptick in involvement by a more racially diverse, younger generation—in other words, there is an increasing pattern of exploitative and extractive arts and culture organizing that is situated in marginalized communities without employing marginalized community members.⁸⁷

Similarly, the tuition-driven business model for higher education has reached a breaking point in the pandemic because it is predicated upon increasing enrollment and auxiliary fees such as housing, facility rentals, and athletics, none of which can be booked to capacity at this time. The pandemic has exacerbated an already-expected decline in enrollment and retention in colleges and universities.⁸⁸

As both student enrollment and auxiliary fees decline year after year, only universities with large endowments can remain open. Small, residential, private non-profit colleges in the Northeast—including art schools—are most at risk of permanent closure during the pandemic.⁸⁹

Across the field, arts and cultural organizations that have roots predominantly in western eurocentric traditions and culture are routinely experienced as elitist and exclusionary, no matter the number of public affirmations they make centering equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), or the amount of dedicated grantmaker support for these EDI initiatives.⁹⁰ There is an inherent inequity—a product of a nation-state built on White supremacy—in the structuring of traditional models for art education, and the time for another approach to learning—for bold action to create transformative educational institutions—is well past.

This moment in history has illuminated both the destructive power of individualism and the healing power of cooperation.

The community-led council will learn about and engage in creating worker co-ops based on the principles of restorative economics, an economic model that turns from one of extracting labor and resources from communities without including them in the bounty of the economic gains, to one that is led by and for the community itself. We learn, share, laugh, play and build together. Yes, In This Place There Is Cooperation.⁹¹

—Anasa Troutman, Executive Director of Historic Clayborn Temple⁹² inspired by the Freedom Quilting Bee Cooperative (see Appendix B page 132 for more)

**Where do
creatives go to
build careers
where they don't
starve or sell out?**

4

The background features a teal color scheme with several overlapping circles and curved arrows. One large circle is in the upper left, another is in the center, and a third is in the lower right. Arrows of varying thicknesses curve across the page, some pointing towards the central circle and others pointing towards the bottom right.

The Case for Creative Cooperatives and Educational Justice in the Arts

Growing Demand for Business Skills in Creative Education

Appetite for professional training in the arts remains strong; approximately 120,000 people graduate with art degrees every year, and of arts graduates surveyed recently, most report an “excess” in training for artistic technique and a lack of in-depth business and entrepreneurial training.⁹³ While professional practices programs in the arts have been on the rise since the late 1990s and early 2000s, as of 2020, “only about a quarter of arts graduates say their

higher education institution helped them develop financial and business management skills and entrepreneurial skills, but most of these alumni

say they need these skills in their work life.”⁹⁴ As art programs continue to expand professional development, leadership, incubator, and entrepreneurial programs for students, BIPOC-led Creative Cooperatives offer an approach to professional practice and business competencies that balance the social and economic desires of creative people, for example, by teaching technical crafts, cultural fluency, facilitation, and entrepreneurship in a holistic manner. See examples of this with Meerkat Media on page 69 and the Boston Ujima Project on page 80.

Many art courses are still taught as though a career path will appear in front of emerging artists, based upon merit or talent—but as our collective knows all too well, such a fate is unlikely and should not be falsely promised.⁹⁵ Especially with the arts upended in the multiple crises of COVID-19, our communities are in dire need of realistic and equitable support.

Art students simultaneously develop competencies of cultural fluency (including comprehension of racial justice), entrepreneurship, and collaboration when working with BIPOC-led Creative Cooperatives.

84 percent of people who make their primary earnings in the arts did not obtain a college degree.

But, as always, new cultural economies are being developed as you read this report, primarily by BIPOC. Artists are engaging with the space of learning itself, questioning the conditions that allow them to gather and learn together with each other, and to develop capacities to build new institutions and navigate the interpersonal relationships that make projects and livelihoods possible.⁹⁶

As educator Gloria Dall’Alba writes, “While knowledge and skills are necessary, they are insufficient for skillful practice and for transformation of the self that is integral to achieving such practice.”⁹⁷ It is not enough for artists to know how to dance or paint or code if they are not aware of how to learn or practice their skill for a living.⁹⁸

The student skill and learning competencies from the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts⁹⁹ place collaborative skills as central in the Transferable Competencies that are

required for creative learners. Foundational Competencies such as technical skills, creativity, and innovation, are supported by these Transferable Competencies of collaboration, reflection (especially around self care, power, and ethics), and career and project management, and these cognitive skills of critical and creative thinking, digital technology, and professionalism. These skills are learned in Creative Co-ops, as creatives enact and refine skills of accounting, business, finance, and entrepreneurship.

Many people enter creative careers without attending college or university,¹⁰⁰ choosing to train with other creatives in informal ways through mentorship, apprenticeship, or in other kinds of preprofessional education. In fact, 1.2 million out of 1.4 million artists—or 84 percent of people who make their primary earnings in the arts—did not obtain a college degree.

Where did these 1.2 million artists do their study and training? While no nationally representative data exists for practicing artists, we can look to leaders in the arts and culture sector to begin to give us insights into the non-accredited learning pathways available to artists nationally. For example, the First People’s Fund reports that many “Native artists learn more effectively through informal networks (peer- and family-based training) than through formal networks (institutional training).”¹⁰¹ Native artists want access to capital, financial education, and professional development training, as the report states that these are “missing links

that would transform their market-based activities into greater self-sufficiency for themselves and their families.”¹⁰² This is why the First People’s Fund offers professional development training to individuals, collectives, and cooperatives, including the ARTZ (Ancestral Rich Treasures of Zuni) Cooperative.¹⁰³

Cooperative Education for Creatives

Black-led cooperatives often arise as an outgrowth of months and sometimes years of study of a vital problem.¹⁰⁴ After the last Great Recession of 2007–2008, the absolute number of co-ops in the United States doubled, and it is likely that this countercyclical trend will occur again as we recover from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰⁵ Scholars predict that the desire for cooperatives will continue to increase due to demographic, cultural, and technological shifts in the labor force¹⁰⁶ which call for a woven social fabric of community and self-determination. As occurs in most times of financial crisis, a general demand for alternatives is on the rise, and our role—as changemakers, investors, and community members in the Solidarity Economy—is to present, sustain, and transform these alternatives to meet the needs of our most marginalized siblings.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, arts and culture institutions were implementing training, study, and cooperative governance to support their community members.

For example:

- In 2014, the first member-owned business accelerator in the country, Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative, was launched and currently partners with Meridian University so that learners can get a MBA in Creative Enterprise and start businesses at the same time.¹⁰⁷
- In 2016, Nexus launched the North Star Black Cooperative Fellowship, a six-month fellowship focused on Black American Cooperative Economics.¹⁰⁸
- In 2017, the Sustainable Economies Law Center launched the Nonprofit Democracy Network, and in 2018, the Hewlett Foundation published a report and workbook about distributed leadership.¹⁰⁹ Many groups and organizations started becoming worker self-directed non-profits, including: artist groups such as SolCollective and Press On; Solidarity Economy groups such as Highlander Research and Education Center, the New Economy Coalition, and the Center for Economic Democracy;¹¹⁰ grantmaking networks such as Justice Funders; and academic hubs such as the National Collaborative for Creative Work at Arizona State University.¹¹¹
- In 2018, the National League of Cities and the Democracy at Work Institute launched the Shared Equity in Economic Development (SEED) Fellowship to convene and equip city leaders with

tools, resources, and expertise to build equitable economies using democratic business ownership.¹¹²

- From 2020–2021, the demand for education and practice about alternatives to austerity, accumulation, and greed accelerated, with the following initiatives for creatives focusing on BIPOC-led creative and cooperative practices:
 - The City University of New York launched a graduate level certificate in Community and Worker Ownership.¹¹³
 - Cooperation New Orleans Loan Fund launched the Black Liberation Co-op Academy.¹¹⁴
 - YOUCCOPE launched with funding from the EU and Santander to encourage educational institutions to include the cooperative model in their curriculum and to boost it among young students and entrepreneurs.¹¹⁵
 - Alternatives to higher education such as People’s Hub, Activist Graduate School, Art World Learning, and The Alternative Art School rose in popularity with increased visibility and enrollment.
 - Documenta, a major exhibition of contemporary visual art that takes place every five years in Germany, will be curated by the Indonesian collective ruangrupa in 2022 as a practice of lumbung, which refers to a collective pot

or accumulation system where crops produced by a community are stored as a future shared common resource. They are developing an international network of lumbung members interweaving their regional practices, study, and resources.¹¹⁶

- In 2020–2021, a wide range of formalized networks of educators focusing on cooperatives and the Solidarity Economy have formed and strengthened, including the Solidarity Economy Academic Seminar for faculty teaching in higher education,¹¹⁷ the New Economy Coalition popular education group, and the Arts, Culture, and Care Working Group for artists, culture workers, and organizers from around the US who are working within the Solidarity Economy framework.¹¹⁸
- Anticapitalism for Artists began as a study group organized by Chris Myers with 8 friends in 2020, and within a few months a weekend conference had 600 attendees and 2000 people joined the mailing list. The group now runs cooperative study groups that center BIPOC creatives.¹¹⁹
- Over 400 people applied to study together in Architecture Beyond Capitalism, a free, peer-led study space organized by The Architecture Lobby; over 750 people registered for a summer 2021 conference organized by Cooperation Humboldt for creative people.¹²⁰

- 7,000 people joined in the Zebras Unite and E2C communities, focused on cooperative alternatives to the traditional start-up “exit,” with 200–300 people communicating with one another on posts each month about economic alternatives that center equity.¹²¹
- 1000 people registered for the January 2021 Solidarity Economy 101 workshop with the US Solidarity Economy Network and Highlander.¹²² In this training, 50 young people ages 16–24 spent a week learning about prison industrial complex abolition, organizing, and restorative justice and a group of participants came together to co-create a workbook with an emphasis on cooperatives. Cosmic Possibilities: An Intergalactic Youth Guide to Abolition is inspiring many youth creatives, organizers, and cooperators now.¹²³
- In 2020, the Center for Cultural Innovation launched the Grant & Loan Fund for Early-Stage Arts, Creative, and Cultural Cooperatives in partnership with SeedCommons and Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative.
- From June of 2020–July 2021, over 800 cooperative technologists and learners from 57 countries enrolled in the course Platform Cooperatives Now,¹²⁴ an online semester-long course offered jointly by Mondragon University and the Platform Cooperative Consortium.

Honoring the Value of Creative and Cooperative Work

Collective and cooperative models offer creatives opportunities to partake in creative changemaking while sharing resources, often because the standard economy is not suited to meeting their needs and sustaining their creative and personal health.

Here are a few examples of the lived reality of working artists in the United States:

- An estimated 2 million (or 30 percent) of all Native peoples are potential or practicing artists, yet most live below the poverty line.¹²⁵
- In 1982, the top 1% of musicians earned 26% of concert revenue. By 2017, the top 1% of musicians earned 60% of all concert revenue.
- As of 2018, just 20 individuals accounted for 64% of global sales by living artists.¹²⁶
- Arts educators face precarity as well, with 69% of all faculty hired on temporary contracts and 33% of instructional staff experiencing housing insecurity.¹²⁷

When facing food and housing insecurity, artists and arts educators cannot serve their audiences or their students, let alone the world at large. As the largest worker cooperative in the United States states, “quality jobs create quality care.”¹²⁸ If 81% of American residents

say that “the arts are a positive experience in the world,”¹²⁹ there must be a better way to ensure that artists benefit from the \$919.7 billion they generate.

Cooperatives offer an important avenue for increased economic and racial justice in the sector. While reporting on Creative Cooperatives is not comprehensive,¹³⁰ a 2012 USDA study identified 305 rural craft cooperatives that served 16,000 member-artists nationwide.¹³¹ An online platform cooperative called Stocksy paid out more than \$4.3 million in royalties to artists in 2015. This is why the co-founder of Kickstarter said that “the co-op model, combined with the scale of the web, has the potential to generate a reshaping of human organization and corporate governance that history has never seen before.”¹³² As the wage gap between workers (artists, arts educators) and CEOs or directors widens, and the number of precariously situated employees increases. Still, the political will for alternative solutions rises as well.

A Cooperative Era

The social, technical, legal, and economic conditions are present for a resurgence of cooperatives in the United States. Mo Manklang, policy director of the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives, reports that there are now 465 verified worker-owned coops in the country, up 36% since 2013, and that about 450 more are in their start-up phase, potentially doubling the number of worker cooperatives in the nation.¹³³ In the multiple pandemics of 2020 and 2021, cooperatives are being championed as effective models for economic justice by a wide range of people and groups, including New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio,¹³⁴ the rapper Noname, Google.org,¹³⁵ the Climate Justice Alliance,¹³⁶ Grantmakers in the Arts, Justice Funders, and the Movement for Black Lives.¹³⁷

But despite the fact that support for co-op development is on the rise, our research revealed a surprising gap in training and support for BIPOC-led Creative Cooperatives. There is a strong presence of arts and culture workers in the cooperative sector of the economy. Yet at this time, there is no cooperative training program focused on the particular needs of artists and culture-bearers. Arts and culture cooperatives have a business advantage over industrial cooperatives because they can get off the ground without hundreds of thousands of dollars in equipment.¹³⁸ More urgently in times of compounding crises, cooperatives can support artists throughout the lifespan

of their projects, including: arts marketing and sales cooperatives, arts venue and studio space cooperatives, financial cooperatives, arts equipment rental cooperatives, and co-working and studio-sharing cooperatives.

Co-ops Are Educational and Innovative Spaces

The Sustainable Economies Law Center reminds everyone that organizations can implement democratic governance regardless of tax status and legal entity. To engage in democratic governance—making decisions together—groups must learn how to share information, roles, skills, and expertise. This is why education and training is one of the seven internationally recognized principles of cooperation.

Most cooperatives engage in informal training and study rather than producing formalized training modules for prospective worker-owners, customers, or their community.¹³⁹ And when cooperatives do invest in creating formalized training and embed that training within their cooperative business—as is the case in the nation’s largest cooperative (Cooperative Homecare Associates) and in the world’s largest federation of cooperatives (Mondragon)—both the quality and the quantity of worker-owners increases.

Cooperative scholar Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard has written that “every African American-owned cooperative of the past

Enabling workers to buy their businesses is a proven model to address the wealth gap in this city.

— Mayor DeBlasio

that I have researched, and almost every contemporary cooperative I have studied, began as the result of a study group or depended on purposive training and orientation of members.”¹⁴⁰ This reveals an enormous opportunity for grantmakers, policymakers, and academic institutions: invest in BIPOC-led Creative Cooperatives (and the Co-op Developers that support them) as sites for education and innovation. See Examples of Education in Cooperatives on page 10 for more.

A Strong Cooperative Ecosystem

It takes decades for a successful national cooperative ecosystem to mature. Today, cooperatives such as Organic Valley, REI, and large credit unions and rural electric co-ops are mainstream. Some serve tens of millions of consumer-members.

1

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Appendices

Employee-ownership is a powerful and long standing strategy for bolstering business resiliency, preserving jobs, generating wealth, and cultivating a sense of ownership amongst working people, especially employees of color, in their workplace and in this nation.

—J. Philip Thompson,
Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy
Initiatives, NYC¹⁴²

It is still early days, but we are starting to see a similar development with worker-owned cooperatives. We know that outsized growth in this sector in the US is possible—indeed, with proper support, likely—because we have seen it happen elsewhere. For example, Quebec, Canada, and the Basque region in Spain now have robust worker co-op sectors. But they did not always.

Moreover, some of the core practices of equitable and sustainable self-determination and community-control that worker co-op success depends on are deeply rooted in a myriad of ancestral and community norms in BIPOC and working class communities in the United States (see Appendix B on page 132). We recognize that the cooperative ecosystem in

the US is only now maturing—with financial, legal, technical, and governmental intermediaries starting to work in concert to create an environment where cooperatives can flourish. But the promise of rapid worker co-op development, particularly among the arts, is widely evident.

An enabling environment for cooperatives in the United States is now starting to have beneficial network effects, as a range of people and institutions dedicated to cooperative enterprise can support one another. In 2004, the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC) was formed as the national membership organization for worker cooperatives, an outgrowth of regional organizing across the country, and in 2013, the USFWC launched the Democracy at Work Institute, to “expand the promise of worker cooperatives to new communities while keeping this new growth grounded in worker cooperatives themselves.”¹⁴¹

Resist and Build

Transformative systems change requires organizers and movement builders who create a world entirely different from what we have ever known: one that is based in solidarity, cooperation, care, and collectivity; one that values community ownership, self-determination, and democratic governance; and one in which BIPOC who have been most harmed by the extractive economy have the political, cultural, and economic power to lead with ease. The

most visionary BIPOC-led movements fighting for racial, economic, and climate justice recognize that a systems-change requires bold solutions for both resisting and dismantling systems of oppression while simultaneously building life-affirming models where all communities thrive. Worker cooperatives are emerging as an organizational form that multiple movements are developing alongside their resistance work, in order to prefigure worlds of equity and justice, including the Climate Justice Alliance and the Movement for Black Lives. Grantmaking bodies such as Justice Funders, Solidaire, Resource Generation, and Grantmakers in the Arts are also learning from and investing in worker cooperatives now because they aim to follow the lead of grassroots organizers committed to co-ops.

Cooperatives in Higher Education

The history of Black cooperatives reveals deep connections between study groups and direct support from educational institutions. For example, Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembard recounts that: “In the 1930s and 1940s, there was a strong Black co-op movement in North Carolina. With the backing of two Black education institutions, Bricks Rural Life School and Tyrrell County Training School, African American cooperators established strong cooperative networks. This initiative exponentially increased the number of Black co-ops in the state. For example, in 1936, there were three Black credit unions, while by 1948 there were 98.”¹⁴³

The first European university, the University of Bologna, was actually a student-controlled institution, where students collectively hired their faculty and oversaw their conduct. Founded around the same time in the Middle Ages, the University of Paris was organized as a guild of faculty. This model became the dominant one, and it is because of this that, for faculty at least, many modern universities still retain at least some vestiges of faculty governance and faculty control over the curriculum.¹⁴⁴ While modern universities have also become subject to rampant bureaucratization and exploitation, there are legacies embedded in these institutions that could become the basis of a much stronger and more radical spirit of democratic control.

A starting point are schools that have centers for the study of cooperatives such as the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Historically, the Center for Cooperatives, which was founded at the University of Wisconsin in 1962,¹⁴⁵ has focused on agriculture and consumer co-ops. However in recent years, it has been a major source for education and training of worker co-ops, including engaging in a direct partnership with the city of Madison to support worker co-op education, training, and development.¹⁴⁶

Another long-standing example of cooperatives in higher education is the presence of student housing cooperatives at dozens of campuses. Across the country today, nearly 4,000 cooperators living in student-run housing cooperatives access low cost housing and skills in democratic management. Some of the first racially integrated housing options for college students were housing cooperatives created in the 1930s. Since its founding in 1968, many of these co-ops have been affiliated with the North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO), a federation of housing cooperatives in Canada and the US that continues to offer financing, education, and job opportunities to the “next generation of cooperators.”¹⁴⁷ See Appendix C on page 137 for more.

**What learning
spaces prepare us
for equitable and
entrepreneurial
futures?**

The background features a network of light pink circles and arrows. A large circle in the top left contains the number '5'. Other circles are scattered across the page, with arrows indicating a flow or relationship between them. The overall color scheme is various shades of pink.

5

4 Points: BIPOC-Led Creative Co-ops

What's key to this next pivot for educational justice is that Creative Cooperatives led by Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color (BIPOC) are centered. These are the worker initiatives that have greater ease in sustaining educational justice because they create:

- 1** Low-cost, free, and paid learning opportunities
- 2** Decolonial, anti-racist, peer-to-peer, and decentralized pedagogy
- 3** Local, intergenerational wealth and increased self-determination
- 4** A labor market that offers high-quality job opportunities with career-building work experience alongside study

1 Low-Cost, Free, and Paid Learning Opportunities

BIPOC learners are disproportionately impacted by the high-cost of education. Of the 14 million students in higher education who are working while learning, about 6 million (43%) are low-income students. Low-income working learners are disproportionately Black (18%) and Latino (25%), women (58%), and first-generation college-goers (47%), while higher-income working learners tend to be White (73%). This means low-income working learners are more likely to enroll in certificate programs and attend either two-year public or for-profit colleges than higher-income working learners, whereas higher-income working students are more likely to enroll in bachelor's degree programs and attend selective four-year colleges and universities. In turn, low-income working learners are less likely to earn a credential overall, even if they come from the upper end of the academic performance distribution.

Creative Cooperatives and Co-op Developers offer an alternative: low-cost, free, and paid learning opportunities that balance the social and economic desires of creative people. Two of the seven principles of cooperation—"cooperation among cooperatives" and "education and training"—create a culture of ongoing study and freely distributing educational materials.

For the 500 plus First Nations in the US there is no word for art. Art is a gift from the creator that comes to us from ceremony, song, and dance. We believe that art has been an important part of our sacred ways for centuries. Indigenous people create art from the soul, from their connection to the natural world. Art helps to heal our spirit and teaches us to honor and share our gifts—it teaches us a good way to live. It is not uncommon for these individuals to view the creation and practice of art as a “personal responsibility” and to humbly embrace cultural continuity.¹⁴⁸

—Lori Pourier (Oglala Lakota) and Elizabeth Woody (Navajo/Warm Springs/Wasco/Yakama)

In countries where the cooperative ecosystem is more developed, cooperative education and training is almost always free of charge, covered by state or regional budgets, some depending on the Education Ministry.¹⁴⁹

An extensive study of the European Union reveals that cooperators are often not paid a stipend to learn, but at times funding is available to cover their materials and meals (for example, in Portugal).

The European Social Fund is also used to finance initial vocational education and training curricula and programs for cooperatives and the Solidarity Economy (e.g. in Greece and Portugal).¹⁵⁰

In the United States, where the cooperative ecosystem is less developed, free courses are still available. For example, new courses from Co-op Developers including LA Co-op Lab¹⁵¹ and Start.coop¹⁵² as well as cooperative groups that are nearly two decades old, such as the Democracy at Work Institute, offer extensive libraries of free resources for cooperators.¹⁵³ Internationally, YOUCCOPE¹⁵⁴ offers open-access, online, digital humanities projects that could be supported and co-designed with support from leaders in higher education. For models to create self-sustaining cooperative learning platforms, read Models and Case Studies starting on page 57.

2 Decolonial, Anti-Racist, Peer-To-Peer, and Decentralized Pedagogy

In settler-colonial logic, decision-making at work, and in artistic creative production too, should be separate from everyday life, conducted by an elite group of White and/or wealthy people who have a right to dominance because they know what is best for everyone. Healing from colonization and oppression requires equitable decision-making and

community-control at work, at school, online, and in daily life; a return to cultural practices that weave together song, story, craft, and movement with decision-making. This healing and (re)learning is being innovated in BIPOC-led cooperative practices that are tactile, playful, heart-opening, co-created, co-facilitated, and experientially driven.

While art programs in higher education have begun to incorporate business and entrepreneurship training into their core curriculum, they are struggling to support the values or desires of creative people as sustainably as many BIPOC-led cooperatives do. On the other hand, BIPOC-led Creative Co-op apprenticeships such as Repaired Nations exist to “repair the effects of colonization and oppression by helping to weave inter-connected communities into thriving, sustainable networks to equitably provide the essentials of life.”¹⁵⁵ Perhaps this is why the first Native co-op, the first democratic loan fund, the first non-extractive venture capital firm, and Black Lives Matter were all started by artists and culture-bearers on occupied Turtle Island.¹⁵⁶

Creative Co-ops, especially those led by BIPOC, also offer a model through which to redistribute consolidated resources to and through community spaces that are inherently built by and for marginalized communities. As predominantly White institutions (PWIs) of arts and culture seek ways to support brilliant BIPOC-led entrepreneurship (See Appendix B on page 132 for more), BIPOC-led Creative Cooperatives, such as the Boston Ujima

Project (see our case study on page 80), offer an incredible opportunity for cultural, social, and financial investment in just and reparative ways. Importantly, Boston residents who do not identify as working class and/or a person of color can join as a solidarity member of Ujima, supporting with capital but without a voting membership. BIPOC-led cooperatives often draw from BIPOC cultural traditions, such as non-extractive lending that occurs in sou-sous and other rotating savings and credit associations.¹⁵⁷

3 BIPOC Intergenerational Wealth and Self-Determination

Systematic discrimination and bias against BIPOC people by White institutions has produced a lived reality for BIPOC creatives who are less likely to be able to own a home, access credit, and secure funding.¹⁵⁸ In 2019, median wealth of Black households in the United States was \$24,100, compared with \$189,100 for White households.¹⁵⁹ As we state above, cooperatives, when combined with ecosystem-wide support and systems-change, offer one pathway toward intergenerational wealth for BIPOC creatives. In cooperatives, worker-owners both own and work in the business. They have 17% greater median household net worth, and 22% higher median income from wages when compared to non-owner and low-income peers.¹⁶⁰ This additional wealth allows cooperators to put down payments on homes and pay for college,

health care, and retirement, in turn sustaining their lives and those of their loved ones.

By seeding BIPOC intergenerational wealth, cooperatives can better mitigate the risk of debt, ensuring that families—traditional and non-traditional—have the pools to draw from to protect one another in case of crisis. Because the wealth is locally seeded and locally sustained, it also contributes to a cyclical, ecosystemic economic flow, moving financial resources through various pockets in a community ecosystem, per timely needs.

4 High-Quality Job Opportunities

Students and creatives alike are looking for access to dignified work. A recent survey conducted by the Chronicle of Higher Education noted, with nearly half of the students (49%) saying that future career prospects are most important when deciding to enroll in a college or university.¹⁶¹ With more than 94% of creative industry jobs created in the United States in the past 10 years in the freelance category,¹⁶² creatives are looking to join together to find better job prospects. As united entities, worker-owned initiatives in the arts and culture sector—such as filmmaking cooperatives and democratic loan funds—offer creative careers and educational opportunities that advance racial and economic justice. Worker-owners are four times less likely to be

laid off. Cooperatives are also more likely to succeed than conventional enterprises, but are often slower to become financially self-sustaining because they prioritize workers, the environment, and the surrounding community rather than profit maximization by cutting costs—showing just how important it is that the entire ecosystem supports them, as they support us. Cooperatives today constitute a substantial segment of the global economy. There are more than 1 billion co-op members in 3 million cooperatives around the world, and they generate an estimated US \$2.98 trillion in annual revenue. If this global, cooperative economy were a united country, it would be the fifth largest economy in the world, after Germany.¹⁶³

With students and worker cooperatives primed, the impact of support—from grantmakers or from higher education institutions—at this time could be enormous. For example, a national collaborative of 40-plus organizations that provides technical assistance¹⁶⁴ to support businesses transitioning to all forms of employee ownership reports that they could grow the number of deals by three times to \$150 million with additional capital and technical assistance support.¹⁶⁵ See a list of the benefits of work-integrated learning in creative co-ops on page 13 for more.

**We can learn new models on
how to support each other.**

—> WORKER COOPS

—@noname

**Hold space for one another, as
the connections between other
projects become evident, make
note of them, name the linkages
as you experience them.**

—Land Relationships Super Collective¹⁶⁶

**How might
Creative Co-ops
offer models
for low-cost
learning?**

6

Models and Case Studies

4 Pathways to Increased Learning in Creative Cooperatives

Our collective has found that potential for learning increases exponentially when cooperatives—which are already individually capable of sustaining educational justice—join together and share resources. While worker cooperatives often have slim profit margins (6.4% on average¹⁶⁷), networks of cooperatives, also known as chambers of commerce, federations of networks, or cooperatives-of-cooperatives, make powerful flows of learning and shared resources more accessible and equitable.

The following pages offer three abstracted “models” of the entities that compose the cooperative ecosystem—Movement Cooperatives, Movement Federations, and Movement Platforms—and four contextualized “patterns” that represent the models’ potential to

hold accessible learning spaces. We have visualized the roles that various stakeholders can play in the cooperative ecosystem overall and invite feedback.

We use the terms “Movement Cooperatives,” “Movement Federations,” and “Movement Platforms” because not all cooperatives come out of social movements for racial, environmental, and economic justice.

By creating federations and platforms that unite individual cooperatives to share resources and deepen the cooperative ecosystem, we can build an educational justice ecosystem that can sustain itself and its community members.

While the number of worker co-ops in the nation are limited and under-resourced at this time—with only 465 verified worker-owned co-ops in the country—the number of co-ops are on the rise.

Around 450 more are in their start-up phase, potentially doubling the number of worker cooperatives in the nation.¹⁶⁸ When creatives unite as worker-owners in Creative Co-ops, they can benefit from more than a gig wage, which has repeatedly shown to not support workers.¹⁶⁹ In this time of urgent need, Creative Cooperatives offer a way to support the social and economic needs of our communities' artists, culture workers, organizers, and changemakers.

We have assembled these generalized models of cooperatives, federations, and platforms that explicitly shape movements, and modeled the current cooperative ecosystem and a possible future ecosystem. Within these ecosystems, we have proposed four patterns that focus explicitly on supporting learners and creating educational spaces, just as co-ops like Meerkat (an example of a *cooperative*), Boston Ujima (an example of a *federation*), and Open Collective (an example of a *platform*) do.

In the following pages, notice increasing flows of money, social exchanges and labor, products/ services, learning, governance, and benefits as Creative Cooperatives federate and receive support from grantmakers, arts institutions, higher education, and the public sector.

These models and patterns attempt to synthesize wisdom and information shared generously by our interviewees and are conceptual offerings that must be adapted and

understood by stakeholders in playful discussion, debate, and adjustment.

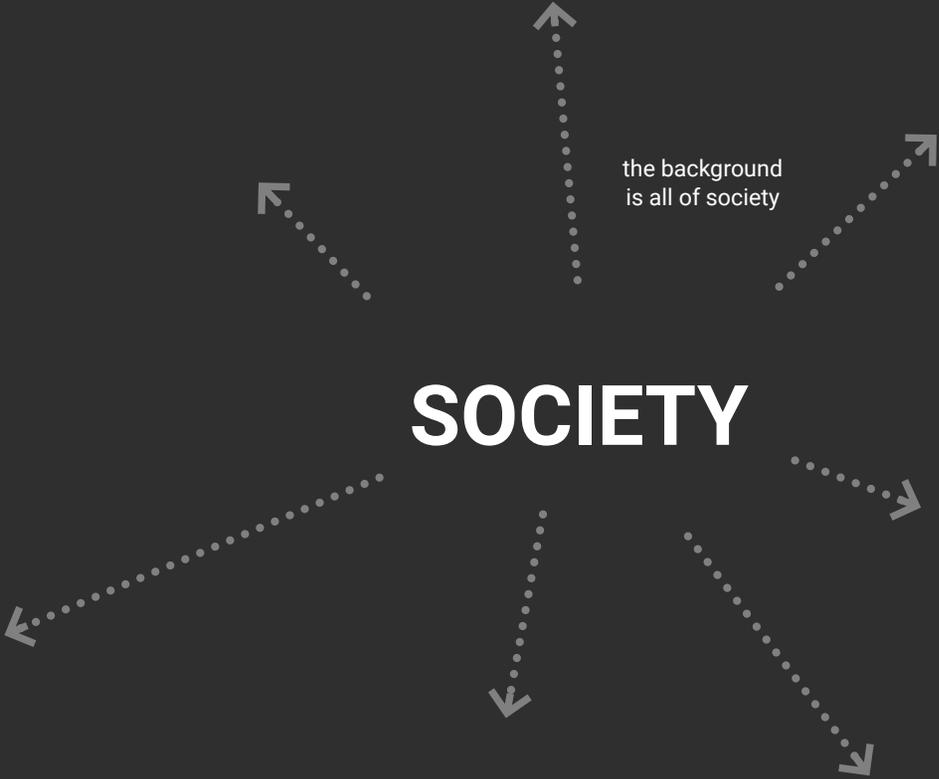
Our mapping process focuses on finding elements that demonstrate the strengths of collectively governed creative spaces. As such, our ecosystem focuses on learning cycles and monetary flows, while other cycles within the cooperative ecosystem might be less detailed than these two. Additionally, each cooperative, federation, and platform has its unique ways of functioning, and the flows we capture are just a few of the many that could exist.

Navigating Our Diagrams

The generalized models for cooperatives, federations, and platforms have three main layers of interaction:

- 1 The “lidded” versions, where you can see the elements which interface with the outer society—like bank account, products and services outputs, and co-op members—external entities that are intrinsically connected to the functioning of the co-op.
- 2 The “unlidded” versions, where you can see the internal flows of an entity —like the monetary and social flows necessary to produce its outputs and support the people involved.
- 3 The deep-dive versions, where you can see peeks of and uncover the spiraling details that generate and protect the heart of that entity—like the lids covering the entities: social core; encounters, relations & meetings; internal benefits; outputs.

How to read these diagrams: 1. **Where is Society?**



How to read these diagrams: 2. Basic Units



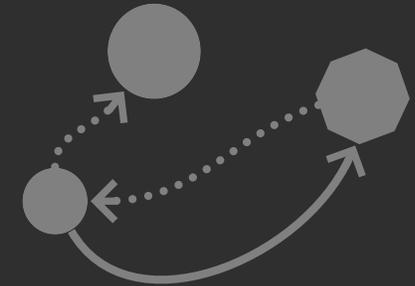
The diagrams consist of actors and flows.



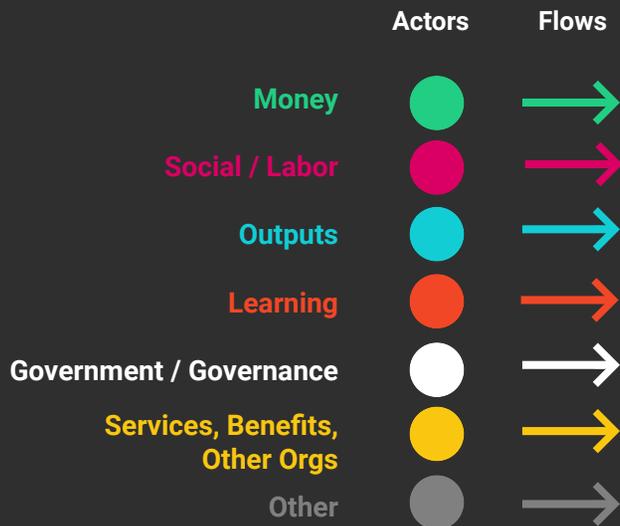
A "flows" to B
A contributes to B
A changes B



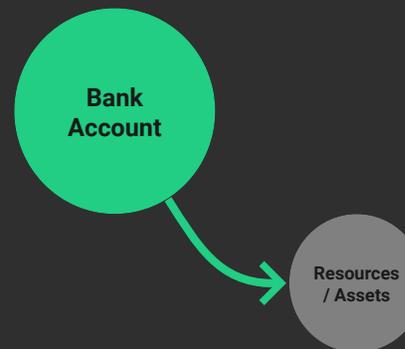
A "potentially flows" to B
A **might** contribute to B
A **can** change B



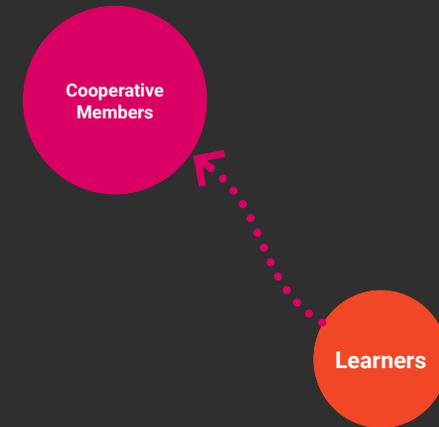
Flows connect between actors to create a system of flows.



There are several types of actors and flows.



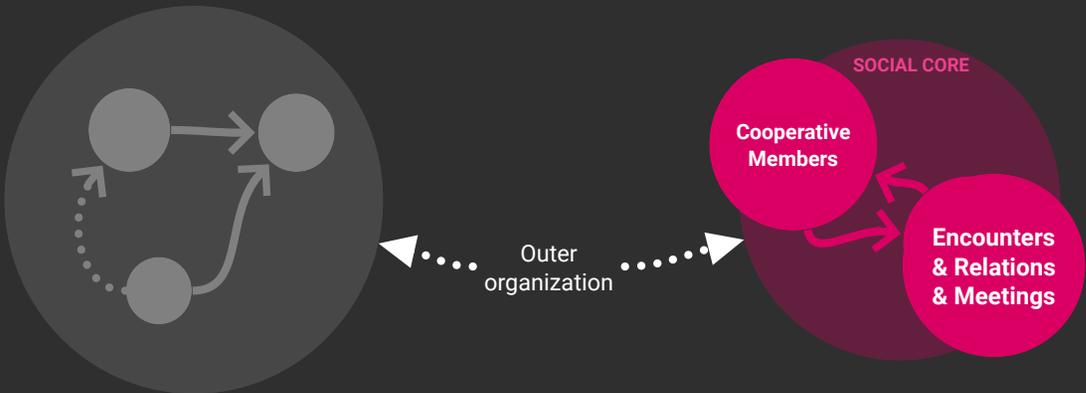
Bank Account contributes **financially** to Resources/Assets



Learners might contribute **socially** to (or become part of) **Cooperative Members**

How to read these diagrams: 3. Actor Interface

Organizations, Entities, Larger Actors

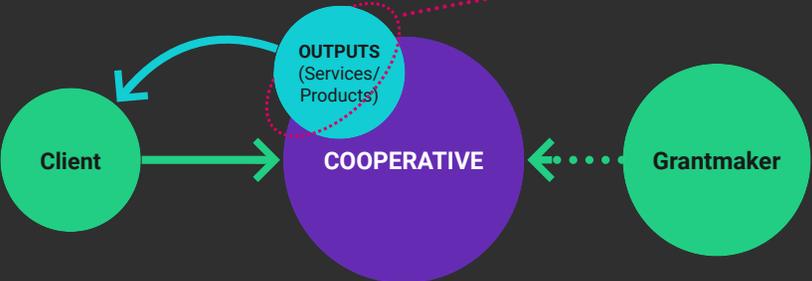
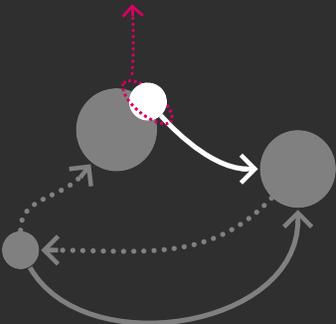


Sometimes, actors **exist inside** of another actor, entity, or organization, shown as a larger translucent circle

For example, "Cooperative Members" and "Encounters & Relations & Meetings" **exist inside** "Social Core"

'Popping out'

Some actors **'pop out'** of its larger actor, because they interface with outside actors.

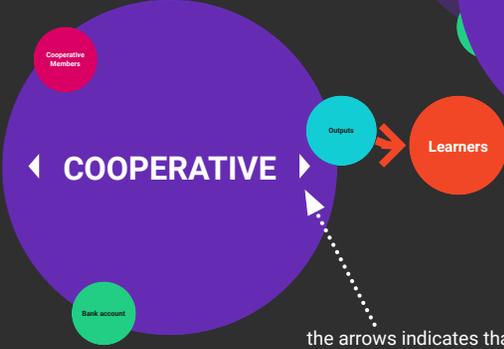
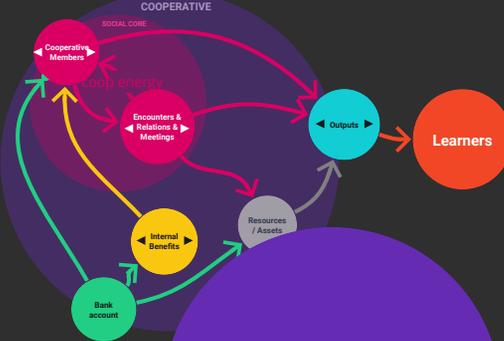
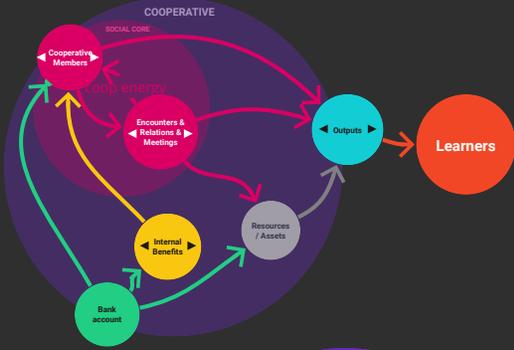


For example, "Outputs" **pops out of** "Cooperative", because it interfaces with "Client"

"A **Client** pays for **services/products** to the **cooperative**, and a **Grantmaker** potentially **funds** the **cooperative**"

How to read these diagrams: 4. Lid System

Triangles indicate entity can be uncovered



the arrows indicates that this entity 'lid' can be uncovered

To make things simple, entities can be covered by a 'lid', that hides the internal operations so that we can focus on its external relations.

The "lid" changes the level of complexity with which you interact.

A Current Ecosystem

Our research has noticed that, at present, Movement Cooperatives and Movement Federations are supported by the same external agents that support and compose the current Solidarity Economy ecosystem.

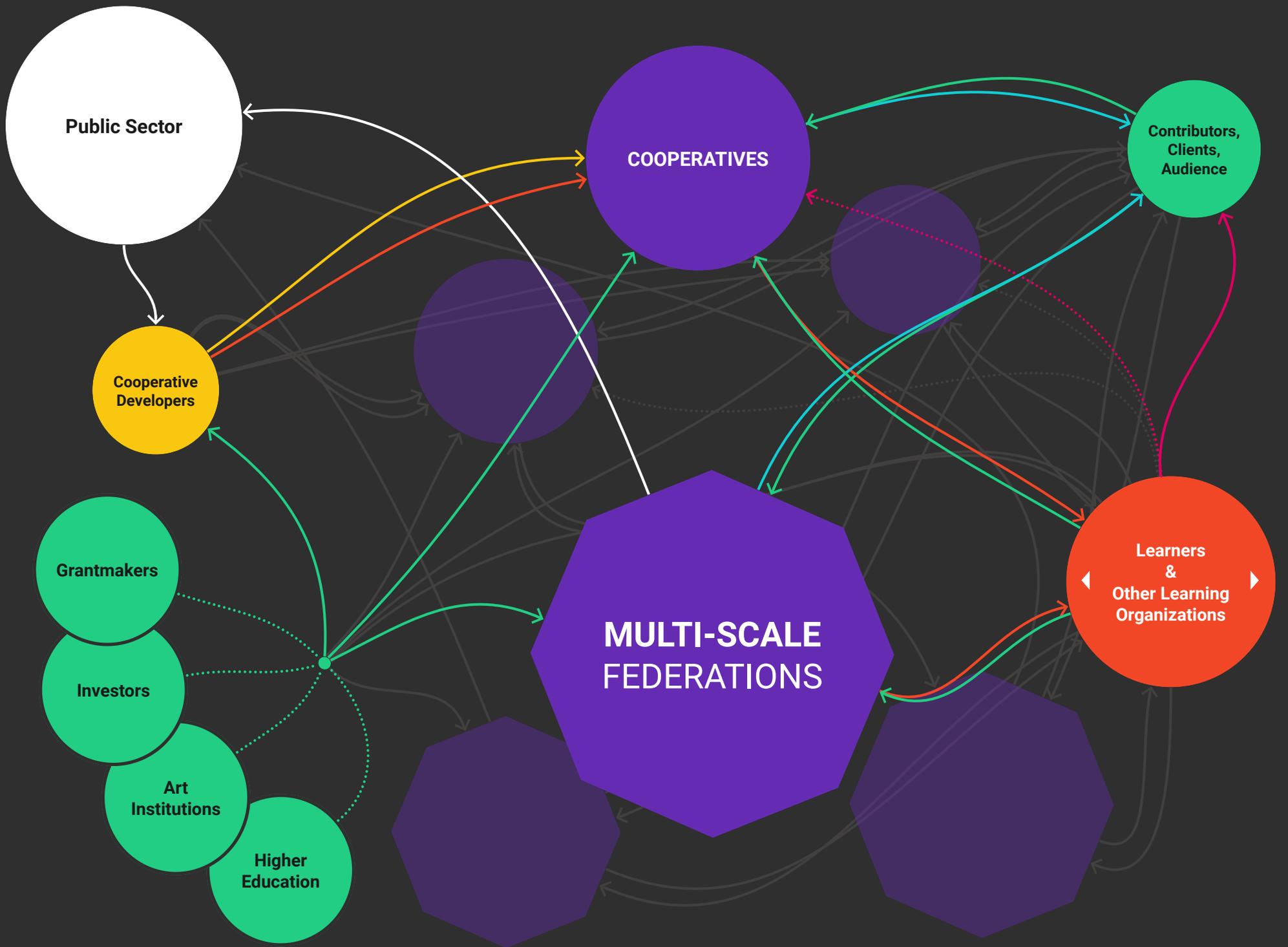
Each entity (Movement Cooperatives and Movement Federations) has its own direct flows between them and external actors (like learners, “money-givers,” and consumers), who make it easier for the entity to exercise full autonomy and access dedicated resources. Unfortunately, in this present condition, Movement Cooperatives and Movement Federations must work within themselves to create individual but mirrored internal structures to monitor resource flows within themselves.

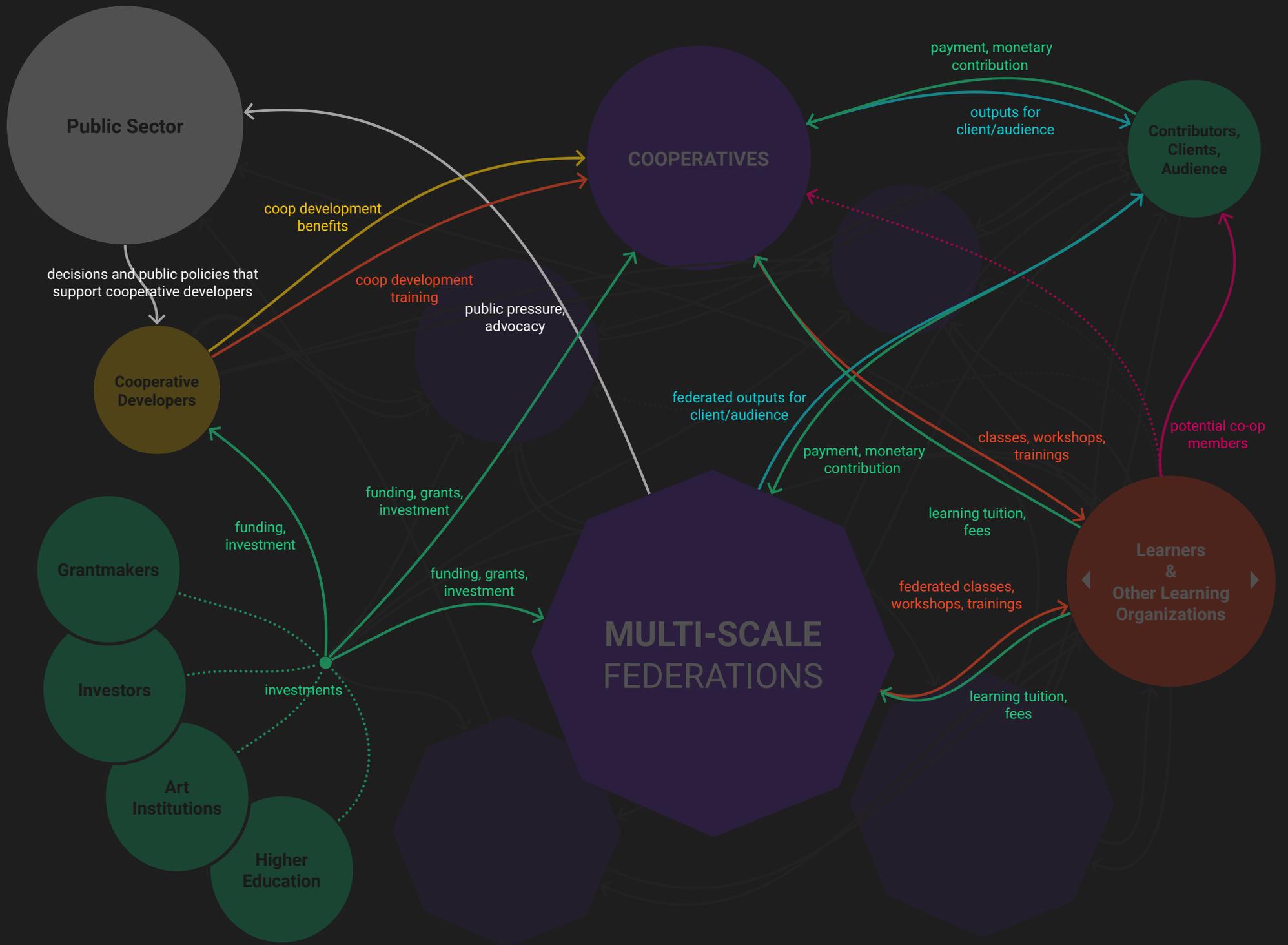
Our work lies in finding ways to consolidate these replicated energies across the ecosystem, and channel them to optimize low-cost learning with Movement Platforms. Movement Cooperatives use collective governance and ownership (when workers make decisions about shared work and shared surplus together) to operate creative spaces. Often, they are BIPOC-led cultural Creative Cooperatives, or autonomous associations of creative people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

Movement Federations use collective governance and ownership to connect individual Movement Cooperatives and build, manage, and distribute communal pots of shared resources. Often, they work across regions to bring together otherwise siloed Movement Cooperatives as members of the Federation.

The combination of spreading power and spreading wealth in Movement Cooperatives creates an impact that conventional cooperatives do not do... cooperatives might not have broader systemic transformation in mind.

—Janelle Orsi and Gregory Jackson¹⁷⁰





A Single Cooperative



Model of a *Movement Cooperative*

Movement Cooperatives can enable sustainable learning spaces, because they...

- Teach and share cultural practices that are already socially and financially sustainable, based on their shared experiences as a collective, and
- Can power both the social and financial flows of the cooperative itself (through increased revenue and potential co-op members), leading to more sustainable revenue and resource distribution practices.

However, since individual cooperatives often have little surplus, investing in learning is a larger up-front cost. Therefore external grants and investments are crucial to jumpstart a cooperative's learning infrastructure.

How Resources Flow in a Movement Cooperative

Movement Cooperatives are able to operate sustainably, but, as we mentioned before, sometimes the inflow of money fails to ensure sustained activity in all of the cooperative's programmatic areas. Here, external investments are much needed to guarantee cooperatives' financial and social sustainability, and allow for extra surplus that can be invested in ameliorations, such as internal

benefits, learning spaces, and resources and assets.

The extra surplus would allow the cooperative to power learning by...

- 1 building resources and creating outputs such as classes and workshops,
- 2 that are then provided to a learner, for money
- 3 who could become part of the future cooperative, and chip in their own resources
- 4 and reduce costs for future learners.

That said, on a cooperative scale, the biggest challenge is to have enough surplus to safely and generously invest in learning. Here, our ecosystem's investors can play a crucial role by providing funding to power the learning infrastructures (teachers, learning materials, content for classes or trainings, and venues) while cooperatives continue their regular activities.

Advantages And Disadvantages of a Movement Cooperative:¹⁷¹

Movement Cooperatives are strong in that they are worker-owned ventures, which prioritize equitable distribution of money, accessible internal benefits, reciprocal ties with local communities, energizing personal and work relationships, and have intercommunal longevity.

However, they struggle with advocacy in local and federal spaces, and have difficulty procuring enough surplus to sustainably invest in learning without destabilizing intracommunal longevity.

A Movement Cooperative Case Study: Meerkat Media

Meerkat Media was founded as an informal arts collective in New York City in 2005 and has grown to become a cooperatively owned production company that produces work for clients as well as a collective of artists who create their own independent artwork with financial and social support from the co-op production company. Their work has been broadcast on HBO, PBS, and many other networks, and screened at festivals worldwide, including Sundance, Tribeca, Rotterdam and CPH:DOX.

Originally formed because a group of friends wanted to find a way to work with one another on a daily basis,¹⁷² Meerkat found a way to freelance together (the client-facing side) and make personal projects together (the collective side).

As of the fall of 2021, Meerkat has 8 worker-owners, with 2 more worker-owner candidates being considered, and supports roughly 15 artists through the Meerkat Media Collective program. The collective is made up of filmmakers who successfully apply to join the collective and who agree to engage in critical feedback and mutual aid support with one another. You can access Meerkat's public-facing governance documents here.

Meerkat: Monetary Flows

Clients such as Sesame Street, Art21, and community-based organizations hire Meerkat to make media for them. This client income fuels the cooperative and collective ecosystem. Meerkat members are all paid the same amount for a day rate and for their internal cooperative work, regardless of the task they do, and earn \$75k on average, as well as receive parental leave and benefits if they want to work full time and offer a skill set to match incoming client work.

Every fall, a portion of the client-facing surplus (gross income) is requested from the co-op for the Meerkat Media Collective members to use for convenings and education. Previously, around 12% of Meerkat's budget was held for this pool; the collective of artists had between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year in support. In recent years, the co-op has moved from a percentage-based model to a flat annual budget for the collective. Since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic began, this has been reduced to \$20,000 a year, though this shifts based upon the collective's requests and the cooperatives' available surplus.

Artists in the Meerkat Media Collective receive an individual stipend of \$1,000 a year with which to create their own independent work. They also gain access to the cooperative's software, equipment, space, and community for screenings, parties, and events. Meerkat Media Collective members are often the first people to be hired for the cooperative's client work and are eligible to join the cooperative when membership opens as well.

Meerkat: Creative Pedagogy

Meerkat is committed to a consensus-based process that values diverse experience and expertise and works together to create feature-length films, animations, documentaries, and more. Foundational Competencies in the arts include technical skills, creativity, and innovation, supported by transferable competencies that include collaboration, reflection (i.e. self-care, power, and ethics, and project management) and cognitive skills of critical and creative thinking, digital technology, and professionalism. See page 9 for an overview of Examples of Education in Co-ops.

Meerkat members develop and reinforce these competencies as well as creative capacities (articulated by Harvard ProjectZero's Studio

Habits of Mind and by Generative Somatics) that enable them to confront complex, changing environments as they co-create their own business. Zara Serabian-Arthur, a member-owner of Meerkat Media, has developed capacities of connection. As she says:

For us, an equally exciting project as making our work was the project of figuring out: Was it possible to create work in a way that reflected our values? What might that look like?

Engaging in that work, honestly, has been the most fulfilling work that I've done as an artist, because it's all about manifesting: What do these values, and these ideas of a different world look like in our daily practice? What does it feel like? How does that transform us as individuals, how does that transform us in a group, in a neighborhood, in a community, and what happens when we share those stories to transform the way things work more broadly?¹⁷³

Serabian-Arthur believes that her capacities impact her group, her neighborhood, and perhaps even historical forces over time. In addition to informal learning that happens in collaborative groups, the following formal learning opportunities are made available by Meerkat:

- Meerkat Media Artists Collective Critical Feedback Sessions, where members of the artist collective

program meet bi-weekly to support one another's personal growth as they make independent films and time-based projects. In these sessions they reinforce Foundational Competencies of craft and creativity, as well as Transferable Competencies such as critical thinking, teamwork, and reflection.

- Paid Training which offers members of the production cooperative a chance to be paid \$30/hr to facilitate member-led trainings, including: Facilitation Best Practices, Meerkat 101 (History and Context), Equipment, Software, Post-Production, and Conflict Management. This is where Foundational Competencies of craft and technique are reinforced alongside Transferable Competencies in work ethic, digital technology, cultural fluency, teamwork, and self-care.
- Public Workshops where Meerkat Co-op members who wish to be in the Outreach Working Group have previously met to prepare lesson plans and materials to co-teach and co-facilitate public presentations and workshops about filmmaking and cooperative enterprise at art schools, art institutions, and at local community events. In these sessions, Foundational and Transferable Competencies in teamwork, critical thinking, leadership, and civic engagement are reinforced.

- Weekly Working Group Meetings during which members interested in monitoring and sustaining Meerkat's monetary, social, and equipment flows can informally and contextually learn about running a cooperative film studio. Here, Transferable Competencies of collaboration and reflection, and Foundational Competencies of craft are reinforced.

- Meerkat Internships where emerging filmmakers are paid by Meerkat and supported in learning from all working groups and on film shoots with clients. This is where Foundational Competencies of craft and technique are introduced alongside an introduction to Transferable Competencies in work ethic, digital technology, cultural fluency, teamwork, and self-care. As Meerkat cooperative member-owner Bryan Chang says:

We've had one intern at a time, seasonally, generally college age. ... The paid interns have been a bit of a pipeline to becoming freelancers and then cooperative members. They start off as production assistants and graduate to shooting or editing for us.

Meerkat Media has a strong market for their creative outputs. The production cooperative and the collective of artists has grown into a strong network that is shaping the creative

ecosystem without ever receiving a grant, barring one-time grants of \$5,000 from Brooklyn Arts Council and the COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program. While this self-determined economy of cooperation is powerful, Meerkat members desire time for reflection, additional internal and external training, and growth. Further, Meerkat would love to create more media and educational videos in alignment with the growing BIPOC-led Solidarity Economy and BIPOC-led Creative Co-op movement,¹⁷⁴ but they (and their partners) need additional support from grantmakers, the public sector, higher education, and arts institutions to do this. See Recommendations on page 119 for more.

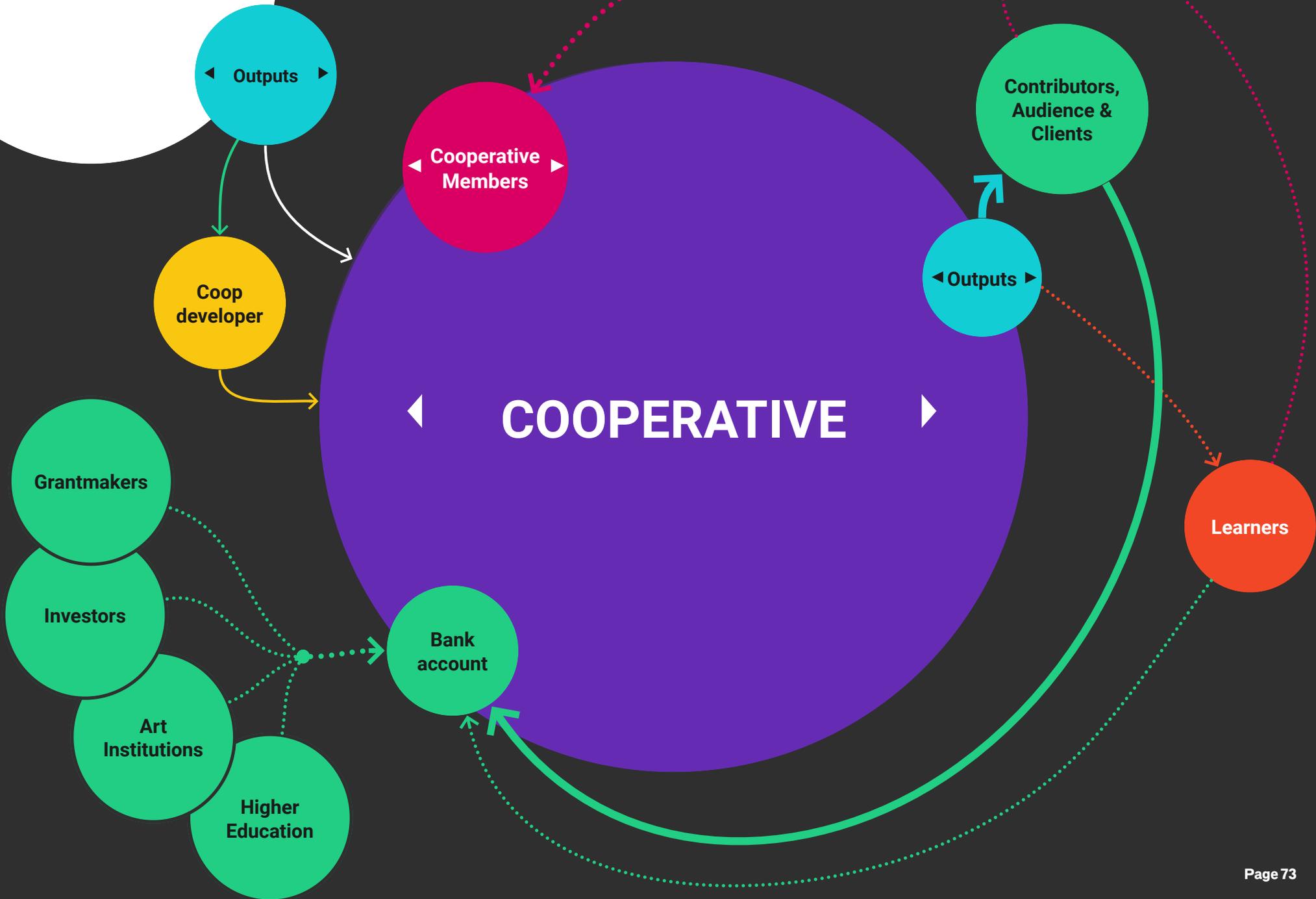
Other Hyperlocal Examples

See page 31 of this report for over 100 Creative Co-ops like Meerkat.

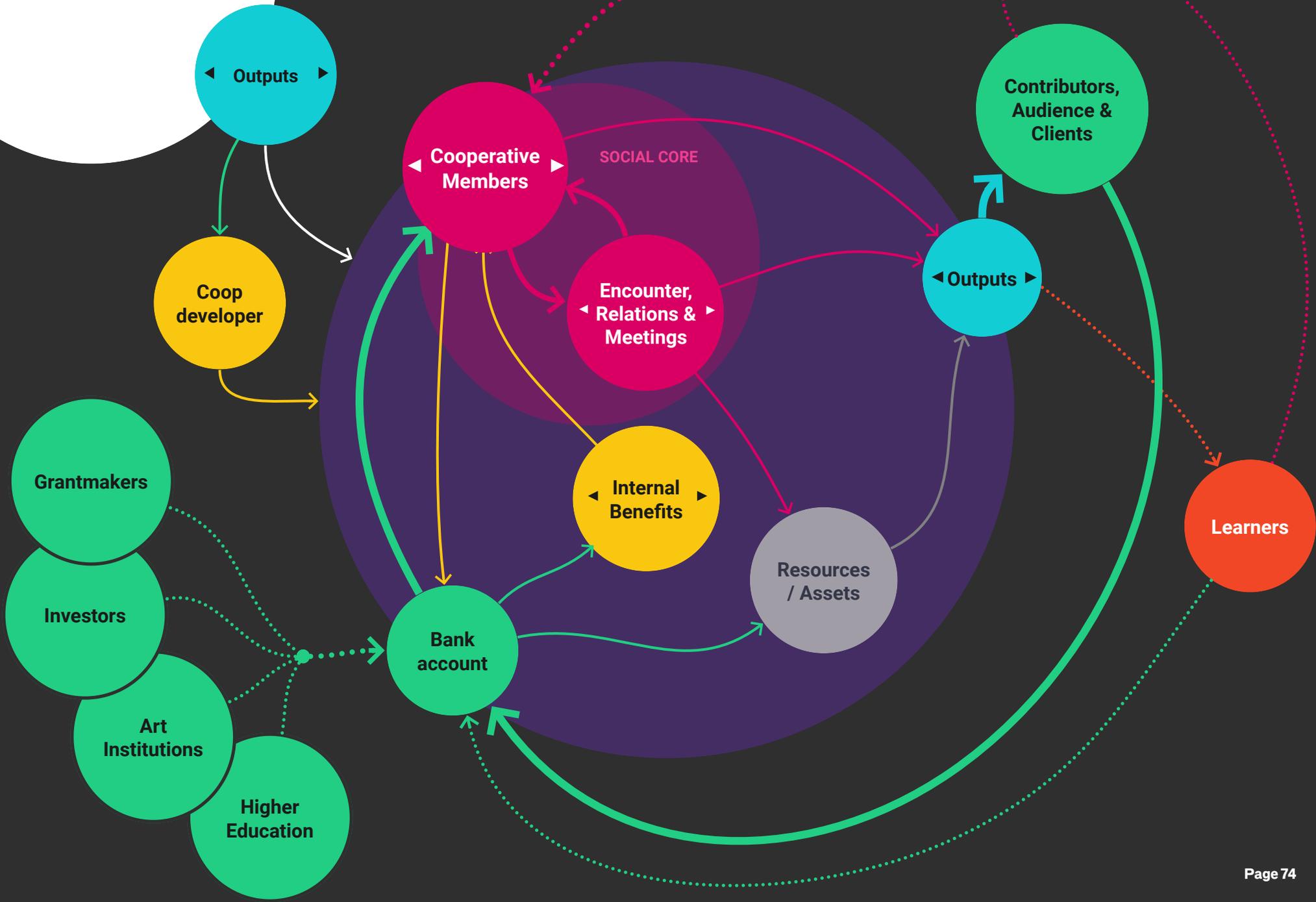
Meerkat Creative Pedagogy

Transferable Competencies	Cognitive Skills	Members of the production cooperative are paid \$30/hr to facilitate internal trainings, including: Facilitation Best Practices, Meerkat 101 (History and Context), Equipment, Software, Post-Production, and Conflict Management. These trainings introduce and reinforce cognitive skills in creative technology and problem solving.
	Collaborative Skills	The Meerkat Artist Collective make independent projects (not client facing) and have bi-weekly Critical Feedback Sessions to support one another's growth as artists. These sessions introduce and reinforce collaborative skills in oral communication, cultural fluency, and teamwork.
	Reflective Skills	In all of their work, Meerkat is committed to a consensus-based process that values diverse experience and expertise and works together to create feature-length films, animations, documentaries, and more. This process reinforces reflective skills of ethical entrepreneurship, power and ethics, and self-care.
Foundational Competencies	Collaborative Skills	In Public Workshops, Meerkat Co-op members who wish to be in the Outreach Working Group co-teach and co-facilitate public presentations and workshops about filmmaking and cooperative enterprise at art schools, art institutions, and at local community events. In these sessions, Foundational and Transferable Competencies in creativity and innovation are reinforced.
	Reflective Skills	Meerkat Internships are where emerging filmmakers are paid by Meerkat and supported in learning from all working groups and on film shoots with clients. This is where Foundational Competencies of craft and technique are introduced.

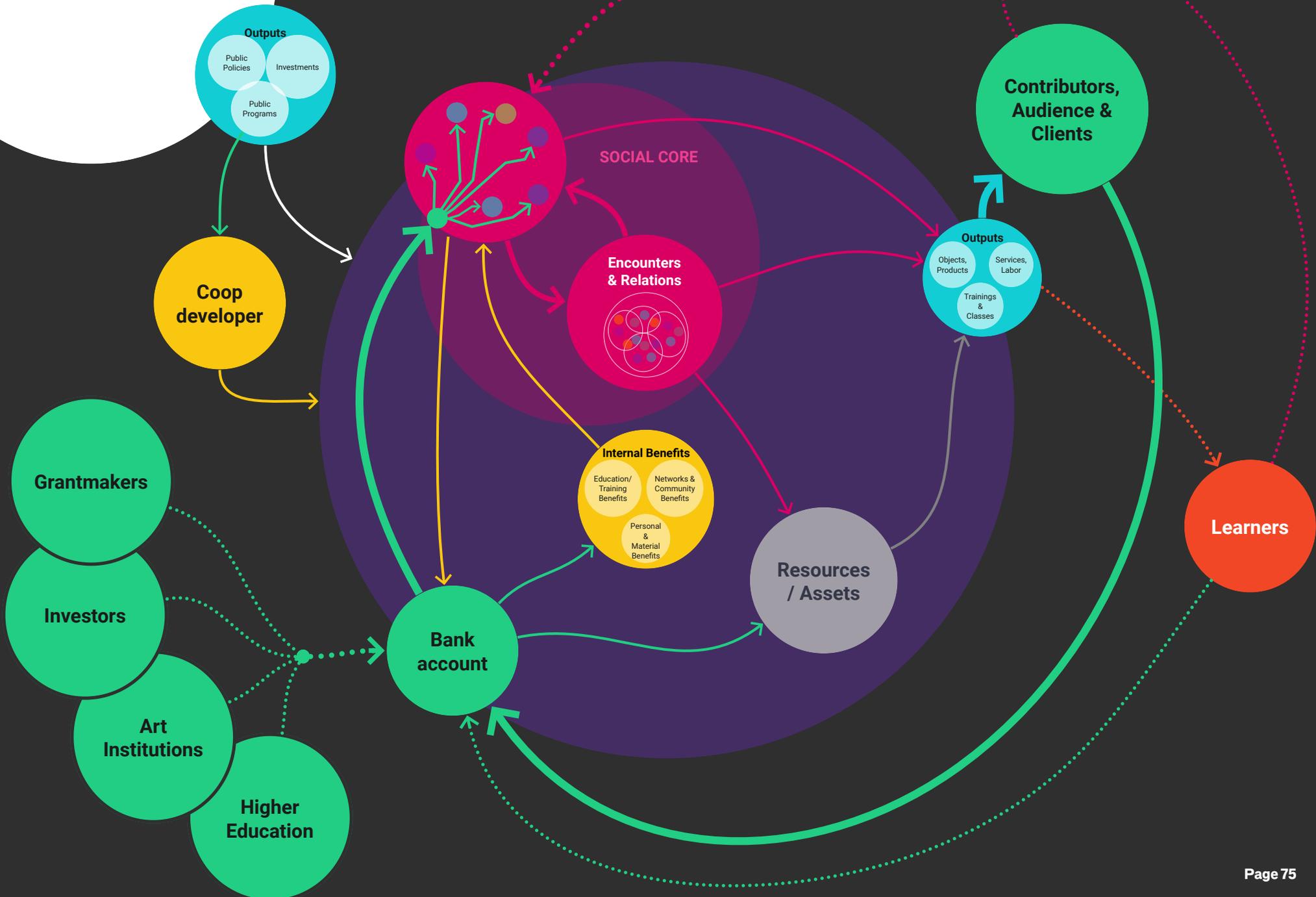
Public Sector



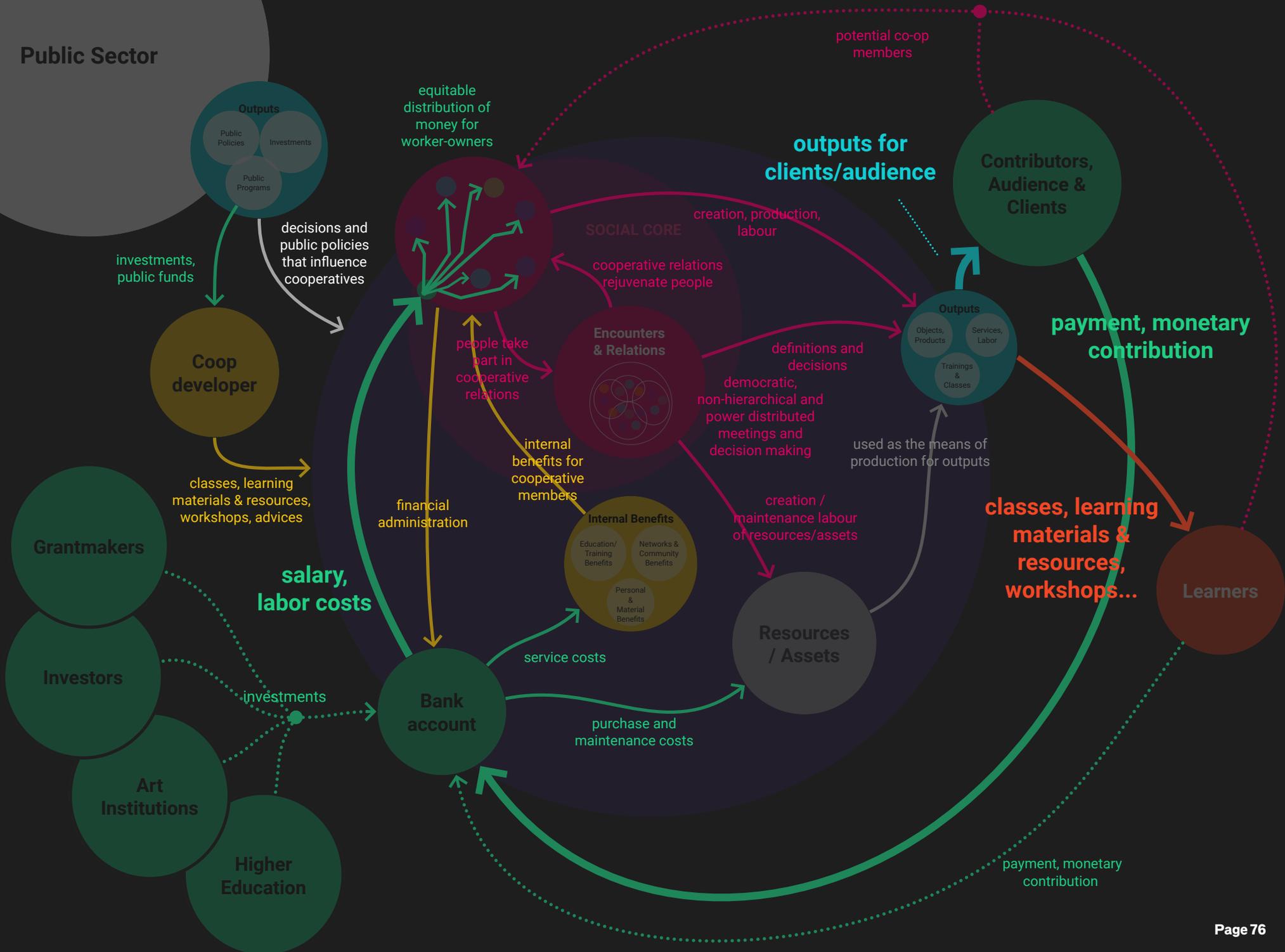
Public Sector



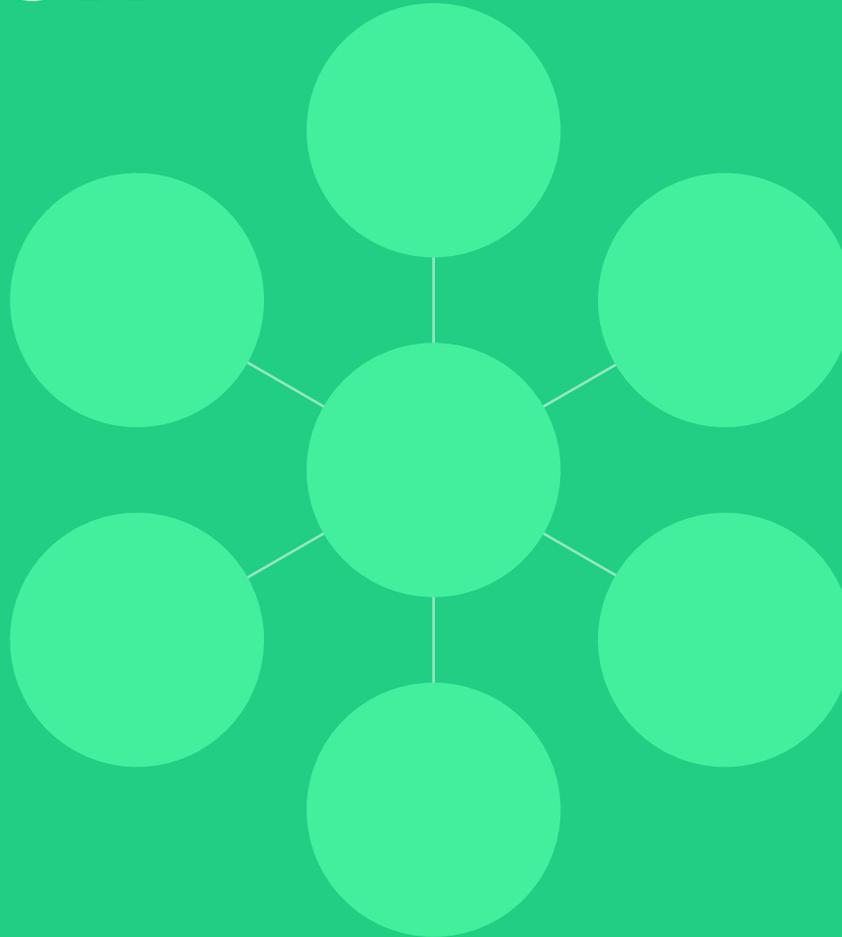
Public Sector



Public Sector



A Regional Cooperative Federation



Model of a *Movement Federation*

Cooperative Movement Federations, or networks that provide support, resources, funds, and benefits to each other, can enable sustainable learning because they...

- Can share knowledge at affordable and larger scales, by pooling cooperative resources and output, and
- Enable further funding for learning through collectivized advocacy efforts.

However, Movement Federations require a great amount of social coordination to be seeded, which often necessitates a larger scale up-front cost. Therefore, funding and investment will be crucial to encourage the formation of these regional or project-based federations that operate as federated schools or learning spaces.

How Resources Flow in a Movement Federation

Movement Federations connect individual cooperatives in one network. Together the network builds a collective pot of shared funds or membership dues and this collective pot can be invested in ways that the members agree upon, including learning and internal benefits. As networks, Movement Federations can bridge social and financial divides across scales; they can house just

cooperatives, a mix of cooperatives and other federations, or just federations. Each combination allows the Movement Federation to engage in regional and national advocacy as a united group. Strengths are paired, and more surplus is garnered to invest in learning and cross-federation internal benefits, which ensures community members can live healthily, sustainably, and with more accessible possibilities for learning.

Movement Federations bring their ability to work with governments and community-based organizations¹⁷⁵ to advocate for public policies and support the cooperative ecosystem, as advanced by the individual cooperatives that make up their membership. Movement Federations can also promote individual cooperatives' products and services through their networks.

Some regional, professional, or project-based networks and federations of cooperatives operate to produce revenue for its member cooperatives, by pooling outputs under a shared project (such as a federated school) and redistributing funds to its members. This is in contrast to many other federations that operate on a membership model, in which members pay the Movement Federation for membership and receive services. Many of the benefits gained from these federations will be through cooperation

at scale: pooled resources, pooled output, pooled cultural capital. However, these federations require a great amount of social coordination between cooperative members to create mission alignment and a strong social core, which is itself an up-front cost and barrier to formation. Funding and investment in Movement Federation development through shared resources and training will be important for the formation of these regional or project-based federations.

For Movement Federations, the increased number of member-cooperatives can gather larger amounts of pooled outputs and extra surplus, used to invest in learning flows, better internal benefits, resources and assets, and others, by:

- Sustaining the centralization of money flows from different input sources;
- Redistributing financial inflows to cooperative members and federated board;
- Increasing shared resources to provide internal benefits (such as business support, technical assistance) that reduces the amount of internal work necessary for each cooperative; and
- Exchanging creative outputs for money with a wider community that has a bigger reach than one cooperative alone.

This would allow a federation to...

- 1 create affordable learning spaces that are less reliant on students' tuition
- 2 by bundling the learning infrastructures and outputs, such as venues, teachers, learning materials, classes, and trainings,
 - a that are then provided to a learner for less or no money
 - b who could become part of a member cooperative or the federation board
- 3 and have a stronger presence when advocating for public policies that benefit both individual cooperatives and federations.

Advantages and Disadvantages of a Movement Federation

Movement Federations are strong in that they have increased surplus with which to invest in learning spaces and internal benefits, and can use this to mobilize the public sector and other audiences locally and nationally. Federations also have naturally close relationships with community-based organizations, which bolster their larger pool of assets and resources, redistributed by a centralized federation board

which reaffirms the Movement Federation's commitment to each individual cooperative member and their community.

However, they struggle with reaching regional populations with nuance, and can face challenges in the collective decision-making process. Movement Federations also often require specific mission alignment for cooperative members to join and for solidarity to function with ease and care. As such, they can rely on up-front and long-term social commitments between cooperative members.

A Regional *Movement Federation* Case Study: Boston Ujima Project

In 2018, after years of conversation and organizing work, the Boston Ujima Project launched the Ujima Fund, a democratic investment vehicle raising capital to finance small businesses, real estate, and infrastructure projects in Boston's working-class BIPOC communities.

Ujima, named for the Swahili word for collective work and responsibility, uses a participatory budgeting process in combination with traditional underwriting to put economic development decisions in the hands of community members. As a Movement Cooperative, Ujima connects multiple regional cooperatives, as well as conventional small businesses, individual artists, and BIPOC and working class residents of Boston to learn together, to make decisions about loans together, and invest in the cooperative economy of their region.

Boston Ujima Project: Monetary Flows

The Ujima Fund raises capital from investors and institutions from across the country, as well as from Ujima Voting Members (current and displaced working-class Boston residents, grassroots partner organizations, community

business owners and their employees), and Solidarity Members (non-voting members). Ujima also has a timebank which allows members to exchange time, rather than money, for resources as a way to expand notions of community wealth.

Boston Ujima Project: Creative Pedagogy

As the first democratically managed investment fund in the country, Boston Ujima places BIPOC arts and cultural organizing at the heart of its work. Since its launch, Ujima has put forth a number of cultural offerings.¹⁷⁶

Artists are listed as "Economy Builders" on the Ujima website, to "expand popular definitions" of what an artist is and can do. In addition to informal learning that happens in collaborative groups, multiple free and pay-what-you-can Ujima programs and learning opportunities center arts and culture, including:

- **The Ujima Arts and Cultural Organizing Fellowship**, where members can receive resources for two years of leadership development. This reinforces Foundational Competencies such as creativity and innovation and reinforces

Transferable Competencies such as leadership, problem solving, and project management.

- **Arts and Cultural Organizing Micro Learning Pods**, where members can meet monthly to build Foundational Competencies including disciplinary craft, technical skills, and creativity, as well as Transferable Competencies such as reflection, civic engagement, power and ethics, and self-care.
- **Black Trust: Chuck Turner Arts and Lecture Series**, where members study materials including poems alongside reports. Black Trust is an ongoing initiative to build a community space for engagement and celebration around economic, political, and cultural transformation. This builds and reinforces Transferable Competencies such as reflective skills, power and ethics, and career management.
- **Residency Residency** (forthcoming) provides subsidized rent for artists and cultural organizers so they can remain in community and do their work. This offers social and financial capital and reinforces Transferable Competencies such as self-care and project management skills.

1

Summary

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Intro

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EDU Justice

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Creative
Cooperatives

5

BIPOC-Led

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Models

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Low-Cost EDU

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Appendices

- **Demo Radio** (forthcoming) is a sound archive and radio show dedicated to highlighting the breadth of innovation produced in BIPOC communities in sound and music technology. This introduces and reinforces disciplinary craft and technology skills.
- **The 2021 Cultural Assembly** will provide \$55,000 in grants to BIPOC and working class artists and cultural organizers in Boston. As Ujima staff collaborate with Ujima members and allies to produce this participatory grantmaking process, skills in power and ethics, leadership, and creativity and innovation are reinforced.

Ujima events feature a combination of artists, cultural organizers, leading thinkers, authors, and organizers whose work ties to their own. The Ashe Ashe 2021 Cultural Assembly is an opportunity for “artists and cultural organizers to come together to set collective priorities and develop practices for shared political power and economic development in Boston.”¹⁷⁷ With \$5 million raised as of 2021, comprising \$4.5 million of multi-tiered investment capital and \$500,000 of grant capital, Ujima is building a community-controlled economy in Boston. While Ujima’s financial support is helping with this goal, they (and their partners) need additional support from grantmakers, the public sector, higher education, and arts institutions to transform the culture of learning across their federation.

See Recommendations on page 119 for more.

We must create the air we are walking in, positively impacting what is considered normal and possible. A cultural shift... Imagination is an essential piece of our effort to build the new world. Cultural workers are economy builders. With that understanding we strive to provide artists with a space to organize and advocate on behalf of themselves and their neighbors.

—Nia Evans,
Director, Boston Ujima Project

Boston Ujima Project



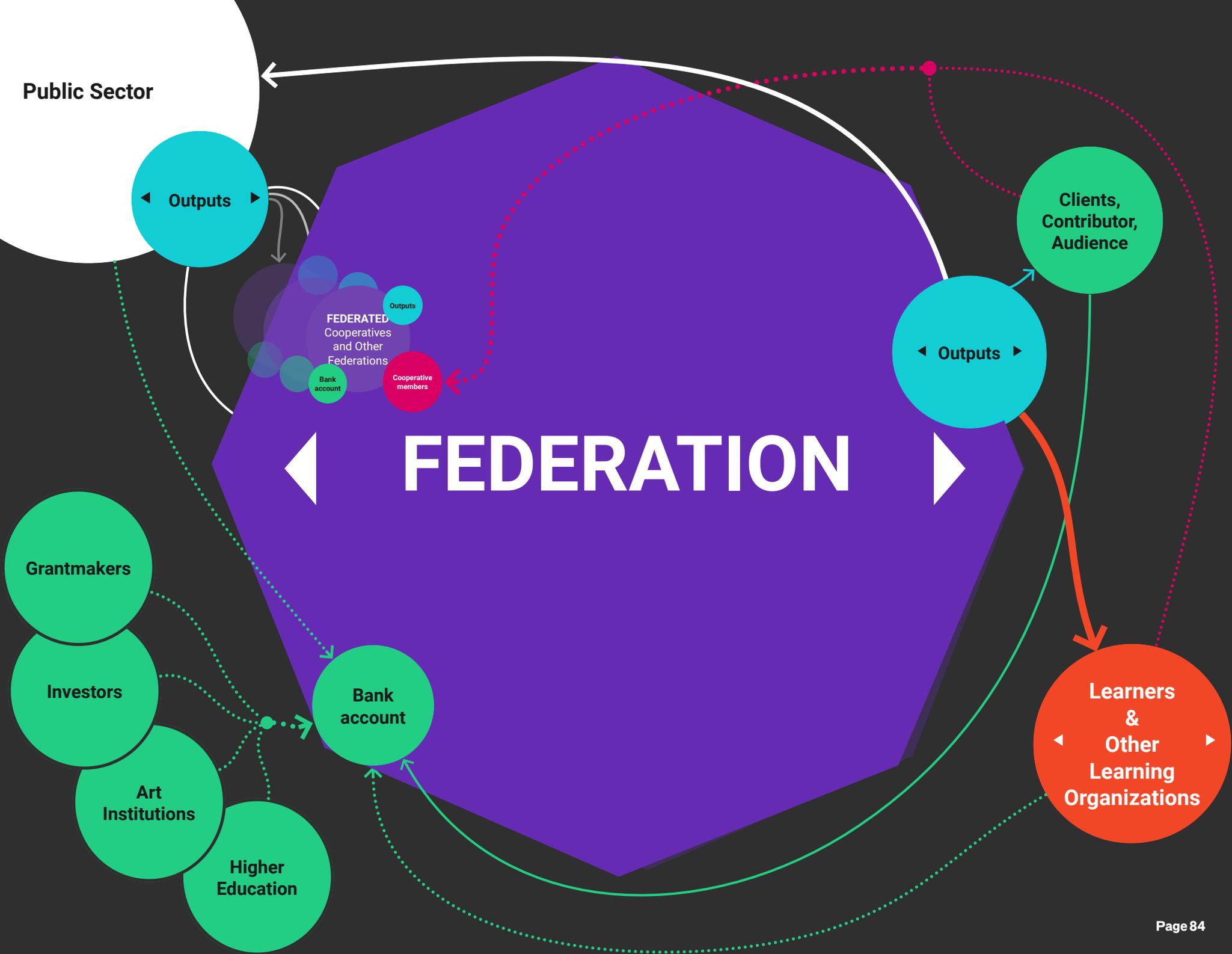
Adapted from the Boston Ujima Project with permission.

Boston Ujima Project: Creative Pedagogy

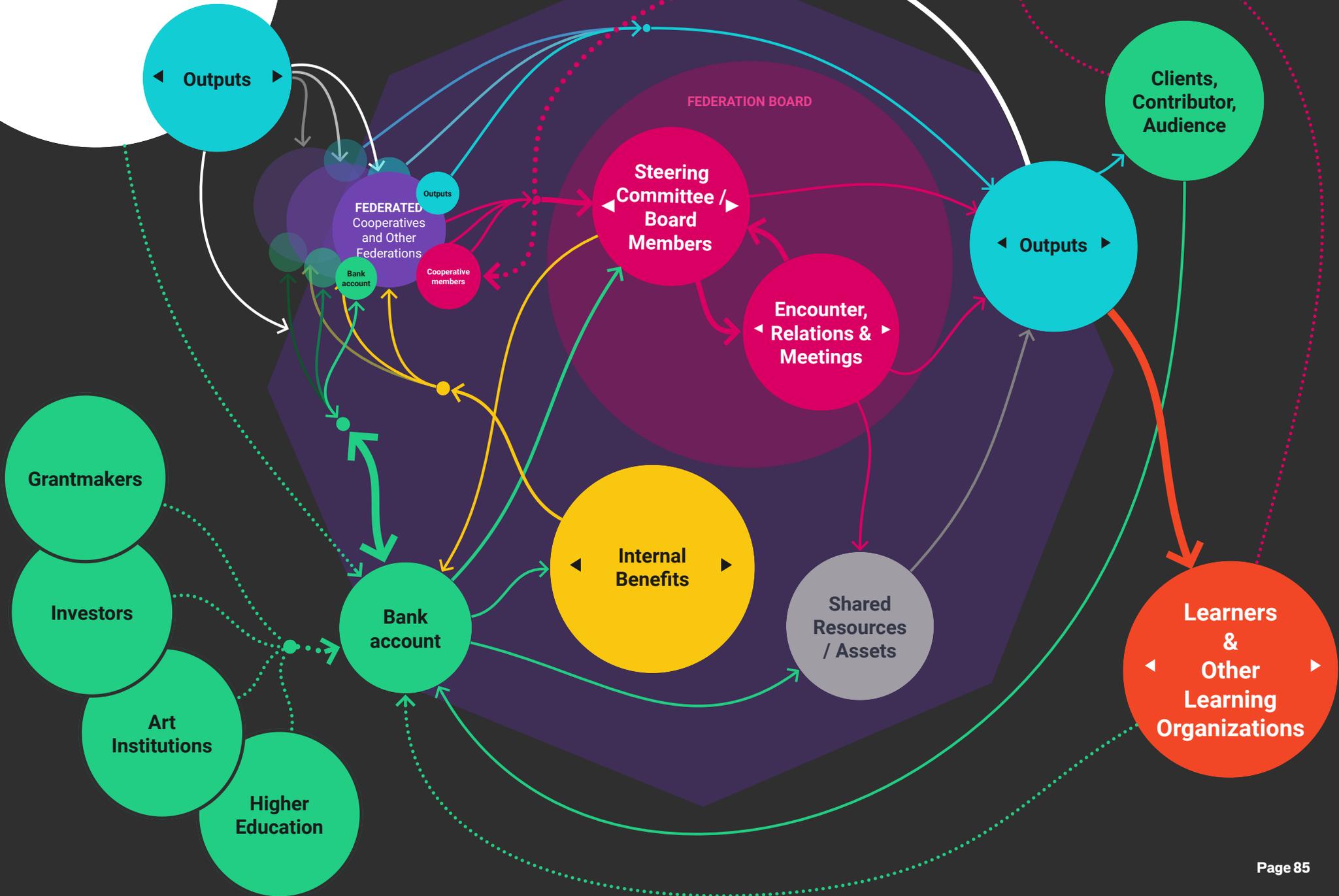
Transferable Competencies	Cognitive Skills	Each month, members of Ujima meet in Arts and Cultural Organizing Micro Learning Pods to share skills, start creative projects individually and together, share work in progress, and to reinforce cognitive skills in digital and creative technology, work ethic, and problem solving.
	Collaborative Skills	The Ujima Arts and Cultural Organizing Fellowship is where members receive resources for one year of leadership development. This reinforces Transferable Competencies such as leadership, problem solving, and project management as Fellows lead projects within Ujima as well as continue their existing organizing work in community, with culture at the center.
	Reflective Skills	In all of their work, Meerkat is committed to a consensus-based process that values diverse experience and expertise and works together to create feature-length films, animations, documentaries, and more. This process reinforces reflective skills of ethical entrepreneurship, power and ethics, and self-care.
Foundational Competencies	Collaborative Skills	Residency Residency subsidizes rent for artists and cultural organizers so they can remain in community and do their work. This offers social and financial capital and reinforces skills of creativity and innovation as organizers are supported in making their work.
	Reflective Skills	The 2021 Cultural Assembly will provide \$60k in grants to BIPOC and working-class artists and cultural organizers in Boston. As Ujima staff collaborate with Ujima members and allies to produce this participatory grantmaking process, skills in power and ethics, leadership, and creativity and innovation are reinforced.

Diagram adapted by authors with permission from the Herberger Institute for Design & the Arts, Dr. Stephani Ethridge-Woodson, Dr. Allison Hall, Dr. Megan Workmon Larsen and Xanthia Walker. The National Association for Continuing Education has approved these competencies.

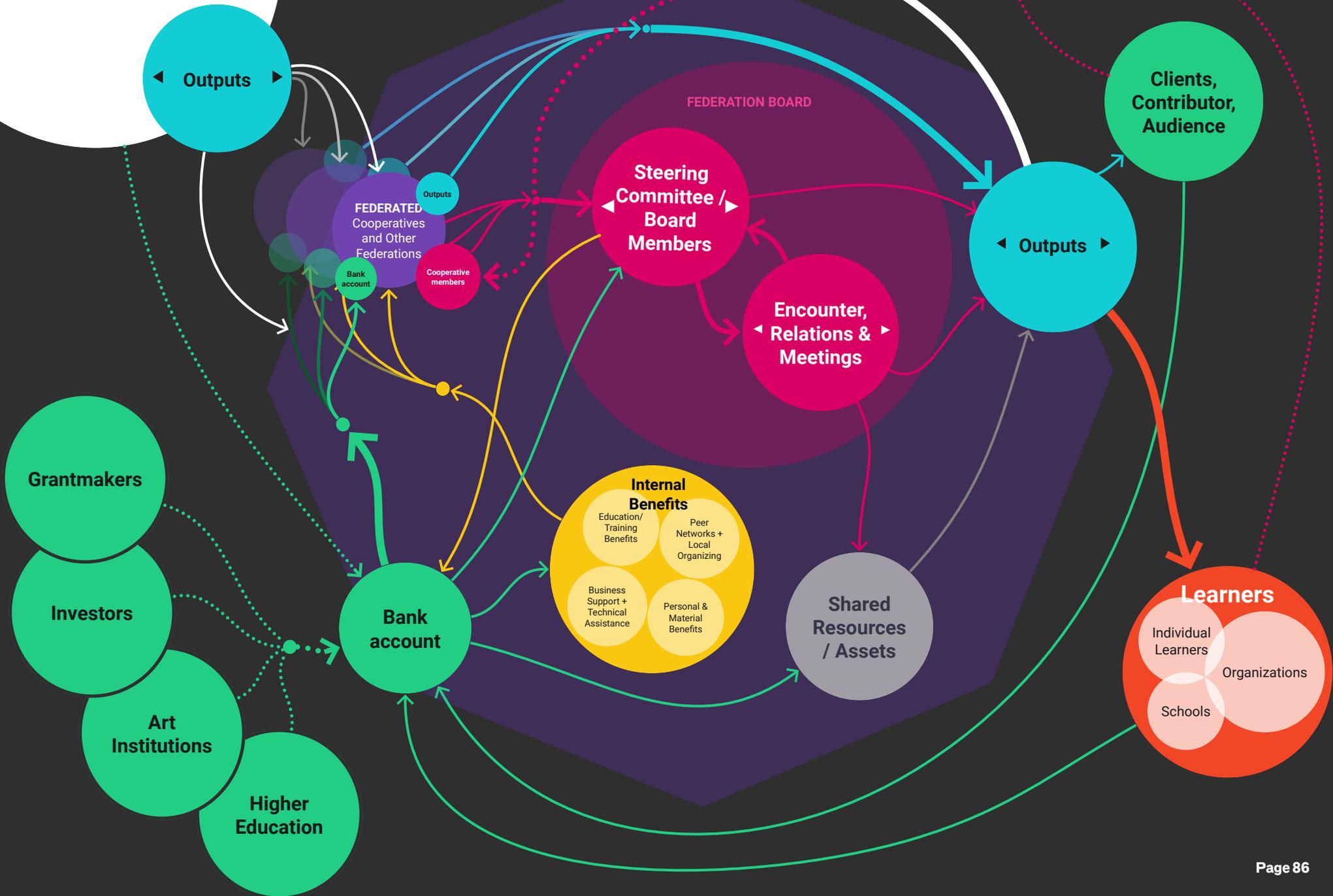
Public Sector



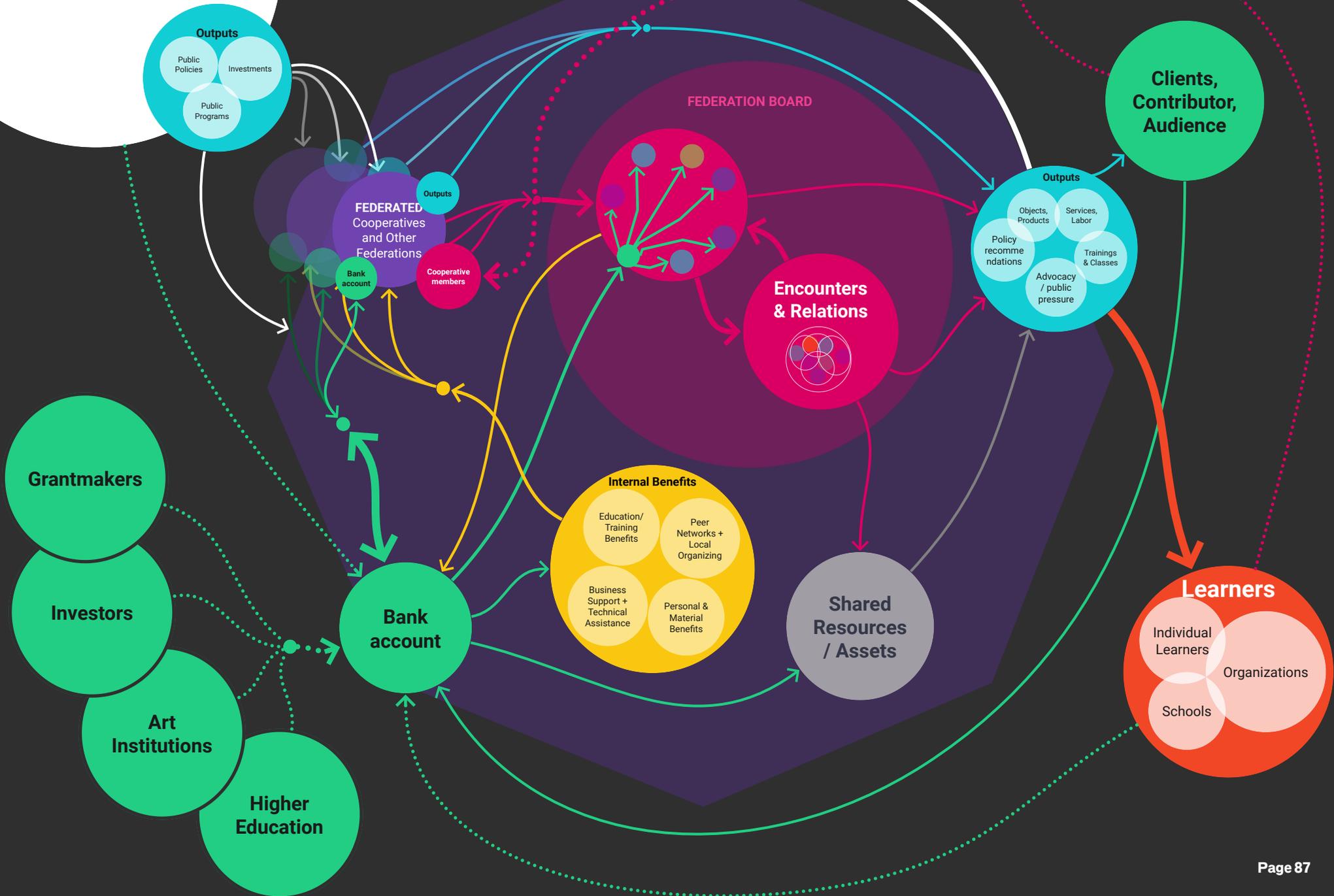
Public Sector



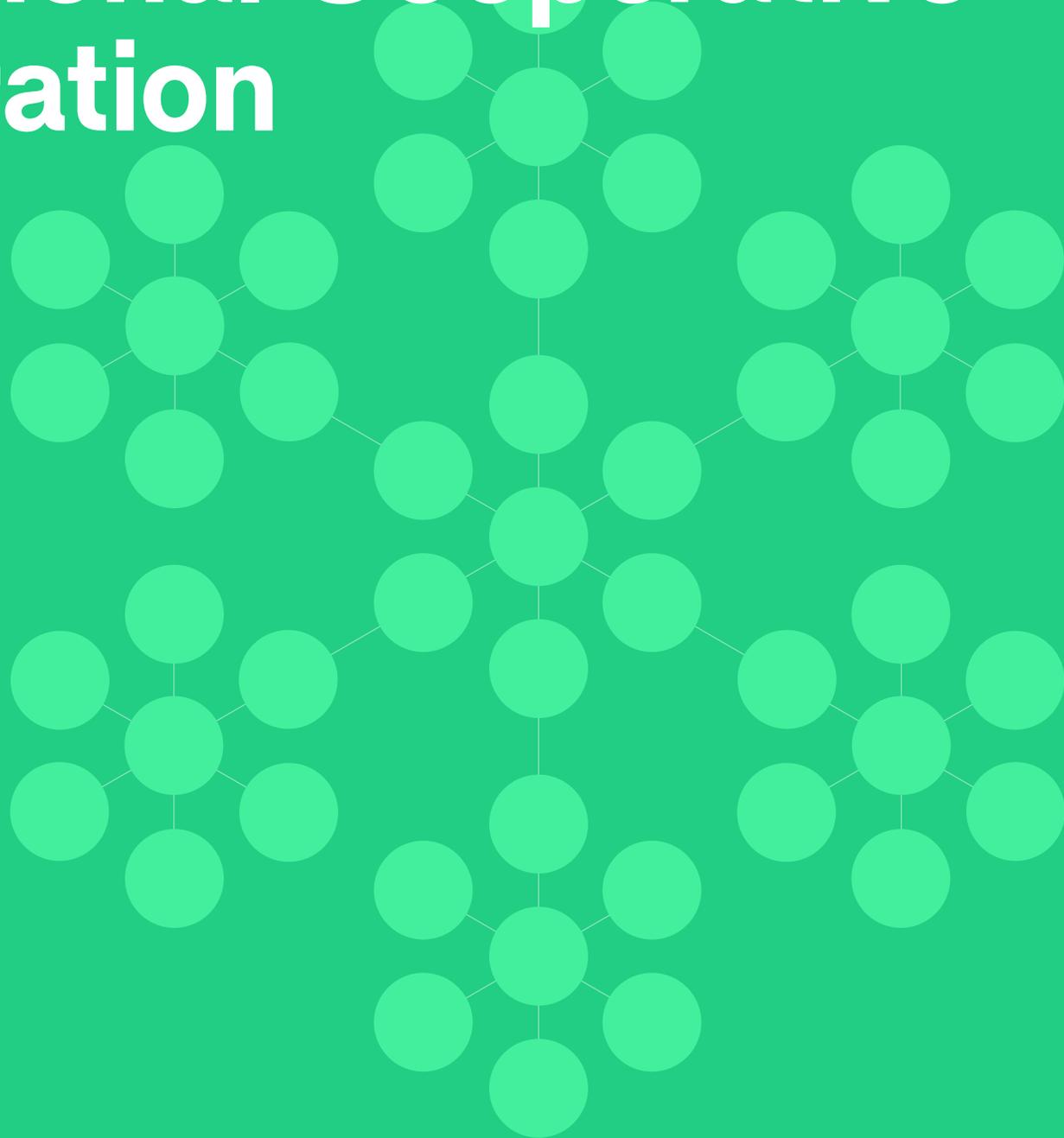
Public Sector



Public Sector



A National Cooperative Federation



A National *Movement Federation* Case Study: US Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC)

The United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC) is the national grassroots membership organization for worker cooperatives. The USFWC's mission is to "build a thriving cooperative movement of stable, empowering jobs through worker-ownership. [They] advance worker-owned, -managed, and -governed workplaces through cooperative education, advocacy and development."¹⁷⁸ The federation includes more than 300 business and organizational members representing 10,000 workers across the country, organized through regional cooperative networks while building power with national and international partners to advance an agenda for economic justice rooted in community-based, shared ownership.

The USFWC was founded in 2004 when a core of worker co-op members came together with co-op developers, scholars, community organizers, and supporters from the broader co-op sector to strengthen worker co-ops through a national, sector-specific organization. Building on growing momentum, this founding event brought together worker co-op practitioners from the existing Western Worker Co-op Conference and the Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy, as well as key players in Midwest and Southern states,

to galvanize and support rising interest in the worker co-op business model.

As of fall 2021, their membership consists of worker co-ops, democratic workplaces (consumer cooperatives, non-profits, and ESOPs with democratic staff management), Cooperative Developers, and various organizations and individuals that support worker cooperatives. These federation members range from 2 to 2,000 workers and span dozens of industries with varying management and governance structures.

USFWC: Monetary Flows

The primary sources of USFWC's capital are annual dues from Federation members, as well as grants, program consulting contracts, and donations from the general public. These funds are supplemented by financial and other support (provided via grants, consulting and program contracts, and individual donations from the broader public), and managed by a member-elected board with support from its Policy and Advocacy, Racial and Economic Justice, Union Co-ops, and Movimiento de Inmigrantes in Cooperativas member councils. In addition, members can gain access to a Worker Ownership Loan Fund (WOLF),

which USFWC participates in through a partnership with Shared Capital Cooperative. WOLF "provides financing to worker-owned co-ops to create democratic jobs, especially in low-income communities."¹⁷⁹

USFWC: Creative Pedagogy

While the USFWC does not name arts and culture in their mission or history, the federation just launched a cooperative for freelancers that centers artists and culture-bearers called Guided, and at least half of the staff at the federation are practicing artists or visual learners who use cultural organizing strategies in their daily work.¹⁸⁰ For example, Daniel Park, USFWC Project Coordinator, is a founding worker-owner of a BIPOC-led Creative Co-op called Obvious Agency, and also facilitates convenings for institutions such as ArtPlace America (before it sunsetted) and Creatives Rebuild New York.

Throughout the programs that the federation offers, Foundational Competencies in the arts are introduced and developed, including technical skills, creativity, and innovation, as well as Transferable Competencies such as collaboration, reflection (i.e. self-care, power, and ethics, and project management) and cognitive

skills of critical and creative thinking, digital technology, and professionalism. See Page 10 for an overview of Examples of Education in Co-ops.

USFWC offers its members a range of educational spaces, tools, and programs, including:

- The National Worker Cooperative Conference, Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy, Western Worker Cooperative Conference and other regional conferences, to which members can get discounted tickets. Here, members can hone Foundational Competencies including disciplinary craft and technical skills, as well as Transferable Competencies such as reflection, civic engagement, cultural fluency, and communication.
- Skill-based in-person and online workshops for worker-owners to learn about democratic workplace experiences. These workshops cater to members with varying familiarity with the cooperative space, and offer members space to focus on Foundational Competencies like creativity and innovation, in addition to Transferable Competencies such as reflection, ethics, professionalism, and teamwork.
- Member councils and peer networks, including the aforementioned Policy and Advocacy, Racial and Economic Justice, Union Co-ops, and Movimiento de Inmigrantes in Cooperativas member councils, where USFWC members can

engage Foundational Competencies like creativity and innovation, and Transferable Competencies like teamwork, communication, and project management.

- The Co-op Clinic, which provides specialized technical assistance to worker owners and cooperatives in setting up financial, governance, operations, and decision-making structures, and builds transferable competencies for democratic management.
- A Policy and Advocacy Council that helps worker owners make their collective voices heard in policy advocacy, and Advocacy Fellows program that trains and coaches worker owners to become spokespeople and advocates for state policy. Here, members can engage Transferable Competencies in problem solving, ethics, civic engagement, and cultural fluency.

While USFWC has a well-established record of organizing cooperatives, they struggle to reach individual worker owners. Additional support from grantmakers, the public sector, higher education, and arts institutions could bolster USFWC's regional outreach. See Recommendations on page 119 for more.

Other Regional Examples of Cooperative Networks and Federations

Arizmendi Association of Cooperatives
Oakland CA
arizmendi.coop

Austin Cooperative Business Association
Austin, TX
acba.coop

Baltimore Roundtable for Economic Democracy (BRED)
Baltimore, MD
baltimoreroundtable.org

Co-op Cincy
Cincinnati, OH
coopcincy.org

Cooperation Buffalo
Buffalo, NY
cooperationbuffalo.org

Cooperation Jackson
Jackson, MS
cooperationjackson.org

Cooperation Richmond
Richmond, CA
cooperationrichmond.org

Cooperation Worcester
Worcester, MA
cooperationworcester.org

Cooperative Economics Alliance of New York City (CEANYC)
New York, NY
gocoopnyc.com

Cooperative Maine Business Alliance
Maine
maine.coop

Cooperatives United for Sunset Park (CUSP)
Brooklyn, NY
cusp.coop

Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund
Epes, AL
federationsoutherncoop.com

Greater Boston Chamber of Cooperatives
Boston, MA
boston.coop

Green Mountain Worker Cooperative Alliance
Vermont
facebook.com/GMWCA

LA Co-op Lab
Los Angeles, CA
lacooplab.com

LA Union Cooperative Initiative (LUCI)
Los Angeles, CA
Luci.coop

Madison Worker Co-ops (MadWorC)
Madison, WI
madworc.org

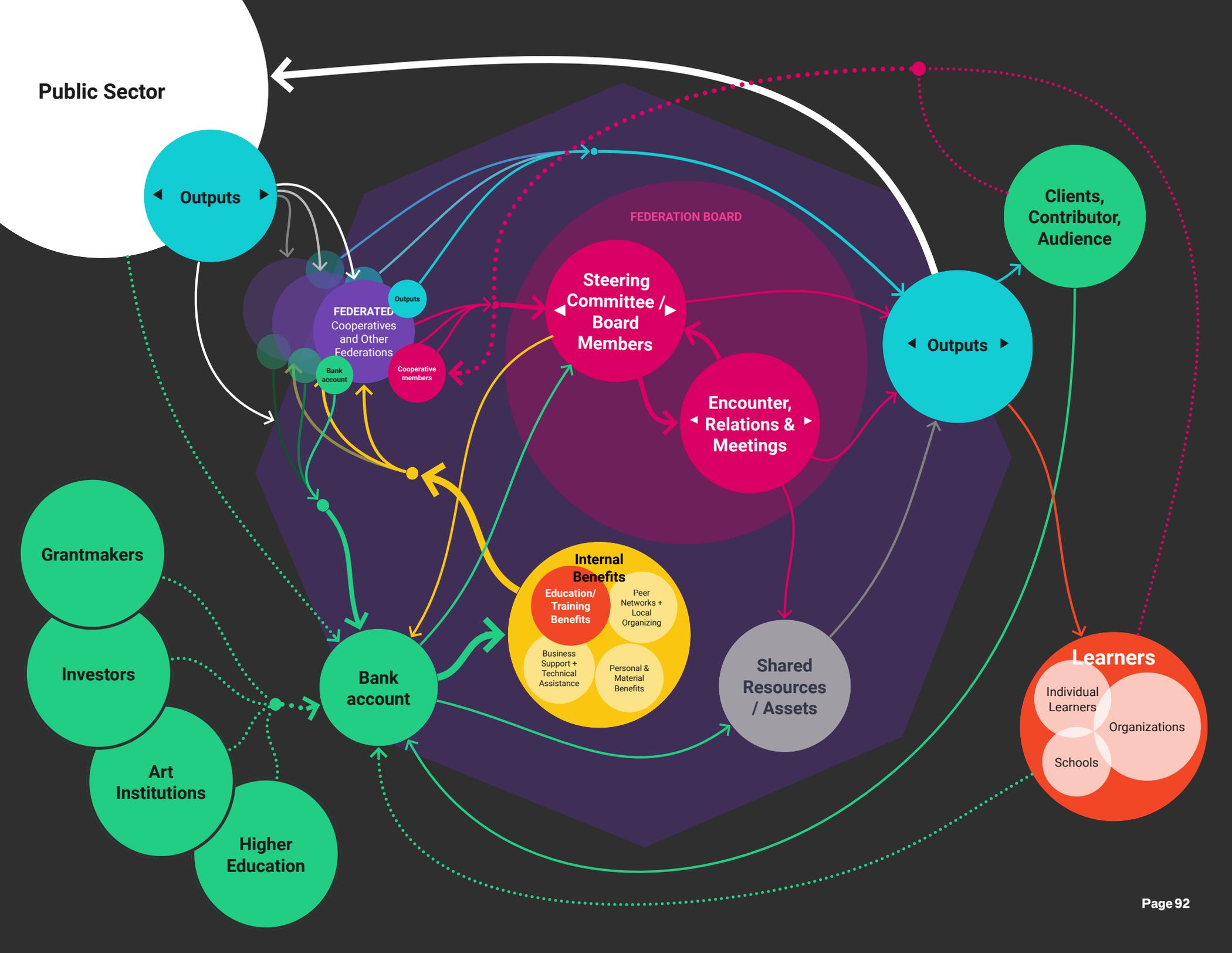
Network of Bay Area Worker Co-ops (NoBAWC)
Oakland, CA
nobawc.org

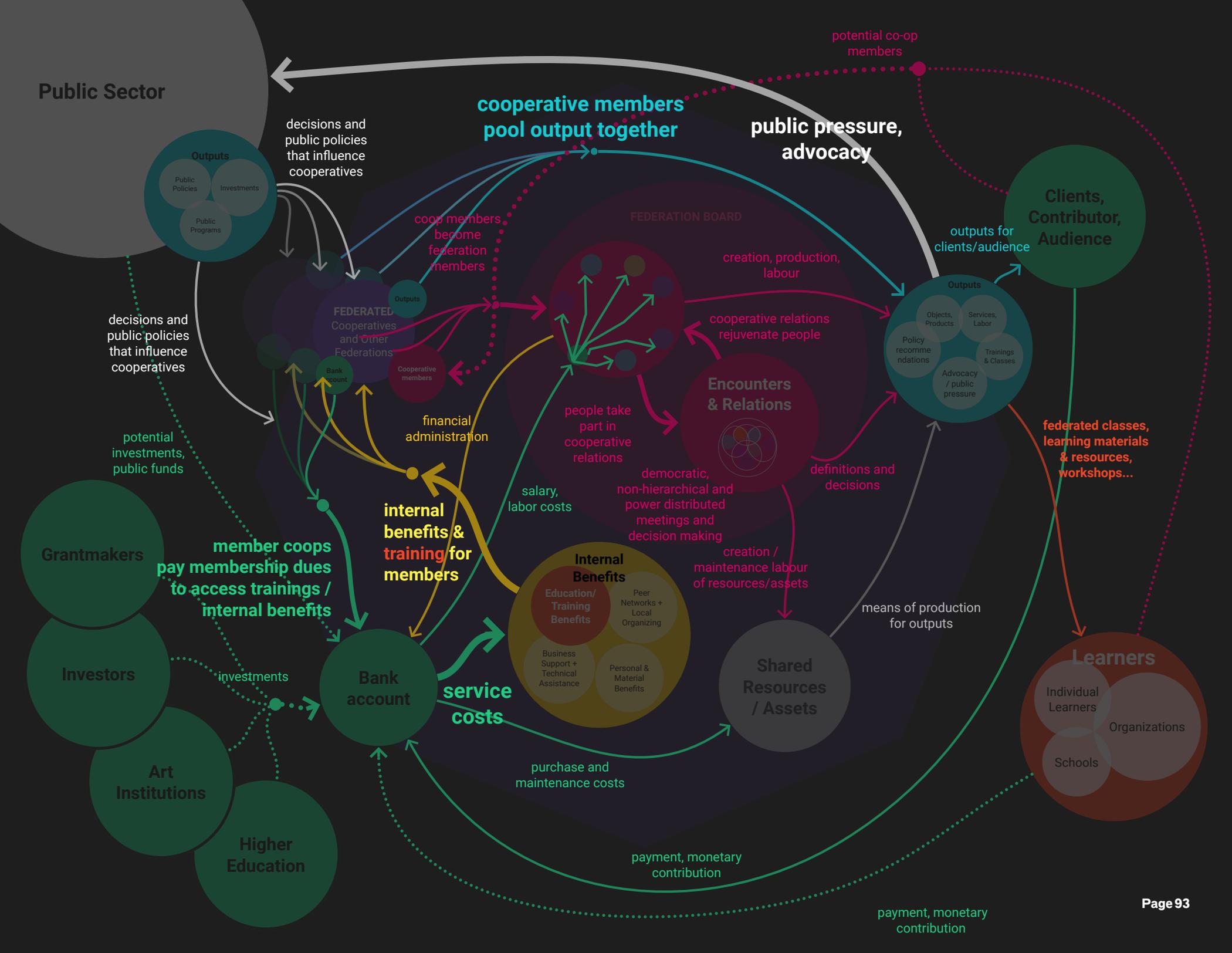
NYC Network of Worker Co-ops (NYCNOWC)
Brooklyn, NY
nycworker.coop

Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA)
Philadelphia, PA
philadelphia.coop

SE Center for Co-op Development
Nashville, TN
co-opsnow.org

Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops (VAWC)
Northampton, MA
valleyworker.coop





A Movement Platform

Model of a *Movement Platform*

Movement Platforms are cooperatively created platforms—like formats for gathering, groups of community organizers, or software—that can help create sustainable learning spaces, because they:

- Provide more resources and learning spaces by bundling flows and providing efficiencies of scale that would have previously required federating; and
- Enable many forms of cooperative participation, which expand the scope and reach of many learning spaces and communities, including online communities, remote reading groups, hybrid study cohorts, in-person governance assemblies, and collaborative funds.

Still, platforms require a high up-front cost to be directed towards creating partnerships with cooperatives and federations; these actions can be funded and invested in by grantmakers and funders.

How Resources Flow in a Movement Platform

Movement Platforms refer to software and collective practices that allow resources to flow between groups at scale. For example, the facilitation and governance practices of sociology are equally important as collectively

owned online software such as platform cooperatives.¹⁸¹ Both are Movement Platforms; social and technical infrastructure that allow cooperatives and federations to share resources at larger scales. The resources and flows that Movement Platforms support would have otherwise been much slower and more painful (as happens in groups without facilitation and governance practices) or would be created by a non-cooperative company at great expense to the cooperative or federation.

Movement Platforms are built and maintained by a team that functions as a cooperative. The platforms are essentially “flow modifiers” that mediate the connection between two elements; platforms bundle and transform flows, such as the flow of resources, money, labor, work, etc.

We use “Movement Platforms” as an umbrella term instead of “platform cooperatives” to indicate that many platforms are also non-computational and offline, and used by cooperatives to bundle and transform flows. For example: a collective library on various tax structures can allow cooperatives to share information on their structures and learn from peers; a physical cooperative “bank,” or money roundabout, can centralize and distribute incoming investments and contributions from multiple stakeholders to multiple cooperatives with relative ease; an assembly platform can allow cooperatives and federations to run easy

and more accessible voting processes for their memberships. Given that nearly half of low-income people in the United States do not have reliable access to broadband, a laptop, or a desktop, and a quarter do not have a smartphone,¹⁸² and that 1 in 5 people in the United States will be over 65 years old by 2040,¹⁸³ it is essential that non-computational solutions are honored for their capacity to unlock flows at scale. For example, a facilitated format for gathering and making decisions that is socialized by community organizers, or a network of regional organizers, can also enable cooperatives and federations to flow more smoothly and to scale.

In order for platforms to support the Solidarity Economy, the development and use of platforms need to happen in tandem with a strong cooperative culture that prioritizes personal participation and involvement and is reflective about power dynamics. To ensure that this happens, supporting accessible and cooperatively run spaces for learning are crucial for sharing and maintaining a culture of cooperation.

With computational Movement Platforms, the high up-front cost and investments needed to develop these platforms often makes it impossible to develop by under-resourced movements and cooperatives. The majority of platforms that play the role of “flow modifier”

are not cooperatives because they rely upon traditional venture capital looking for the greatest economic, rather than social, return on investment. To avoid the domination of these venture capital-funded platforms, co-op platforms require non-extractive investments and initial investments and funds from external agents (e.g.: grantmakers and investors), to be created by or in partnership with cooperatives and federations, which would allow the Movement Platform to...

- 1 gather resources from external contributors (money or other support),
- 2 process the resources (output) through the platform with some retained for platform development and administrative services to cooperatives and federations (learners),
- 3 and sustain a flow of money through multiple under- and unconnected collectively governed creative spaces.

**We create infrastructure so
that when the most pressing
crisis goes away, the social
fabric remains.**

—Pia Mancini, Open Collective

A Movement Platform Case Study: Open Collective

Open Collective launched in 2015, to offer solutions to a basic need: informal groups, like collectives, have few places to put their shared money. For example, if a group raises \$1,000 for a project that builds community power—like a mutual aid group, a skillshare, a giving circle, a timebank, or a tool library—who is going to hold onto the money that was raised? Open Collective allows groups to legally spend and collect money without incorporating, opening a bank account, or unfairly burdening an individual in the group with responsibility for collective funds and complicating their taxes. Combining a tech platform with fiscal sponsorship, Open Collective can take on the compliance side—like dealing with the IRS—so that groups can focus on their work.

The platform allows aligned groups to operate under the umbrella of a legal entity, called a “fiscal host” (fiscal sponsor) or just a “host”—for example, a nonprofit 501(c)(3). The cutting-edge payments and budget management platform tracks everything transparently. The host team processes the groups’ transactions and handles all tax reporting, banking, liability, contracts, etc., according to regulations of the country where the host is. In this way, Open Collective is an innovative “fiscal sponsor of the future,” allowing groups to be hosted by any node in a globally connected, hyperlocal network of legal entities. For example, the Kola Nut Collaborative timebank is hosted by Open Collective Foundation 501(c)(3) and LinuxServer is hosted by Open Source Collective 501(c)(6). Each node, or “host” on the platform offers their legal status to the groups that they support. There are 100-plus hosts on the platform now, each serving 1 to 2800 collectives.

Open Collective considers themselves to be a steward of a legal, financial, and technical commons—a piece of shared infrastructure—very much aligned with the Movement Platform conceptual framework outlined on page 95 of this report. When an improvement (whether technical, policy, or

knowledge-based) is made that supports a host and its collectives in one location, it can propagate out to all other hosts around the world, because it is an online platform.

The unique impact of Open Collective lies in leveraging the commons and network effects to connect grassroots initiatives with funds that they would not be able to access otherwise due to legal barriers, e.g. they need access to 501(c)(3) status to receive a grant, to open a bank account, or to provide invoices/receipts to funders.

Open Collective: Monetary Flows

Open Collective is an unconventional fundraising and spending platform because it enables groups to borrow the legal status and bank account of another organization as a fiscal sponsor. Any legal entity can use the tech platform as a way to host groups that want to spend and collect money transparently. Hosts that provide services to their collectives for free can use the platform for free. If hosts charge a fee to their collectives, Open Collective asks for a 15% cut of that host fee. For example, if a host charges a 5% fee and a group raises \$1,000, the host takes \$50 and passes \$7.50 of that to Open Collective, leaving the collective with \$950.

How can
collectives learn
to collaborate with
money?

—Alanna Irving,
Open Collective member
and co-Founder of Loomio,
CoBudget, and Enspiral

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Open Collective, as a Movement Platform, has created multiple fiscal hosts in different countries and topic areas, to be directly connected to the communities they serve, testing out software features and improving services in response to community needs on a daily basis.

Two hosts founded and operated by the same people who founded Open Collective Inc (the company that builds the tech platform) are Open Collective Foundation, a US 501(c)(3), and Open Source Collective, a US 501(c)(6). The latter, Open Source Collective, supports open source developers to be able to do their work for the commons without working for non-cooperative companies. Open Collective Foundation supports the solidarity economy movement in the United States, with over 150 mutual aid groups and 100+ other solidarity economy initiatives using the platform as of 2021. Fiscal hosts charge a “host fee” to resource their operating costs (4-8% for OCF and 10% for OSC), with 15% of that host fee going back to Open Collective Inc to fund improving the tech platform itself. Groups hosted by Open Collective Foundation raised over \$5 million dollars in 2020 (set to top \$10m in 2021), thus passing significant resources to Open Collective Inc to maintain and improve the software platform. In this way, the platform is sustained and requests from collectives can be implemented as tech features that all hosts in the entire ecosystem can use.¹⁸⁴

Open Collective, as a Movement Platform, demonstrates the ways that non-extractive

investment and grants can build shared wealth and shared power. The co-founders raised nearly \$3 million with investors who agreed to: (1) not have majority ownership and (2) not be able to force dividends because they do not have board seats. In fact, the \$3 million can be paid back as debt (the platform began making profit in 2020), as shown in the term sheets.¹⁸⁵ This means that, unlike most venture-backed start-ups, Open Collective can pay computer engineers at market-rate and also guarantee that the platform works to build a culture of shared stewardship so that it can eventually be given back to the people who use it, to maintain and control collectively.

Open Collective Inc is currently legally structured as an C-Corp with owners, investors, and employees, but is run in practice as a worker collective where individuals are empowered to participate fully in decision-making. Open Collective members are now in discussions with advisors about the best way for the thousands of groups worldwide that rely on the platform to steward it and share ownership.

To do this work, Open Collective is partnering with Exit to Community (E2C), an effort to develop alternatives to the standard model of the startup “exit.” Rather than simply aiming for an acquisition by a more established company or a public stock offering, E2C asks: “Could startups aim to mature into ownership by their community of stakeholders?”¹⁸⁷ Recognizing that creative learning environments center embodied, heart-opening gatherings that

VC funding didn't completely make sense to us because we knew the exit paths (IPO or Sale) didn't feel right. We were never willing to go all hypergrowth at any cost or sell OC and risk our mission.¹⁸⁶

— Pia Mancini, Co-Founder and member of Open Collective

can develop and sustain a culture of shared ownership, Open Collective has allocated time and money to Art.coop Study-into-Action, Community Forums, and ongoing learning initiatives.

Open Collective: Creative Pedagogy

Open Collective, as a Movement Platform, allows collectives to meet one another, connect, and share knowledge and lived experiences so that they may learn and grow together. In addition to informal learning that happens in collaborative groups, the following formal learning opportunities are made available by Open Collective, to the public:

- **The Sustain Conference** is coordinated by Open Source Collective, a host on the Open Collective platform. Sustain is an in-person gathering for Open Source developers that occurs in community-organized locations internationally. Each event is led by a team of facilitators and emphasizes competencies of analog teamwork and collaboration. Phones and laptops are not to be used throughout the day and participants are asked to put devices away if they are a distraction to anyone. Competencies of critical thinking, power, and ethics are reinforced as participants create shared vocabulary and terms of organizing for shared livelihoods in and sustainable open source projects.
- **Open Collective Foundation's monthly Community Forum** is emerging in the winter of 2021 as a place for groups, collectives, and initiatives to share ideas, offers, and needs, with one another. In this new forum facilitated by Mike Strode, Open Collective aims to introduce and reinforce competencies of project management, technical skills, and cultural fluency as groups build relationships with one another and get a sense of ways to shape and steward the platform of Open Collective itself. ¹⁸⁸
- **Art.coop Study-into-Action** is supported by Open Collective Foundation, a host on the Open Collective platform. Study-into-Action

is a pilot for a series of future learning programs and currently enables cultural innovators across silos—creatives, organizers, popular educators, grant-makers, and policymakers—to socialize, study, and dream together in order to take collective action. Competencies of cultural fluency, creativity and innovation, and oral communications are reinforced in the facilitated sessions that follow public webinars on topics ranging from legal structures for cooperatives to 'zine making with the Boston Ujima Project. ¹⁸⁹

- **Open Collective connects groups on the platform that already offer learning initiatives**, including Women Who Code, OpenMined, SPEC, ALYX, Ethics, Public Policy, and Technological Change Course, TechUP trainings, Drupal diversity trainings, Trust The People, and Greatherthan Academy.

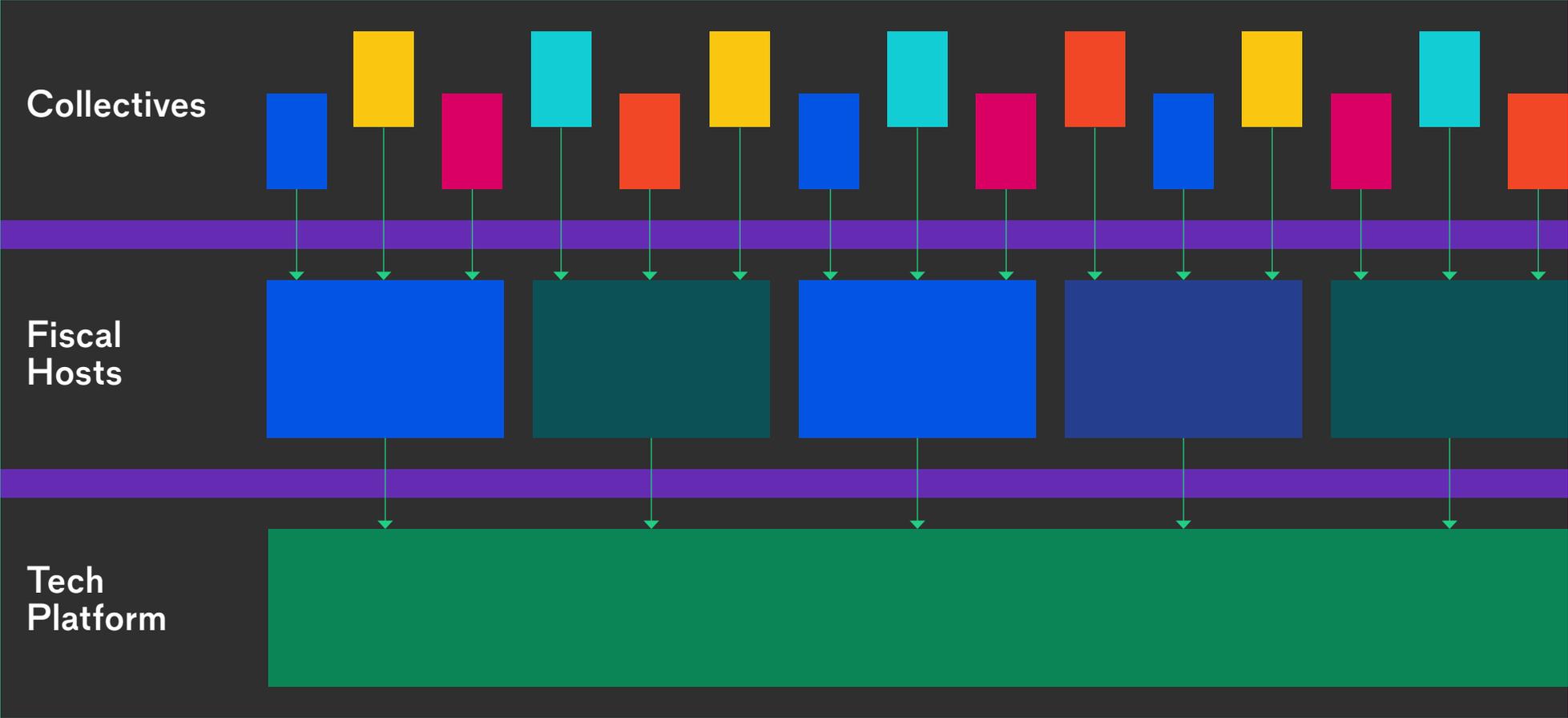
Women Who Code is an international non-profit organization that provides services for women pursuing technology careers and a job board for companies seeking coding professionals. The company aims to provide an avenue into the technology world by evaluating and assisting women developing technical skills.

Greatherthan offers courses in Trauma Informed Collaboration, Reflective Leadership, and Liberating Structures, and is closely connected to the Open Collective,

as it is the outgrowth of a book co-written with Alanna Irving. ¹⁹⁰ The academy offers facilitated online learning for “an entry point into the emergent knowledge and practices that Greaterthan has developed and tested over the past decade.” ¹⁹¹ Competencies of leadership, power and ethics, and professionalism are introduced and reinforced in these courses.

As with most collectives and cooperatives, learning is central to Open Collective. Alanna Irving, Chief Operating Officer of the platform and Director of Open Collective Foundation, empowers members by creating transparent systems, a culture of deep trust, and with a structure that Irving calls “Full Circle Leadership.” ¹⁹² The Movement Platform was created because community power goes hand in hand with financial power—but financial sustainability is not enough. Communities need to have the skills to collaborate and the authority to make decisions over the tools that underpin their sustainability.

Open Collective



We virtualize legal entities: We create a new virtual layer on top of existing organizations.



Diagram adapted with permission from Open Collective.

Open Collective: Creative Pedagogy

Transferable Competencies	Cognitive Skills	The Sustain Conference is open to the public and is coordinated by Open Source Collective, a host on the Open Collective platform, to organize technologists who wish to make open source projects sustainable. Competencies of creative thinking and problem solving are reinforced as participants create shared vocabulary and terms of organizing for shared livelihoods and sustainable open source projects.
	Collaborative Skills	Open Collective Foundation's monthly Community Forum is emerging in the winter of 2021 as a place for members, groups, collectives, and initiatives to share ideas, offers, and needs with one another. In this new Forum, facilitated by Mike Strode, Open Collective aims to introduce and then reinforce competencies of teamwork, oral communication, and cultural fluency as groups build relationships with one another and get a sense of ways to shape and steward the platform of Open Collective itself.
	Reflective Skills	In all of the work at Open Collective, the worker collective is committed to transparency in governance, code, and finances. This open and collective process reinforces reflective skills of self-care, power and ethics, and ethical entrepreneurship.
Foundational Competencies	Collaborative Skills	Art.coop Study-into-Action is open to the public and is facilitated by Open Collective Foundation, a host on the Open Collective platform. Competencies of cultural fluency, creativity and innovation, and oral communications are reinforced in the facilitated sessions that follow public webinars on topics ranging from legal structures for cooperatives to 'zine making and live DJ sessions.
	Reflective Skills	As a Movement Platform, Open Collective aims to connect groups on the platform that already offer learning initiatives, including Women Who Code, a host on the platform which is an international non-profit organization that provides services for women pursuing technology careers and a job board for companies seeking coding professionals. This provides avenues into the technology world by evaluating and assisting women developing technical skills.

Diagram adapted by authors with permission from the Herberger Institute for Design & the Arts, Dr. Stephani Ethridge-Woodson, Dr. Allison Hall, Dr. Megan Workmon Larsen and Xanthia Walker. The National Association for Continuing Education has approved these competencies.

Other International Examples of Movement Platforms

Loomio

Loomio is a collaborative decision-making open source tool that emerged out of the occupy movement.

Year established

2011

Initial funding

Crowdfunding and impact investment

Co-op type

Worker-owned cooperative

Profit-share mechanism

Revenue-share to pay back investors, distributions of surplus to worker-owners

CoBudget

CoBudget is a software tool that helps groups allocate funds collaboratively and transparently.¹⁹³

Year established

2012

Initial funding

In-house project of Enspiral, which funds via internal crowdfunding

Co-op type

Collective

Profit-share mechanism

None yet, but would be shared to its fiscal host, Greaterthan, and then to Enspiral Foundation

Stocksy¹⁹⁴

Stocksy is a photography and video platform owned by the artists who create the material. To differentiate from the rest of the market they heavily curate their selection and hand select the artists able to join, as well as maintaining strong commitment to real customer service.

Year established

2013

Revenue

In 2016, revenue \$10.7 million with dividends of \$300K

Initial funding

Funded through a \$1 million loan for one of the founders

Co-op type

Producer co-op with all artists as members

Profit-share mechanism

Artists receive 50% of a standard license purchase and 75% of an extended license purchase as well as a share in the company which gives them a right to a portion of the profits of the company.

Resonate¹⁹⁵

Resonate is a multi-stakeholder cooperative music streaming site which offers artists, listeners and employees real democratic control of the company as well as a share of the profits.

Year established

2016

Revenue

N/A

Initial funding

Crowdfunding initiative

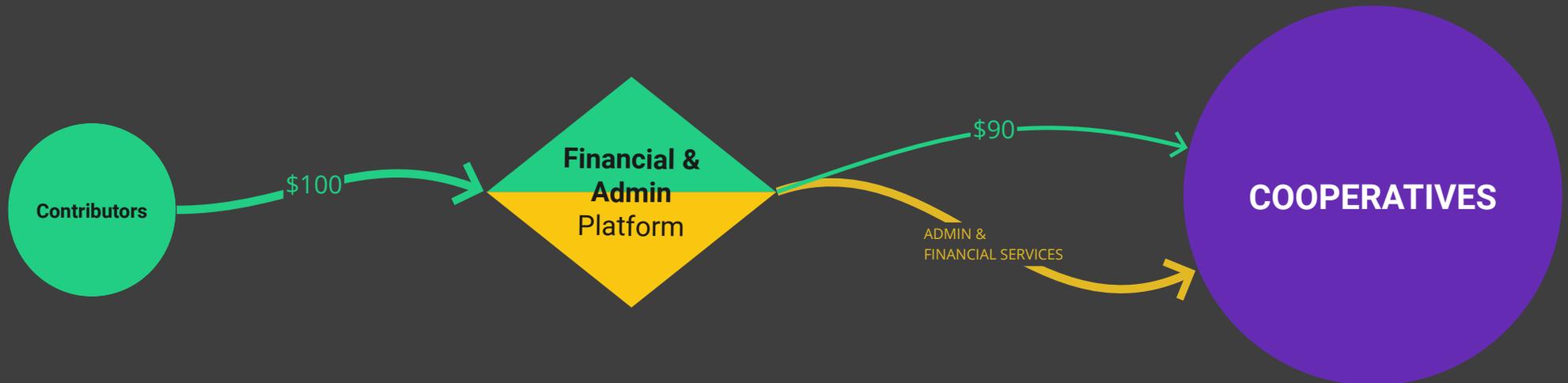
Co-op type

Multi-stakeholder co-op with artists and employees get their share for free while listeners pay a small (\$5) annual fee to become members.

Profit-share mechanism

They use a 'stream2own' model to ensure that artists get their fair share from user listens. Initial listens are very cheap but after about 10 listens the users have contributed the equivalent of purchasing the song on iTunes. The artist is rewarded and the user gets the song to own. All listens are recorded on a public blockchain to ensure total transparency.

EXAMPLE OF OPERATION



Contributors send **money** to a **Platform** which then distributes (slightly less) **money** and **admin and financial services** to the **Cooperative**.

Advantages and Disadvantages of a *Movement Platform*

Movement Platforms are strong in their ability to reduce duplicative labor, especially in administrative capacities, through their centralization of incoming and outgoing resources. They also allow cooperatives and federations to share costs of labor, weaving the two entities into one another to make a more actively connected ecosystem.

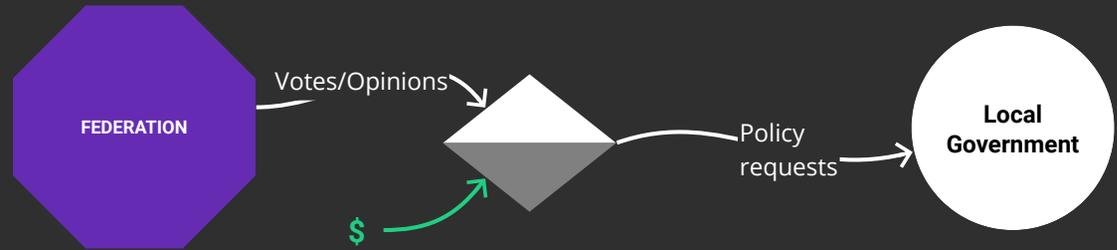
However, they can decrease interest in federating, and rely on a culture of change to be fully functional. If a Movement Platform is limited to technology, accessibility will also be in need of nuanced problem solving, which often comes with higher up-front costs. Movement Platforms also run the risk of being continuously expensive if they are non-computational; for example, community organizers paid across regions may require additional financial infrastructure.

Example Types of Platforms



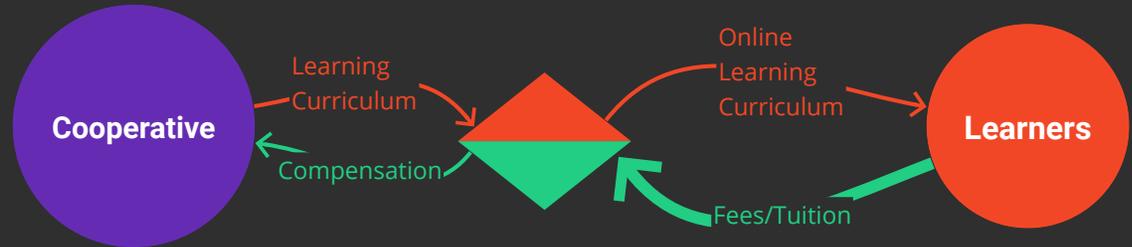
Participatory Budgeting Platforms

Groups (Such as a Federation) collect **votes/opinions** to a **Participatory Budgeting Platform**, which then consolidates opinions into a series of **policy requests** to be sent to **Local Government**



Learning Platforms

Groups (Such as a Cooperative) creates a **Learning Curriculum**, hosted on a **Learning Platform**, which **Learners** use to access **Online Learning Curriculum**. The **Fees/Tuition** students pay makes its way to the **Cooperative** as **Compensation**.



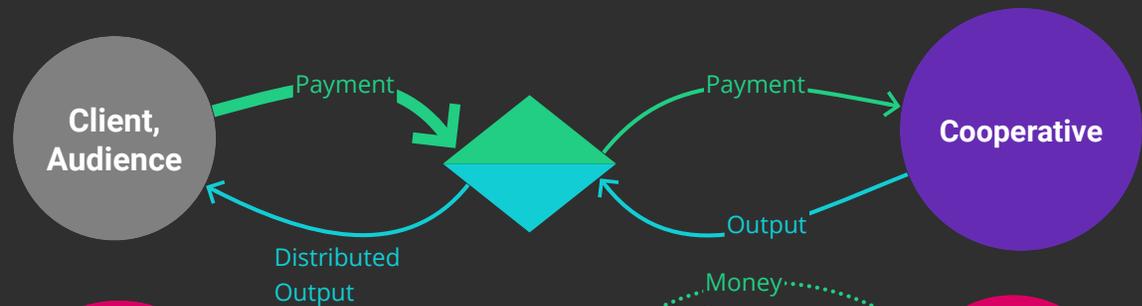
Financial & Admin Platforms

Contributors send **money** to a **Financial and Admin Platform** which then distributes (slightly less) **money** and **admin and financial services** to the **Cooperative**.



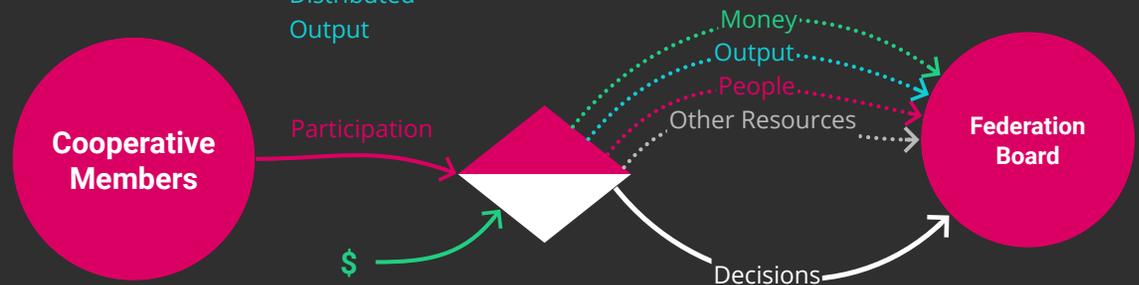
Output / Distribution Platforms

Clients pay money to a **Distribution platform** which then passes **Payment** to the **Cooperative**, receives **Output** from the **Cooperative**, and distributes/delivers that **Output**, back to the **Client**.



Community Assembly Platforms

On a **Community Assembly Platform**, **Cooperative Members** participate to discuss and make **Decisions** to change/acquire/purchase **Money**, **Output**, **People**, and Other resources

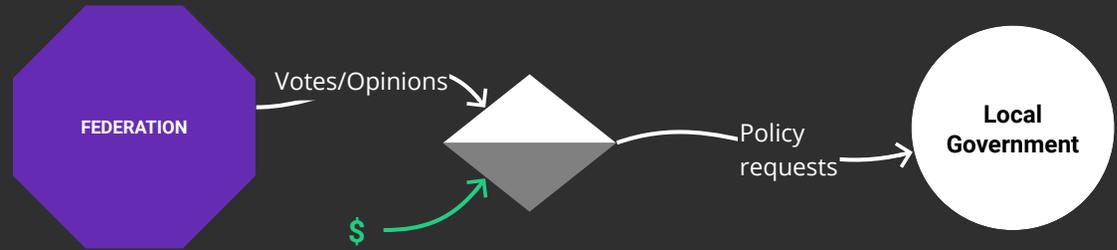


Example Types of Platforms



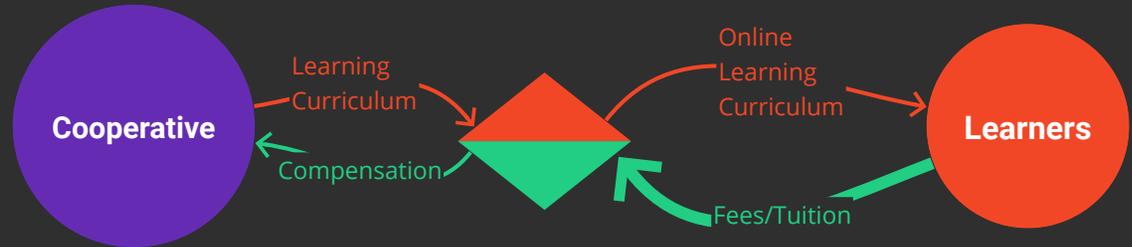
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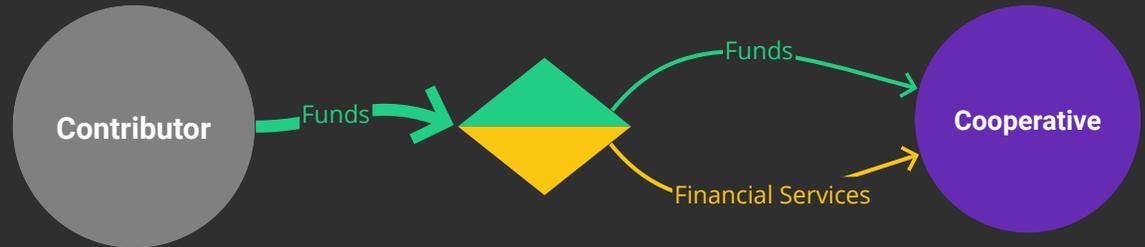
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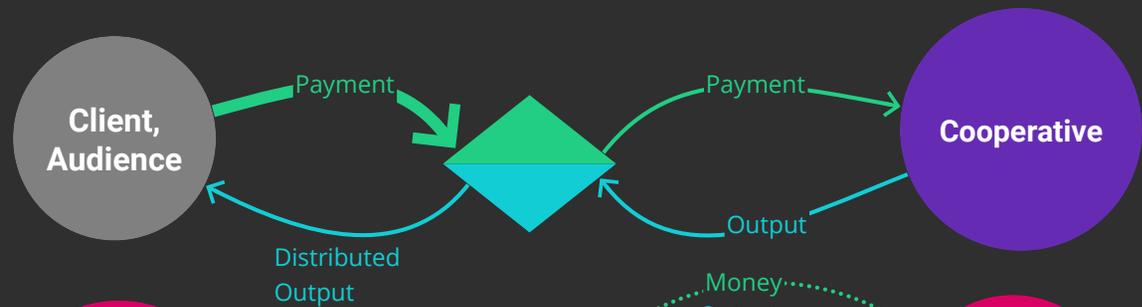
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Contributors send **money** to a **Financial and Admin Platform** which then distributes (slightly less) **money** and **admin and financial services** to the **Cooperative**.



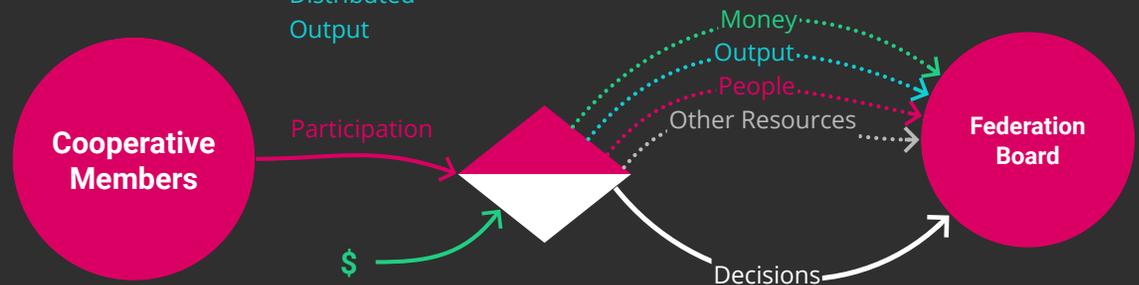
Output / Distribution Platforms

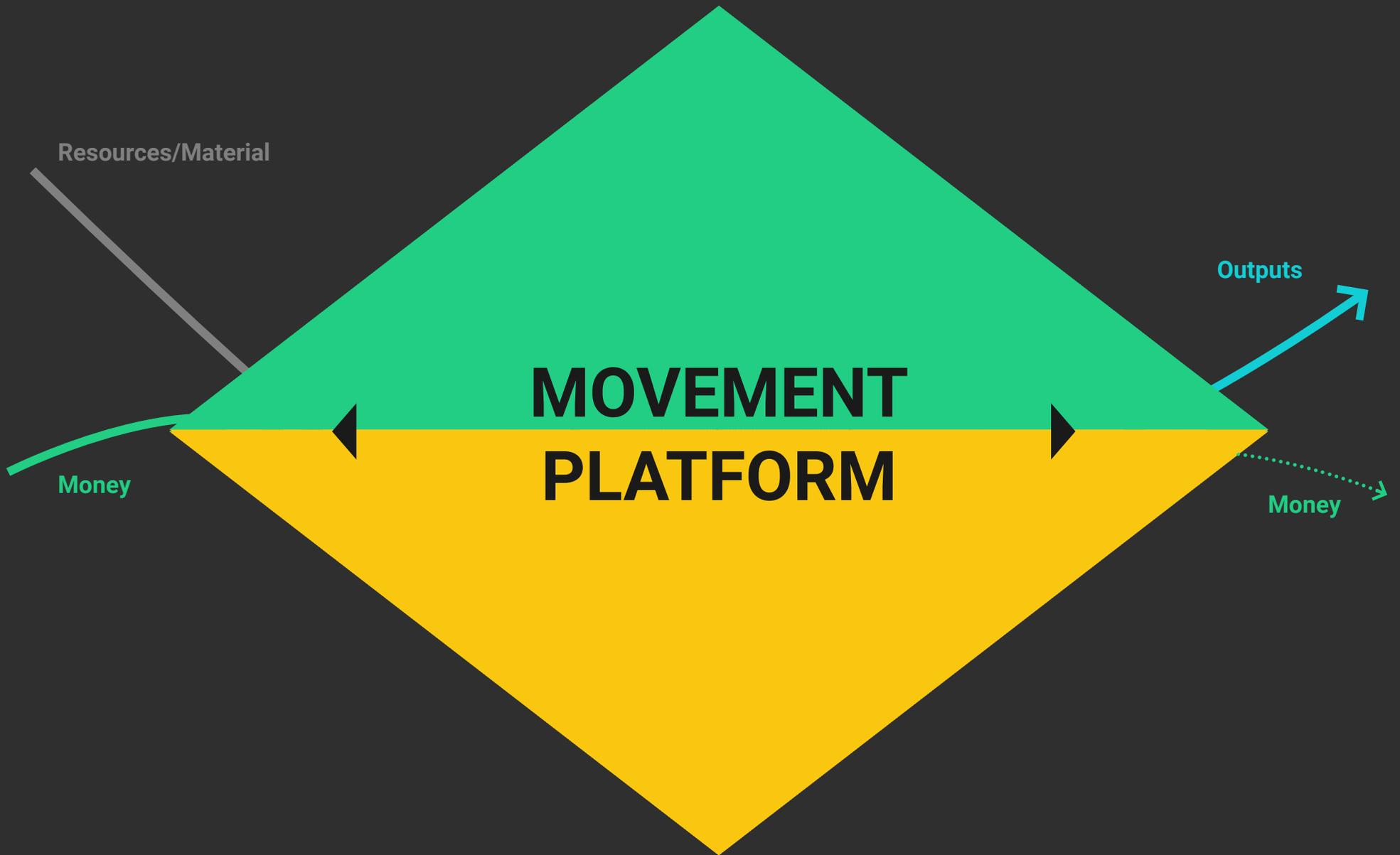
Clients pay money to a **Distribution platform** which then passes **Payment** to the **Cooperative**, receives **Output** from the **Cooperative**, and distributes/delivers that **Output**, back to the **Client**.

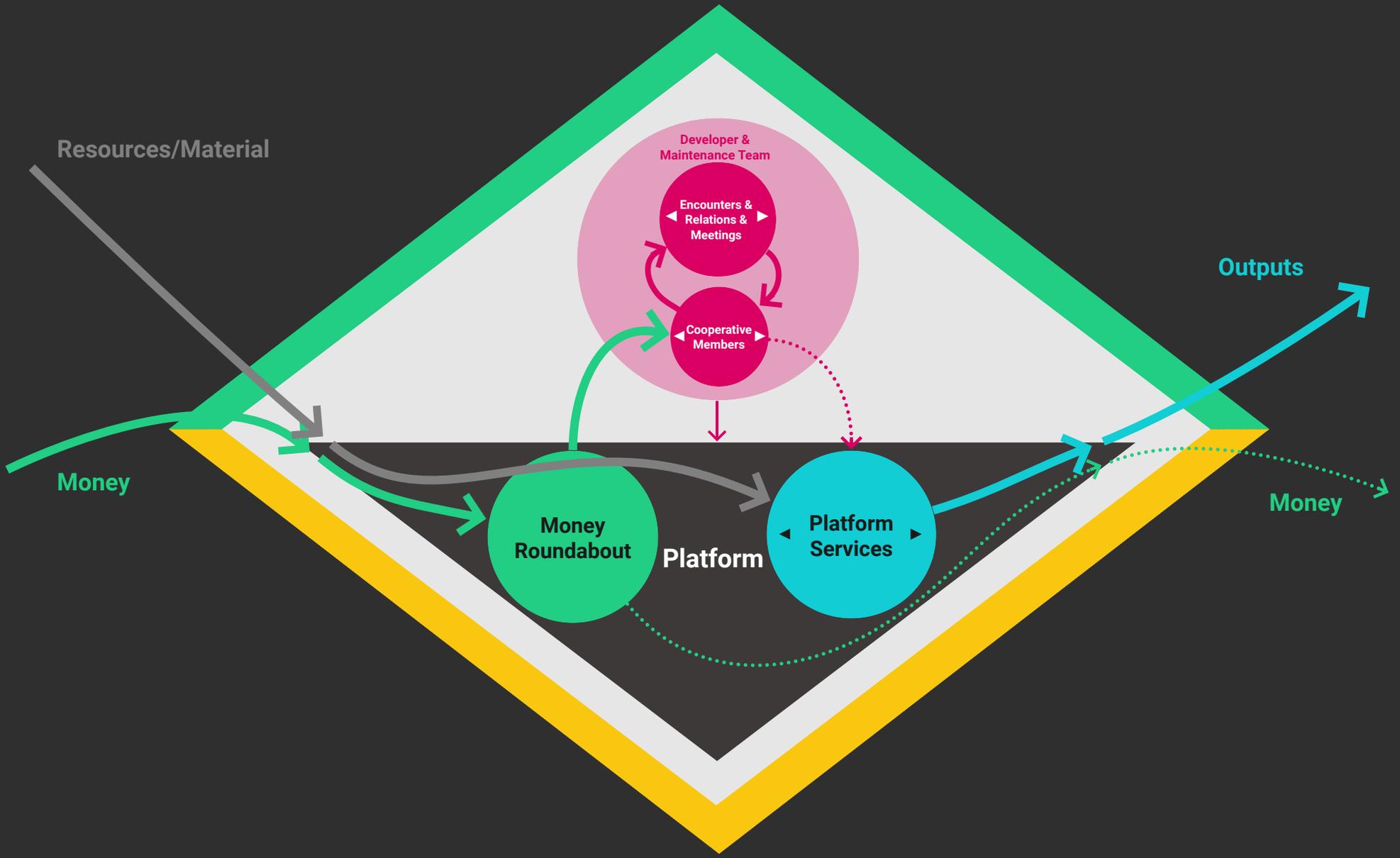


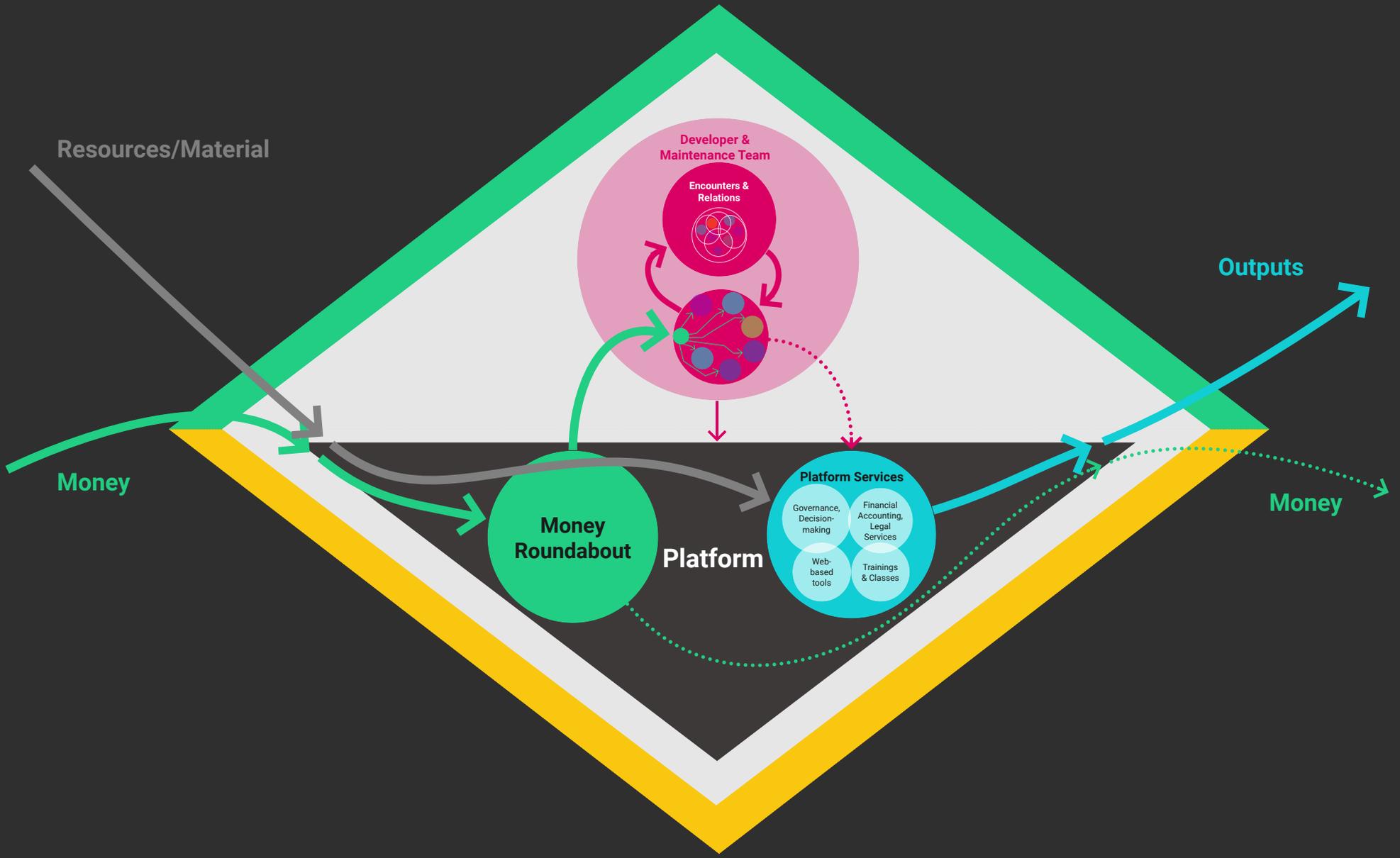
Community Assembly Platforms

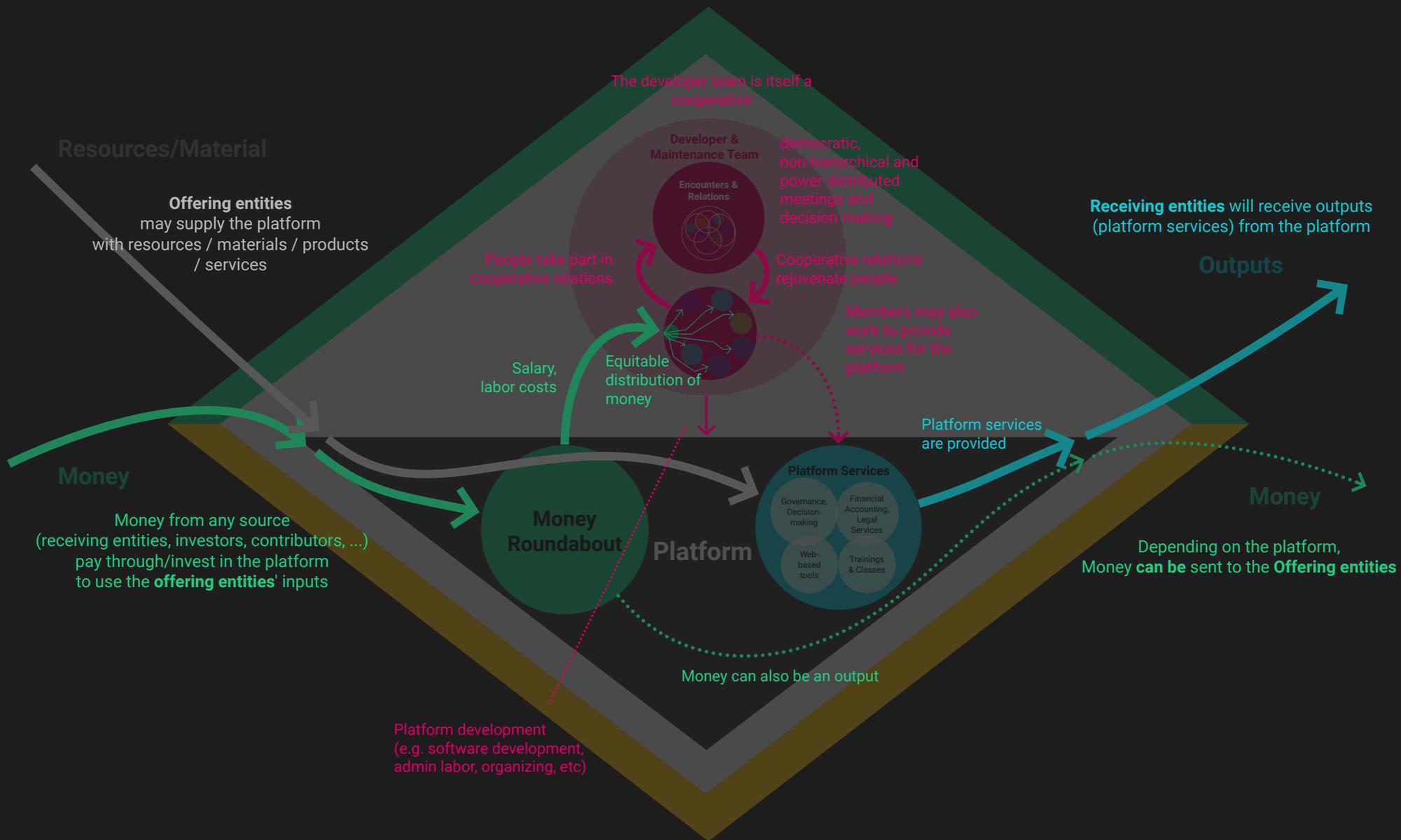
On a **Community Assembly Platform**, **Cooperative Members** participate to discuss and make **Decisions** to change/acquire/purchase **Money, Output, People**, and Other resources











Online movement schools can be used in strategic ways. People are learning together from Kentucky to Kenya and are bringing ideas from their local work. It would not be possible, financially or health-wise, for most of these learners to travel to meet each other.

We don't think we need to do everything online. But some things can happen online that are not possible in person.

—Hope Ghazala, People's Hub¹⁹⁶

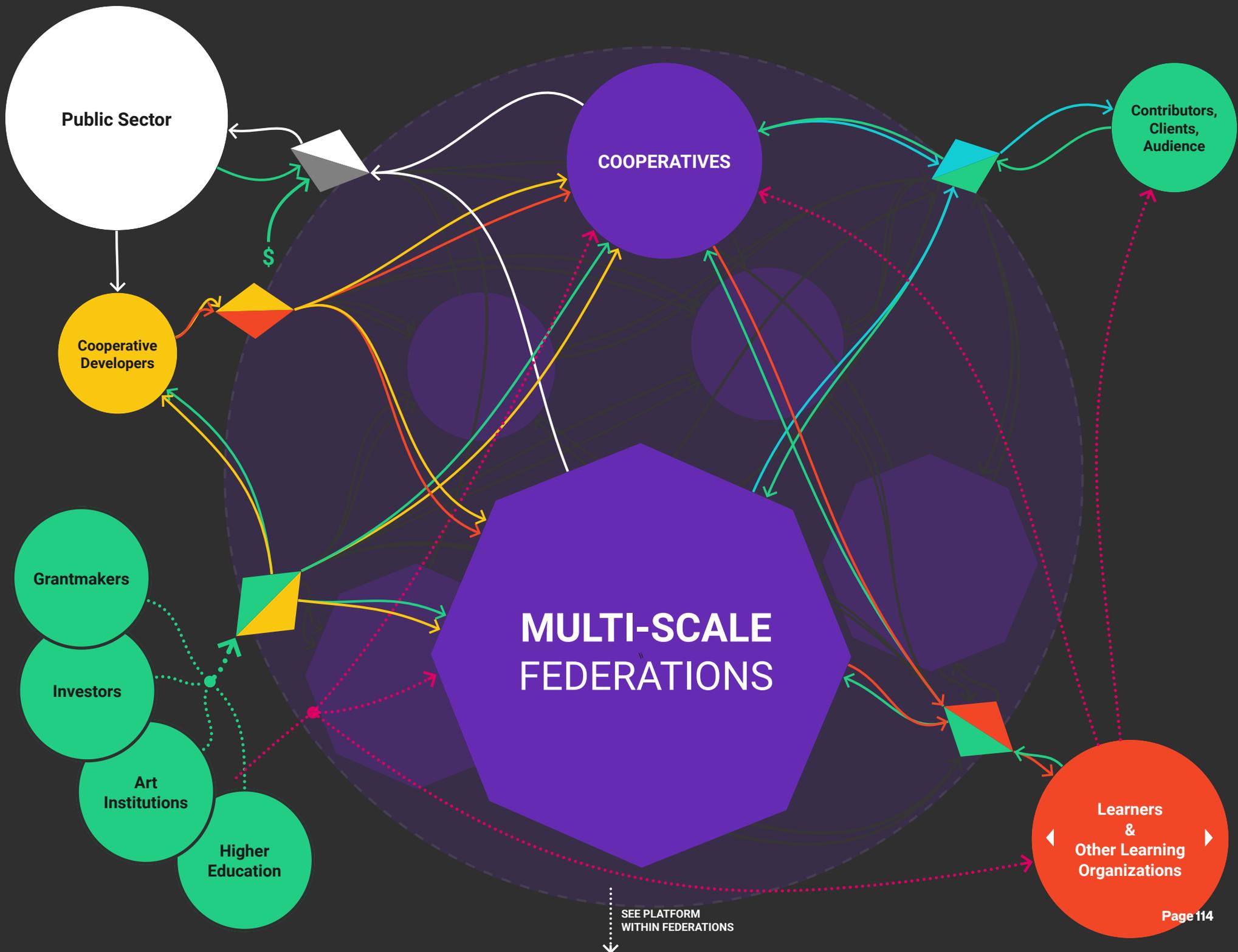
A Resulting *Woven Ecosystem*

Ultimately, these individual models are only as strong as the Woven Ecosystem they belong to. When Movement Platforms, Federations, and Cooperatives work in tandem, cooperation occurs at scale, and equitable learning becomes more accessible for all.

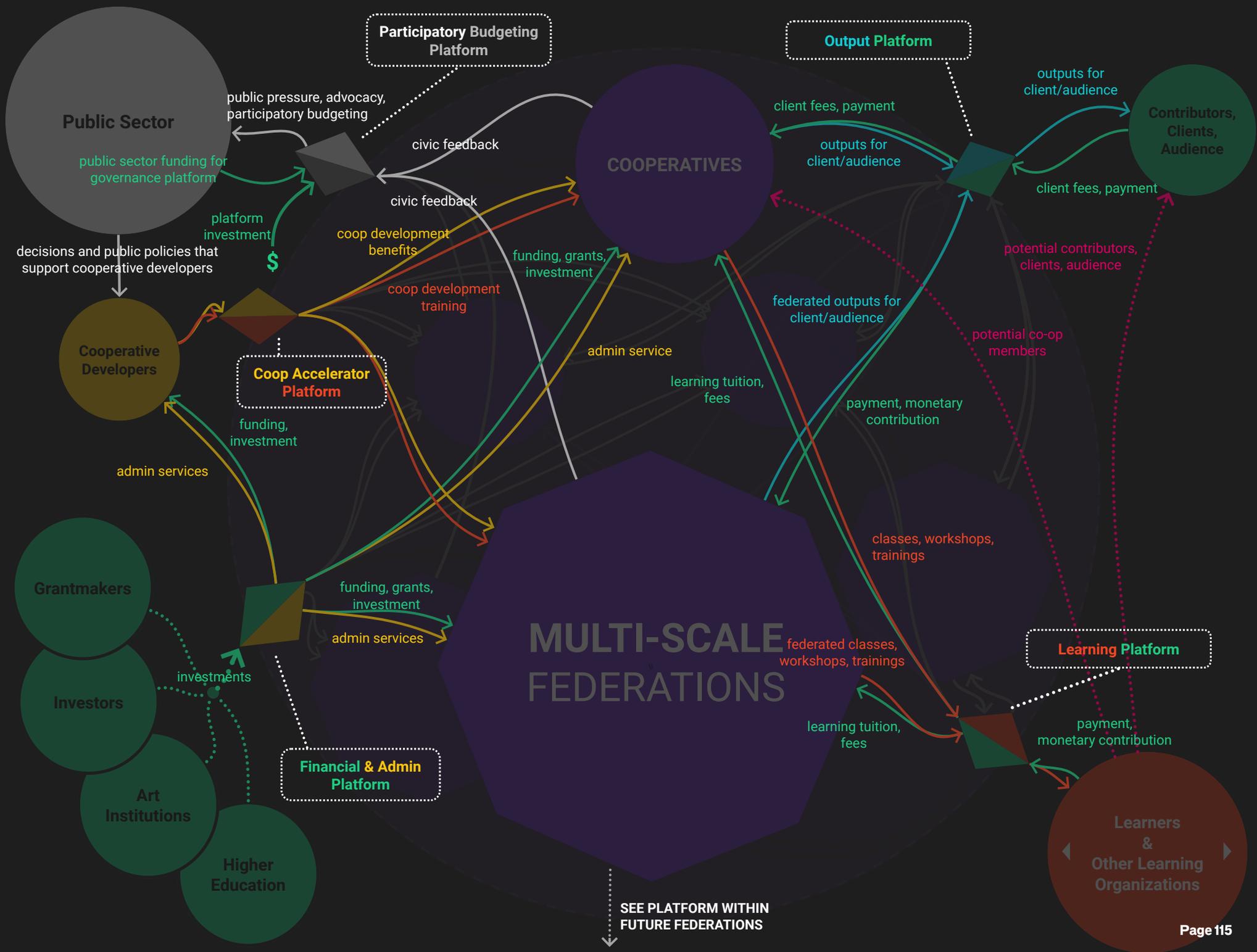
As Movement Platforms augment and collectivize the resource flows between entities, they enable Movement Cooperatives and Federations to operate with economies or cooperation of scale, accessing increased or new resources that otherwise may not have been possible. Similarly to Movement Platforms, the Woven Ecosystem depends on a strong cooperative culture that prioritizes personal participation and involvement. Its governance structure must be reflective about power dynamics—which are the core values of Solidarity Economies and BIPOC-led restorative justice—in order to collectively govern and hold creative spaces for Movement Cooperatives, Movement Federations, and Movement Platforms.

Collaboration between Movement Cooperatives, Federations, and Platforms will transform the educational landscape, bridging “spirits and logistics” into an ecosystem. We recommend further research about ways to connect cooperatives to the existing training and course offerings produced in non-monetary and non-profit educational entities, such

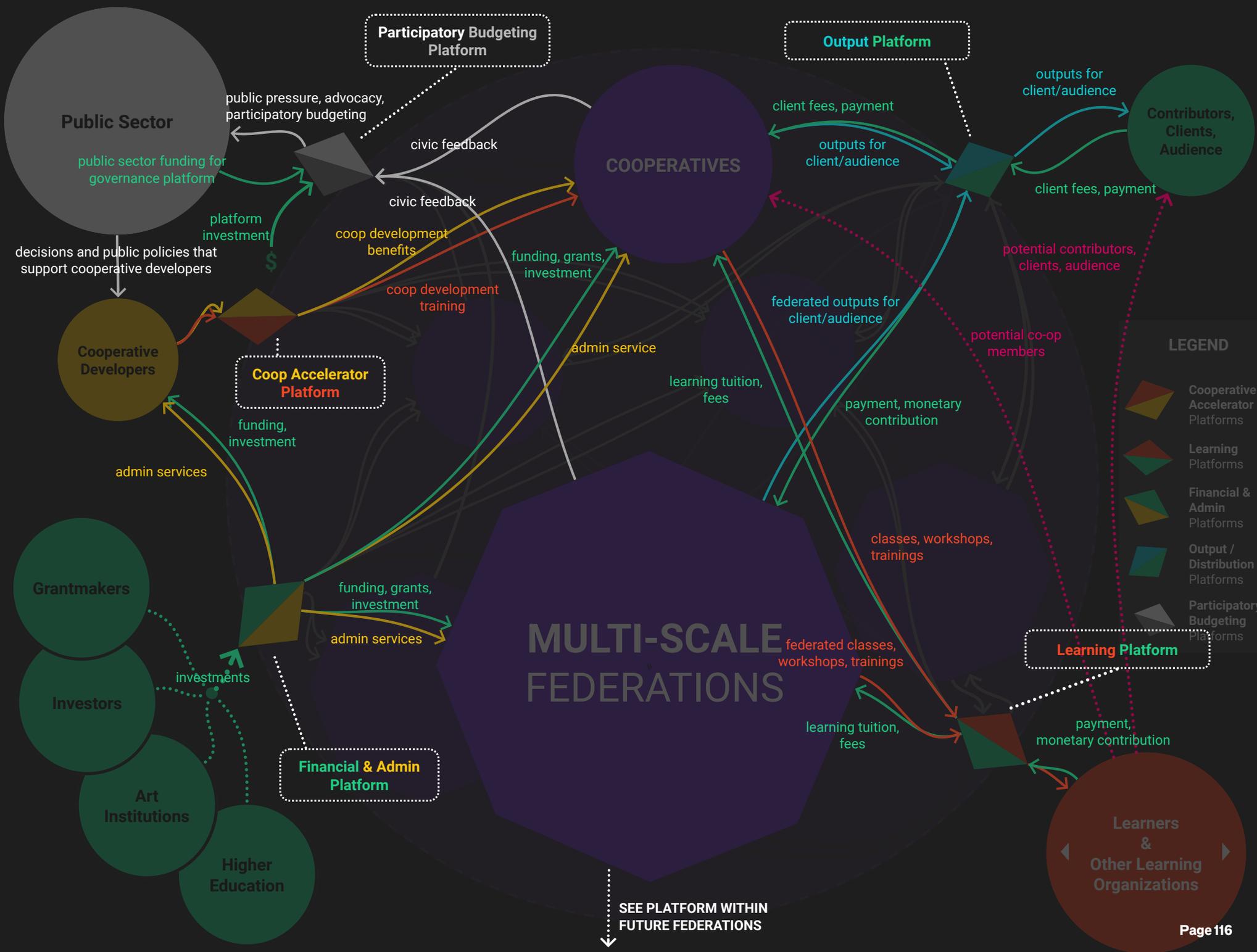
as unpaid teaching in DIY and self-organized learning spaces, online movement schools, curriculum offered by popular educators, government support for workforce development, training offered by unions, and research centers in institutions of higher education. This report focuses on the financial self-determination that becomes possible in for-profit cooperative enterprises. Further research is required to assess this learning in depth, to ensure that it is racially just, and to map the connections between learning in existing non-profits and cooperative enterprises.



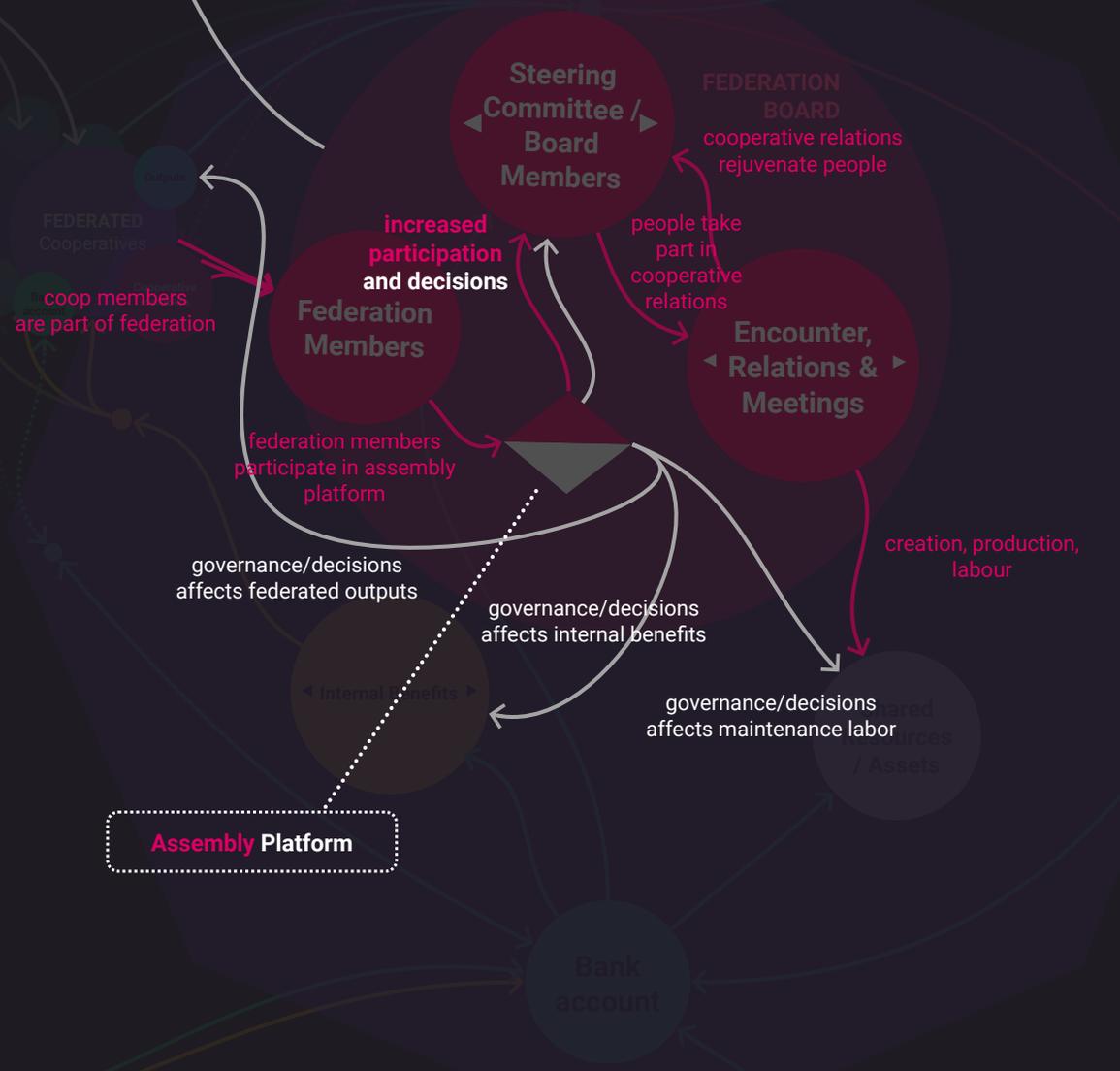
SEE PLATFORM
WITHIN FEDERATIONS



SEE PLATFORM WITHIN FUTURE FEDERATIONS



FEDERATION



Where
do we
go from
here?

7

Recommendations for Low-Cost Learning

Our hopes for an educational ecosystem that is equitable, creative, and democratic—and accessible in all these ways—rely on our commitment to supporting Movement Cooperatives, Movement Federations, Movement Platforms, and the resulting Woven Ecosystem from every corner, every shelf, and every pocket.

But, it begins with one critical understanding: that the heart of this work lies in following the lead of BIPOC creatives and changemakers. Without continuous, sustainable, equitable, and accessible support for these keystones of our community, low-cost learning cannot happen.

Our collective puts forth the following three essential commitments, which reflect on our research with changemakers in our immediate and local learning ecosystems. We call on you to expand upon our three essential commitments by listening to BIPOC leaders in your vicinity.

1 A commitment to learning about culturally rooted, BIPOC-led educational efforts

Predominantly White institutions have a long history of reinforcing arts education as White property.¹⁹⁷ To heal and repair this practiced ignorance and structural violence, a BIPOC-led, grassroots, community-engaged approach is required. This means that leaders in arts and culture institutions must focus on communities that have experienced the greatest extraction and exclusion from the dominant economy: the rural South, Indian Country, and BIPOC cultural workers in all locations. To shift power dynamics, we suggest: leadership and decision-making bodies that are representative of the communities that they serve.

2 A commitment to reimagining how procurements, grants, and investments can be activated, including structures other than 501(c)3 and 501(c)4.

In the past decade, the boundaries of “charitable purpose” have shifted in ways that are somewhat invisible to foundations and to the public.¹⁹⁸ The shift can mainly be observed in the activities for which the IRS does and does not grant tax exemption. The Sustainable Economies Law Center has been in a unique position to observe this, having provided legal support to dozens of organizations that have pushed the boundaries. We’ve seen many activities receive tax exemption even when the IRS might previously have considered them too commercial in nature or too oriented toward private benefit.

Now, the IRS is seeing that charitable purposes can effectively be advanced in circumstances where communities organize to meet their own material needs through cooperation and mutual aid. In their applications to the IRS, nonprofits pointed to evidence of their community’s economic challenges and feelings of disempowerment, then cited the growing body of literature indicating that self-organizing and community-led solutions may be the most effective at addressing such problems. This shift has opened doors for private foundations and public charities to play

an expanding role in funding cooperatives with grants and program-related investments. Previously, the IRS was prone to recognizing activities as educational only if they carried some hallmarks of institutional education, such as classroom instruction, credentialed instructors, organized presentation of a curriculum, and administration of testing. Today, we have evidence to show that such instructional methods are less effective than hands-on, practical, social, and experiential modes of learning. We also know that people everywhere need spaces where they can experience and practice democratic participation and new economic structures, because it is only through such experience that people can gain confidence to shift away from the disempowering and extractive structures of the dominant system. With conscious structuring, cooperatives and mutual aid groups may be the most effective training grounds for the Solidarity Economy and can thereby broaden the scope of activities viewed as “educational.” This, too, expands the space in which foundations can fund cooperatives. See Appendix G on page 144 and Recommendations on page 119 for more.

Foundations can fund organizations that are private businesses or other structures as long as they can assert charitable intent.

—Eddie Torres,
CEO, Grantmakers in the Arts¹⁹⁹

3 A commitment to cultivating the Worker-Owned Arts and Culture Ecosystem

In addition to supporting cooperatives with grants and program-related investments, institutional leaders can leverage their strengths and positions in the arts and culture ecosystem to support worker-owned arts and culture. We offer 17 of suggestions from our research and recommend that leaders work with BIPOC-led Creative Cooperatives who are actively engaged with regional Cooperative Developers, the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives, the Democracy at Work Institute, the New Economy Coalition, and the US Solidarity Economy Network, as well as the interviewees in this report, to better understand how to bring your gifts to the cooperative sector.

To get started,
read *Collective Courage*
by Dr. Jessica Gordon
Nembhard and listen to
the *Cooperative Journal*
and *How to Citizen*
podcasts. More
resources are here.

To Support Low-Cost Learning Spaces in Movement Cooperatives

Grantmakers and Investors Can

- Provide up-front funding for cooperatives to develop learning programs
- Commit to ongoing funding for admin, teaching, and maintenance labor, in turn offsetting student tuition

Higher Education and Art Institutions Can

- Partner with cooperatives to co-develop and support learning in and beyond traditional programs

Cooperative Developers Can

- Provide technical support for cooperatives to develop and support learning programs

Public Sector Can

- Create public policies that support cooperatives that prioritize low-cost education

To Support Low-Cost Learning Spaces in Movement Federations

Grantmakers and Investors Can

- Provide up-front funding for developing the federation and its learning program
- Commit to ongoing funding for admin, teaching, and maintenance labor, in turn offsetting student tuition

Higher Education and Art Institutions Can

- Partner with federations to co-develop and support learning programs
- Develop partnerships with federations to provide low-cost interdisciplinary educational resources

Cooperative Developers Can

- Provide technical support for federations to develop and form learning infrastructure

Public Sector Can

- Create public policies that support federations and prioritize low-cost education

To Support Low-Cost Learning Spaces in Movement Platforms

Grantmakers and Investors Can

- Provide up-front non-extractive investment or grants for supporting the development of community learning spaces
- Commit to ongoing funding for educational platform development and maintenance

Higher Education and Art Institutions Can

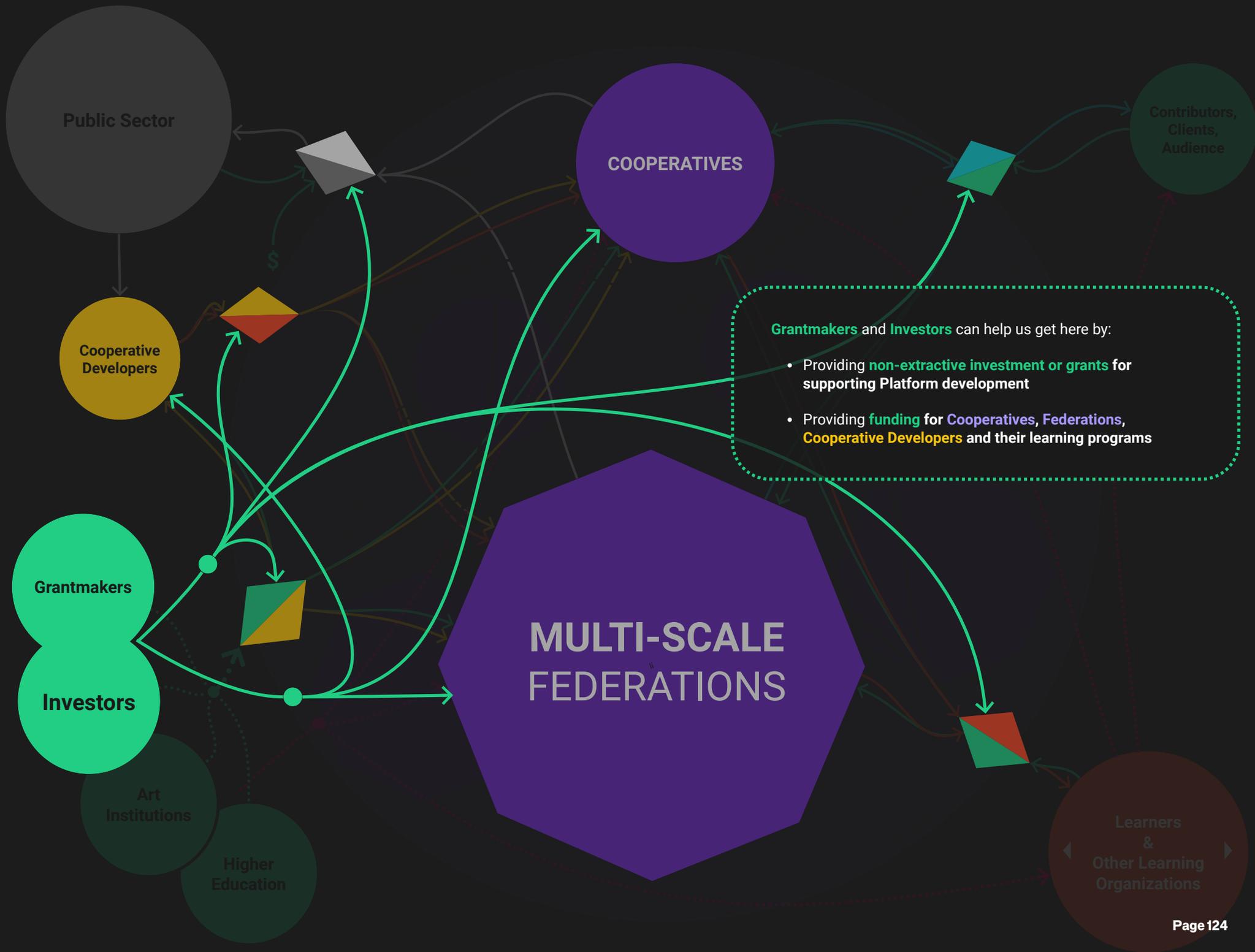
- Partner with platforms to co-develop educational infrastructure, and to use and invest in a Movement Platform
- Develop partnerships with platforms to share low-cost educational resources more widely

Cooperative Developers Can

- Provide technical support for cooperatives to develop, form, and share learning infrastructure

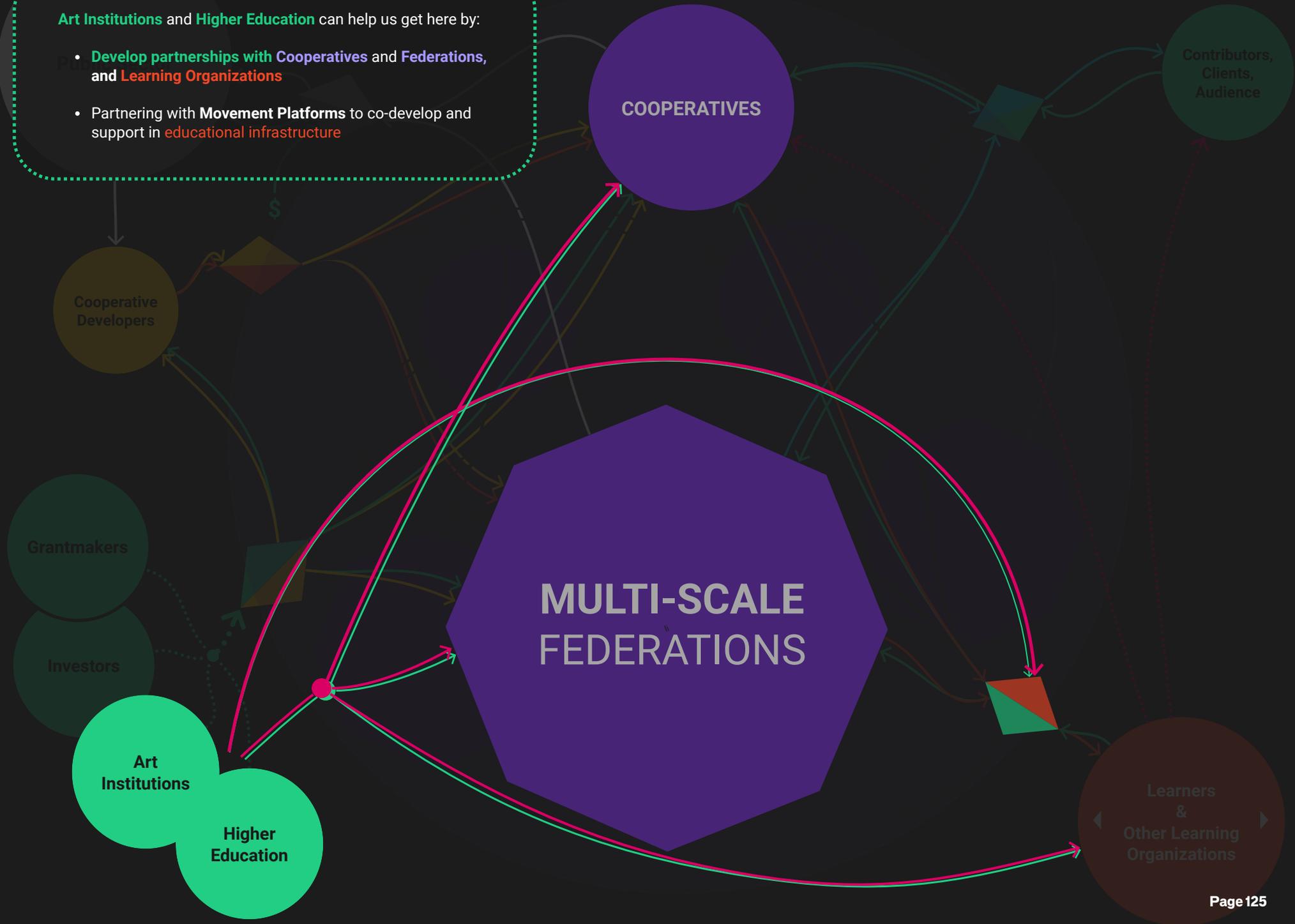
Public Sector Can

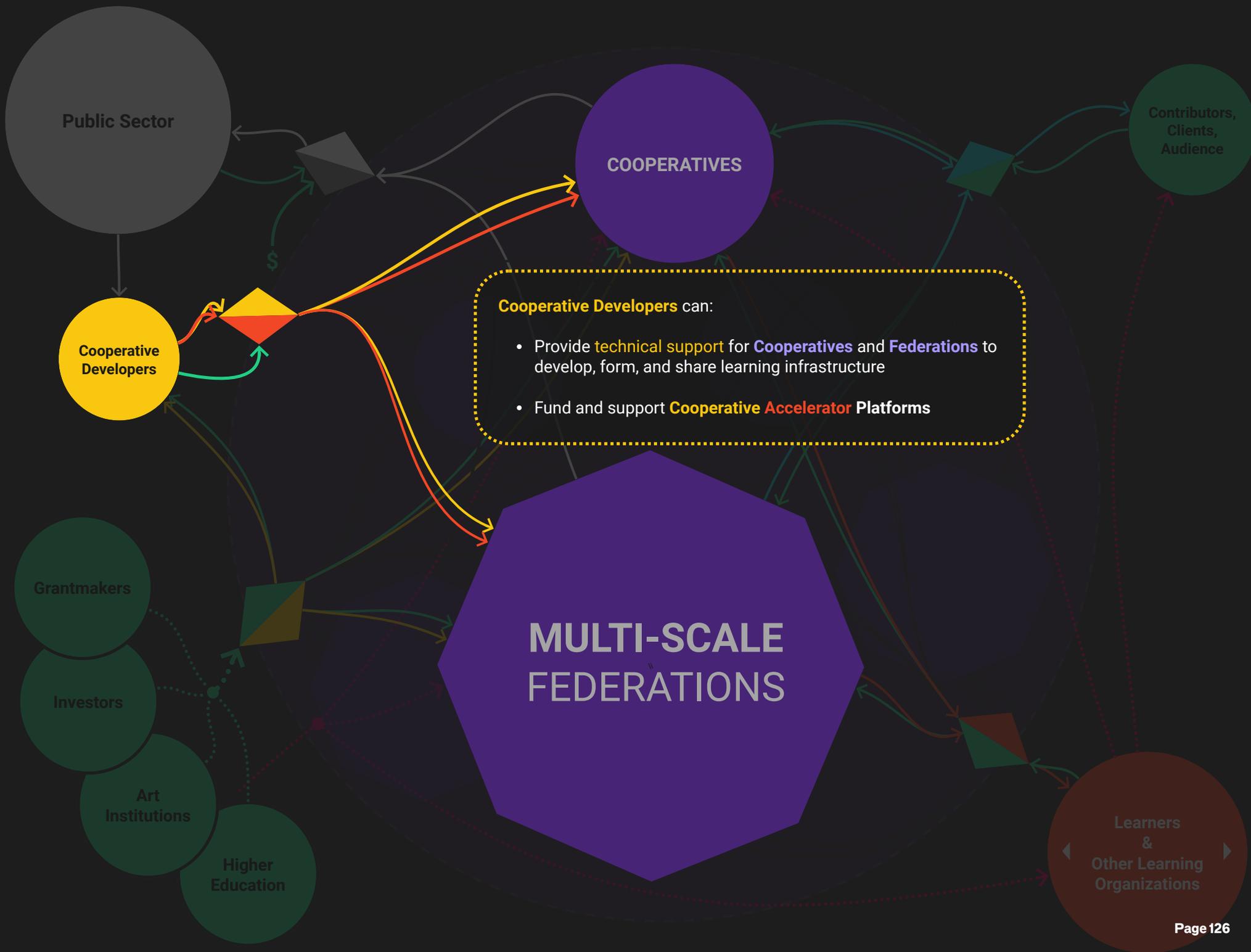
- Create public policies that support cooperatives and prioritize low-cost education

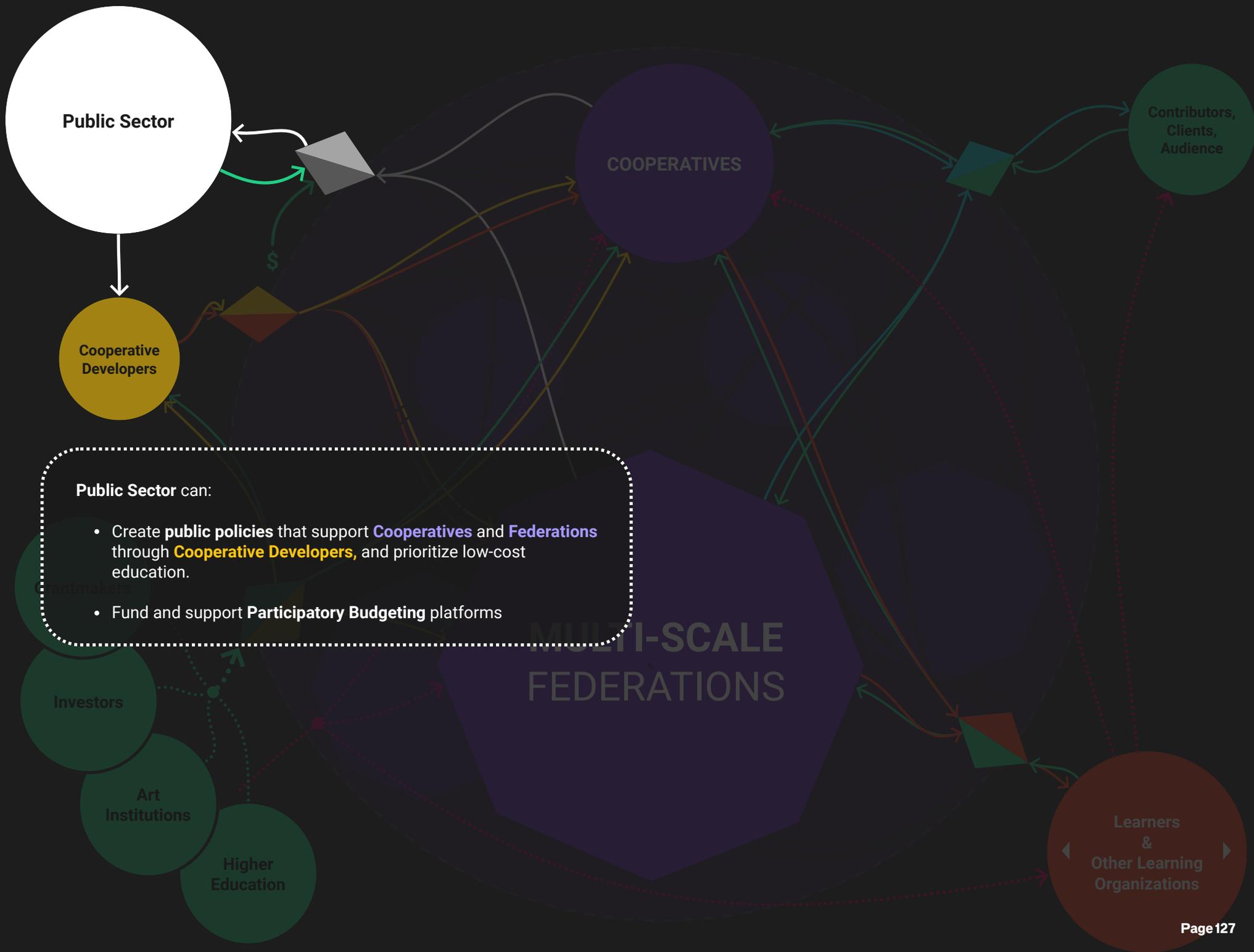


Art Institutions and Higher Education can help us get here by:

- Develop partnerships with Cooperatives and Federations, and Learning Organizations
- Partnering with Movement Platforms to co-develop and support in educational infrastructure







No going back to a political economy that privileges owners over workers.

No going back to dividing poor and working class communities with White supremacy and ableism.

Nor to criminalizing Indigenous, Black, and Brown communities.

No going back to putting profit over the health of our bodies and ecosystems.

Nor one that treats workers' lives as expendable.²⁰⁰

—Highlander Research and Education Center

8

Appendices

Appendix A: Contributors

This research draws upon interviews, workshops, and conversations with over 90 people, including:

Chi Achebe, Founder, ResSpot
 Mio Asatani, Founder and CEO, Curina
 Kenneth Bailey, Sector Organizing and Strategy Lead, Design Studio for Social Interaction
 Simon Berge, Business Chair of Cooperative Enterprises, University of Winnipeg
 Nina Berman, Associate Director, Communications and Content, Fractured Atlas
 Alicia Le'Von Boone, Head of Cultural Programming, NYC-Today at Apple
 Adam Bright, Producing Executive Director, Double Edge Theatre
 Laura Callanan, Founding Partner, Upstart Co-Lab
 Evan Casper-Futterman, Program Director, Economic Democracy Learning Center, Bronx Cooperative Development Institute
 Bryan Chang, Finance Working Group, Meerkat Media Co-op

Esther Choi, Doctoral Candidate, Ethnic Studies, University of California—San Diego
 Binna Choi, Casco Institute, Working for the Commons, Netherlands
 Jen Cole, Director, National Collaborative for Creative Work, Arizona State University
 Courtney Dailey, Vice President Creative Director, Color Design, Nike
 Jeffrey Devereux, Co-Founder and Worker-Owner, Cafeteria Radio Co-op
 Peggy Dreamer, Co-Organizer, the Architecture Lobby and Architecture Beyond Capitalism
 Steve Dubb, Senior Editor, *Nonprofit Quarterly*
 Matthew Epperson, Georgia Cooperative Development Center
 Pascale Gatzen, Director, Practice Held in Common, Netherlands
 Hope Ghazala, Community Offerings Coordinator, People's Hub
 Noemi Giszpenc, Executive Director, Cooperative Development Institute

Sarah Peters Gonzalez, Organizer, Cooperation Humboldt
 Angeline Gragasin, Founder, Happy Family Night Market
 Ebony Gustave, Founder, *Cooperative Journal*
 Michael Hall, Artistic and Executive Director, Art Students League
 Sharmin Hossain, organizer with Queer Crescent
 Mahnoor Hussain, Organizer, Artist, and Community Member
 Leo Hwang, Assistant Academic Dean, College of Natural Sciences Academic Advising Center, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
 Lena Imamura, Artist and CoFounder of NAME GLO
 Alanna Irving, Executive Director, Open Collective
 Deepa Iyer, Strategic Advisor at Building Movement Project
 Joshua Jenkins, Co-Founder and Worker-Owner, Cafeteria Radio
 Laura Jorgensen, formerly Senior Director, Financial Operations And Analysis at Fractured Atlas
 Shravya Kag, Artist and Community member

Esteban Kelly, Executive Director, US Federation of Worker Cooperatives
 Noor Khan, Artist and Community Member
 Susan Jahohda, Professor, Art, University of Massachusetts—Amherst
 Alessandra Lacorazza, Finance Working Group, Meerkat Media Co-op
 Nati Linares, Co-Founder, Art.coop and Communications Organizer, New Economy Coalition
 Marina Lopez, Project Organizer, Art.coop and Cooperative Humboldt
 Lameesa Mallic, Artist and Community Member
 Pia Mancini, Co-Founder, Open Collective
 Alina Manko, Team Member, Open Collective
 Ruthi Engelke McDonald, Organizer, Cooperation Humboldt
 Chris Myers, Co-Organizer, Anticapitalism for Artists
 Ramser Nasser, Founding Member, Emma.coop
 Paige Landesberg, Curator of Public Programs, Miriam Gallery

Charlie O'Donnell, Founder,
Brooklyn Bridge Ventures.
com

Janelle Orsi, Director, Sustainable
Economies Law Center

Stephanie Owens, Head of School
of the School of Arts + Media
at Plymouth College of Art

Carol Padberg, Director,
Nomad9 Interdisciplinary
MFA Program, University of
Hartford

Rad Pereira, Artist

Daniel Park, Co-Founder,
Obvious Agency

Sophia Park, Associate Director of
Community, Fractured Atlas

Amanda Parmer, former Director
of Programs, Independent
Curators International and
Doctoral Candidate, Media,
Culture, and Communication,
New York University

Francisco Pérez, Executive
Director, Center for Popular
Economics

Cierra Peters, Communications
Director, Boston Ujima
Project

Yvon Poirier, Vice-Coordinator,
RIPESS

Sal Randolph, Artist

Robert Ransick, Vice President
of Academic Affairs,
Minneapolis College of Art
and Design

Cameron Rhudy, Staff Attorney,
Sustainable Economies
Law Center

Austin Robey, Founder, Ampled

Katya Rozanova, Artist,
Activist, Educator, City
University of New York

Lauren Ruffin, Co-Founder,
Crux.coop

Laura Hanson Schlachter,
Researcher, University
of Wisconsin Center for
Cooperatives

Shanna Sabio, Co-Founder
and Executive Director,
GrowHouse NYC

Nathan Schneider, Assistant
Professor, Media Studies,
University of Colorado
- Boulder

Sanjit Sethi, President,
Minneapolis College of Art
and Design

Zara Serabian-Arthur, Meerkat
Media

Maansi Shah, Organizer and
Community Member

Matthew Slaats, Doctoral
Candidate, University
of Virginia School of
Architecture

Allison Smith, Fine Arts Dean,
California College of the
Arts

Mike Strode, Organizer,
Kola Nut Collaborative

Jessica Solomon Principal and
Director, Art in Praxis

Jeff Sterrenberg, Finance
Working Group, Meerkat
Media Co-op

Sadé Swift, Co-Founder and
Worker-Owner, Cards by
Dé and Communications
Coordinator, Greenworker
Cooperatives

Kay Takeda, Deputy Direct,
Artist Programs, Joan
Mitchell Foundation

Rachel Tanner, Assistant
Director of Planning and
Development Services, City
of Palo Alto

Daniel Tucker, Moore College
of Art and Design,
Graduate Studies: Socially
Engaged Art Department

Eddie Torres, President and
CEO, Grantmakers in the
Arts

Carlos Uriona, Co-Artistic
Director, Double Edge
Theatre

Vicky Virgin, Choreographer,
Demographic Analyst,
NYC Mayor's Office for
Economic Opportunity

Dawn Weleski, Artist and
Former Co-Director,
Conflict Kitchen

Emma Werowski, Information
Designer, Two Twelve

Amy Whitaker, Assistant
Professor, Visual Arts
Administration, New York
University

Aniyia L. Williams, Principal,
Responsible Technology
Omidyar Network

Lauren Williams, Designer and
Co-Organizer, Antiracist
Classroom

Rosten Woo, Co-Founder,
Center for Urban Pedagogy

Appendix B: A Brief History of BIPOC-Led Creative Cooperatives and Study

Contributed by: Eric Triantafillou

In the history of the United States, cooperatives have often emerged in times of social and economic crisis.²⁰¹ Cooperatives have served as self-organized, semi-autonomous enclaves from which communities defend themselves against the economic exploitation of the market, the wage system, forms of dispossession (displacement, privatization, financialization), and state-sanctioned repression and violence. By providing access to essential goods and services such as food, healthcare, education, skill training and employment, the protection of civil rights, local lifeways, and the environment, as well as the decommodification of assets held in common, cooperatives safeguard communities from local, regional, national, and global structures of domination.²⁰² Cooperatives have been an especially vital technology in communities where crisis—economic inequality, structural racism, sexism, heteropatriarchy—is ongoing.²⁰³

The history of African American cooperatives is exemplary in this regard. In her groundbreaking study, *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice* (2014), Jessica Gordon Nembhard details the long, rich history of Black cooperatives and Solidarity

Economies that arose in response to economic crisis, racial discrimination, and violence.²⁰⁴ The socioeconomic condition of southern Blacks—from slavery through Jim Crow—compelled them to innovate the cooperative model as an economic development strategy of self-preservation and political empowerment, and a bulwark against the constant onslaught of White supremacy and anti-Black racism. The innovations of the Black farm co-ops, cooperative marketing boards, consumer cooperative grocery stores, cooperative schools, and credit unions of the South would inform the International Co-operative Alliance²⁰⁵ cooperative principles that define the cooperative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.”²⁰⁶

Black cooperatives developed out of the mutual aid societies that sprang up during and after slavery as a means of providing “the basic needs of everyday life—clothing, shelter, and emotional and physical sustenance.”²⁰⁷ Mutual aid societies, many of which were coordinated and run by women, collectively grew and distributed food, sold surpluses, and combined their resources to buy back

enslaved people, purchase goods in bulk, and provide services that were inaccessible in the dominant economy such as healthcare and childcare.²⁰⁸ These mutual aid societies would eventually evolve into mutual insurance companies, social service agencies, and joint-stock companies—“the earliest cooperative-like incorporated businesses in the US for both Blacks and Whites.”²⁰⁹ Indeed, the Black cooperatives of the nineteenth-century South were in many ways the precursors of the modern community-control movement.²¹⁰

A key financial innovation of the early Black cooperative movement was the establishment of credit unions. By collectively pooling their deposits/savings, cooperatives were able to provide low-cost financial services, seed funding, mortgages, and other loans to communities that lacked access to the dominant (White-owned) banking system. Credit unions allowed communities to build assets and wealth that could be used, for example, to purchase land or save it from foreclosure, enabling Black cooperatives to become anchors in their communities, and reducing the necessity, incentive, or desire of their worker-owners to leave.²¹¹ Credit unions were a means of keeping the financial resources created in, for, and by a community,

circulating within the community. Through lending to local businesses and residents, credit unions were crucial to the development of the cooperative model, from worker co-ops and co-op stores to housing co-ops.

Because many of these local cooperatives were often unable to meet all of their own needs, credit unions were equally crucial to the development of regional cooperative networks. The most successful Black cooperatives tended to be those that were part of a networked regional cooperative system that, by linking cooperatively owned enterprises, kept exchanges recirculating among them, thus reducing dependence on the White economic power structure.²¹² For example, during the Great Depression, which saw the rise of more African American cooperatives than any other period in US history, the Young Negroes' Co-operative League, under the leadership of Ella Jo Baker, attempted to create a networked system that would connect cooperatives in major US cities to a national infrastructure to develop and supply cooperatives throughout Black communities. With its focus on engaging and training Black youth in democratic and participatory economics, the YNCL's goal was to supply the goods, services, and employment the Black cooperative movement needed and to keep wealth/resources flowing within Black communities across the US.²¹³

Many Black intellectuals linked the autonomy of cooperative economics with the struggle for

Black emancipation).²¹⁴ In his landmark 1907 study *Economic Co-operation Among Negro Americans*, W.E.B. Du Bois advocated for the creation of a "Cooperative Commonwealth," a strategy of "racial economic cooperation" that would combine cooperative industries and services in a "group economy" and expand the democratic power of Black consumers into production. By gaining economic self-sufficiency, African Americans could take control over their lives, assert themselves as equals, and even leaders, and recirculate wealth within their communities.²¹⁵ But as a new class structure within the Black community developed, and the cultural differences between Blacks grew, Du Bois found that middle class Blacks were not necessarily inclined to redistribute their wealth based on race solidarity.²¹⁶ He argued it was a mistake to assume that common social conditions based on race would subsume growing class divisions in the Black community and he moved away from philanthropic Black capitalism as the key to Black salvation. If Black cooperative initiatives were not supported by worker-oriented (socialist) government policies, Du Bois believed they would ultimately fail.²¹⁷

Recognizing these class divisions, many Black cooperatives joined the Knights of Labor and the Cooperative Workers of America (CWA), the only two integrated unions operating in the South at the time that supported local control of grassroots cooperatives over production, the 8-hour workday, living wages, and gender and racial equity.²¹⁸ By centering

the needs of the poor and working classes who were left out of the market or discriminated against within it, cooperatives enabled Blacks and Whites to join together to create their own markets and enterprises, allowing them to gain access to affordable, quality food, housing, and financial services, to help one another, and to provide for their families. The Black cooperative movement cultivated the same philosophy and spirit that inspired the larger cooperative movement. Writing in the 1930s, Alethea Washington conveyed this collective spirit: "The cooperative movement offers a means whereby we can work together to solve economic problems ... The cooperative movement is inter-faith, inter-class, and inter-race. Therefore it gives us that common meeting ground which produces the best setting for working together."²¹⁹

Cooperative Education

The success and growth of Black cooperatives depended on their approach to education as a cooperative resource and the self-educational strategies they employed to this end.²²⁰ These strategies involved "on-the-job" peer-to-peer training in agricultural and manufacturing skills, business planning, managing, accounting, and cultivating democratic participation, particularly for young people whose involvement would insure a cooperative's sustainability and thus the community's well being into the future. In most cases, Black business cooperatives were "an outgrowth of months and sometimes years of study of a vital

problem.”²²¹ Nearly every cooperative started with a study group or some kind of collective study. Members of a community often formed “study circles,” informal gatherings with readings and discussions where participants “become intelligent in each phase of the new enterprise and are thus able to operate with a degree of ease and understanding that practically assures success.”²²²

The process of developing and maintaining cooperatives through experiential education generated trust and solidarity among participants and an “ethos of mutuality” that was shaped as much by “racial prejudice as by black solidarity.”²²³ Based on a “study-learn-implement” model, these informal peer-based educational settings allowed participants to solve problems in creative and unconventional ways.²²⁴ For example, some study circles created “lending circles” that developed microlending mechanisms to support one another and make sure that each individual was able to pay back the loan.²²⁵ Reading lists and curricula were developed and shared across regional study circles. Established in 1918, the Negro Cooperative Guild was an early example of the deliberate use of a national study circle to inspire Black cooperative business development around the country.²²⁶ These innovative study circles, networking conferences and other forms of peer-based education are still used by cooperatives today to educate members, strengthen civic participation, and gather the emotional energy and intellectual acumen needed to start

and sustain cooperative enterprises,²²⁷ e.g. the predominantly Latina Women’s Action to Gain Economic Security (WAGES) in California and the Bronx-based Cooperative Home Care Associates.²²⁸

“In some ways,” writes Gordon Nembhard,²²⁹ “the history of African American cooperative development is more about the African American promotion of cooperatives and efforts toward cooperative economic education than about the creation and success of cooperative businesses.” Using newsletters, newspaper and journal articles and columns, and public lectures and conferences, cooperatives shared information with one another and with the public. They sent their members to cooperative conferences or created their own conferences. Many cooperatives even created their own schools. The Mercantile Cooperative Company, established in Virginia in 1901, raised money to build a new school that hosted study groups and evening classes. The South Carolina CWA developed a “free cooperative school system”²³⁰ and in North Carolina, Black cooperatives created the Bricks Rural Life School and the Tyrrell County Training School. In addition to teaching cooperative economics, the Bluefield Colored Institute in West Virginia formed a student cooperative store, which, by selling supplies to students, functioned as “commercial laboratory for the application of business theory and practice.”²³¹ Many of these schools built on the peer-to-peer study group model, described by Halena Wilson,²³² one of many

women innovators of Black cooperative education, as one in which students “learn how to put an end to ruthless exploitation... They learn that the future well-being of themselves and their offspring, that the success of the enterprise depends upon the consolidated efforts of the entire group.”²³³

The role of Black women in democratic and management structures was integral to the relevance and effectiveness of cooperatives in general.²³⁴ Not only were Black women founders, members, managers, and directors of cooperative enterprises, they pioneered the link between education and organizing, especially movement organizing aimed at generating political power. In 1930, the hugely influential civil rights activist Ella Baker helped form the Young Negro Cooperative League, a network of affiliated regional cooperatives and buying clubs around the US that pledged itself to the full inclusion and equal participation of women. As its national director, Baker coordinated and conducted its education programs, which emphasized the role of mass education in grassroots organizing. Baker developed a dialogic, reciprocal, and de-centralized approach to education that drew on her diverse experiences in the cultural and political ferment of 1920s and 1930s Harlem.²³⁵ She exemplified a radical pedagogy similar to the Brazilian educator and political organizer Paulo Freire—“to teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibility for the production or construction of knowledge.”²³⁶ In 1960, Baker left her role as the

Executive Secretary of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), where women formed the laboring body and men assumed leadership roles²³⁷ to help found the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), where she developed a bottom-up, cooperative, participatory, and democratic structure that actualized degrees of gender equity. She would often say, “Those who do the work make the decisions.”²³⁸

As the leader of SNCC in the 1960s, Baker participated in workshops at the Highlander Folk School (HFC), an interracial educational cooperative for poor and working people in Appalachia.²³⁹ Rather than engaging in traditional pedagogical methods—there were no grades, credits, examinations, or degrees—HFC placed culture at the center of justice work by inviting participants to develop interactive workshops that used film, music, dance, and dramatic presentation to promote more embodied forms of learning.²⁴⁰ HFC understood that the emotional well-being of individuals could not be separated from the political tactics and strategies the workshops developed (e.g. non-violent civil disobedience). The interdependent realization of one’s values, commitments, hopes and desires had to be grounded in the energy, love, and warmth of the “spiritual” community they created together.²⁴¹ Baker employed these creative pedagogical techniques, which included innovative teaching devices such as the use of haiku poetry, in the over fifty Freedom Schools she helped establish in Mississippi in the

1960s.²⁴² Her pedagogical approach encouraged young people to develop a culture that rejected dominant social values and enacted a new form of social relations that prioritized cooperation and collectivism over competition and individualism.²⁴³ Functioning as “alternative classrooms” for Black students, many who had been kicked out of public schools for their political activity, Freedom Schools synthesized antiracist education and organizing by linking teaching with community mobilization and movement-building.²⁴⁴

HFC’s approach was not only “revolutionary from an educational, political, and social standpoint,” it was an exemplary instantiation of a “visible and successful model of a future integrated society”²⁴⁵ HFC was pioneering what would come to be called “prefigurative politics”²⁴⁶—the attempt to embody in the here-and-now the future one wants to see.²⁴⁷ Described as “the educational center of the civil rights movement during the 1950s and early 1960s.”²⁴⁸ HFC functioned as a “movement halfway house”²⁴⁹ for many young Black activists—Septima Clark, Rosa Parks, Dorothy Cotton, Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernathy, and John Lewis—who would go on to play pivotal roles in the broader civil rights movement.²⁵⁰ At HFS, Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins developed the “Citizenship Schools” model that flourished across the South in the late 1950s and early 1960s.²⁵¹ HFS pioneered the “teach-in” model that became a crucial educational strategy in the New Left, feminist, and anti-war movements

of the late 1960s²⁵² and in the present (e.g. the World Social Forum, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership).

In an era with widespread sharecropping and political disenfranchisement, Black women also made a crucial link between the independence of cooperatives and the political power of Black land ownership. In 1966, after being evicted by White land-owners for registering to vote, women sharecroppers in Alabama formed the Freedom Quilting Bee cooperative. Using money raised from selling quilts, they bought land for farming, built a sewing factory, and provided day care and after-school services for members’ children.²⁵³ After co-founding the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer, a member of SNCC and a leader in the right-to-vote campaign, formed the Freedom Farm Cooperative (FFC) in Mississippi. With money raised from philanthropic funders,²⁵⁴ Hamer bought forty acres of land on which hundreds of families grew cash crops for sustenance and income. FFC used its resources to give loans for Black business development, the purchase of homes with heat and running water (a first for many families),²⁵⁵ and grants to college students. For Hamer, owning land meant not only owning the food from it, but the political freedom it created. Said Hamer: “Land is the key. It’s tied to voter registration.”²⁵⁶ FFC operated for about a decade but was ultimately unable to sustain itself. Like many Black cooperatives, its demise is attributed to drought, poverty, racial

segregation and a lack of access to capital.²⁵⁷ But Mills also suggests that a plantation mentality and the experience of sharecropping robbed many Black farmers of collective decision-making skills and made them skeptical of cooperatives like FFC.²⁵⁸ Because FFC was not begun by existing landowners who were bringing resources to an enterprise, the “economic cooperative concept seems to have been imported rather than homegrown ... Displaced farmers and low-income laborers, many of them destitute and weary of farming, were invited to participate but apparently were not truly engaged in the cooperative spirit of the project or educated about what was involved in belonging to a co-op.”²⁵⁹

It is worth considering how the relationship between land and longevity played out in a different context. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Blacks Arts Movement in Chicago was able to flourish due in large part to the existence of the Southside Community Arts Center (SCAC), which offered art classes to the regional community and provided a space where artistic practice could play a crucial role of in the mobilization of Black radical politics.²⁶⁰ Under the leadership of the artist and activist Margaret Burroughs, the building SCAC occupies was purchased in 1940 with funds from the New Deal’s Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Artist Project. Building on SCAC’s success as an artistic, cultural, and educational hub, in 1961 Burroughs opened the DuSable Museum of African American History and Culture²⁶¹

nearby and together with SCAC the two institutions comprised a Black cultural corridor in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood. Of the more than 100 community art centers established during the WPA, SCAC is the only one that is still open today.

One of the few Black cooperatives that still exists today is the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund (FSC/LAF), a non-profit cooperative association with over 20,000 members that, among other initiatives, addresses food insecurity and regional control over healthy food systems. Originally founded in 1967, FSC/LAF has been able to sustain itself through funding from a variety of state and federal agencies, foundations, churches, corporations, individual donors and cooperative membership dues. Looking to federations such as the FSC/LAF, scholars of the Black cooperative movement in the US²⁶² and many practitioners suggest that the long-term sustainability of cooperatives is predicated on the ability to generate economies of scale, such as those developed by the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation in the Basque region of Spain, the largest and longest running federation of cooperatives in the world.²⁶³ Mondragon’s longevity is due in large part to its ongoing commitment to “democratizing the access to qualifications” through Mondragon University, a formalized system of free cooperative education funded by 10% of the corporation’s total annual surplus.²⁶⁴ The legacy of the Black cooperative movement and the long-term success of

Mondragon loom large in the imagination of the possible. Today, Cooperation Jackson (CJ), a radical cooperative experiment in Mississippi is attempting to make the city of Jackson and the Kush district (the eighteen contiguous majority Black counties that border the Mississippi river) the Mondragon of the American South.²⁶⁵ This visionary project consists of four interconnected and interdependent institutions at various stages of realization: a Solidarity Economy anchored in a federation of local worker cooperatives and mutual aid networks, a cooperative incubator, a cooperative credit union and bank, and the Balagoon Center, a community hub for cooperative education and training that houses the Fannie Lou Hamer Community Land Trust and the Freedom Farms Cooperative, an urban farming co-op. One of CJ’s goals is to become an instrument of “dual power” to counter the abusive powers of the state and regional, national, and international capital by building an independent political force that can challenge the two-party structure that dominates electoral politics in Mississippi.²⁶⁶ CJ’s goals are advanced through modest but no less audacious everyday collective actions, such as designing and manufacturing 3D-printed masks to combat COVID in Jackson, a city beset by inadequate health care and entrenched legacies of racialized inequality.

Appendix C: The Artist in the University is a Historical Anomaly

Contributed by: Leigh Claire La Berge

Before one can think of taking art out of the university, one must contend with how art got into the university, and, indeed, how the university became a place which could host not only art, but a menagerie of vocations and contradictions. For our purposes in this report, the university is a creation of the post-war era, and the years from the early 1950s to the late 1970s have many moments in which universities and artists approached and responded to each other.

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the "GI Bill" marked a pivotal moment in higher education. But such a bill should be seen as more broadly reflective of the country's Keynesian moment: roughly, the late 1940s through the early 1970s, in which art, public culture, and, yes, education, were funded directly by both state and federal governments.

It was a time when, according to Howard Singerman, the university played a "crucial role as both patron and scene for the art[s]." ²⁶⁷ It's not only that the period's various avant-gardes, such as Fluxus and Experimental Music, "originated in the college classroom," but rather that the expansion of arts education in universities would change what art

was and who could be an artist. ²⁶⁸ As part of Keynesian economic management, which centrally included rising wages and expanding opportunities for employment throughout the 1942–73 period, the federal and state governments bolstered universities to levels never seen before or since. Sharon Zukin notes that these investments undergirded the "state's contribution to artistic careers... [and] encouraged many more young people than before to go to college. In the sixties, more artists were college-educated than in any previous generation." ²⁶⁹ She further claims that such fiscal support had a "democratizing" and "professionalizing" effect on art. Placing artistic education within an expanding university "opened art as a second career for people who had not yet been integrated into the labor market in a significant way. . . . By the late sixties and early seventies more than a million adults in America identified their occupation as in some way connected with the creative arts." ²⁷⁰ In Singerman's words, by the time this expansion was over, the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) would emerge "unchallenged [in its] administrative success." Literary critic Mark McGurl has called the period of 1945 through our present "the program era" to note the expansive formal and pedagogical transformation of creative writing under the

rubric of an MFA program. ²⁷¹ Both McGurl and Singerman note the deep irony that out of avant-garde anti-institutionalism and modernist individuality, the path to becoming an artist was transformed into a university-based, professionally credentialed degree.

As universities expanded throughout the 1960s by subjects taught, degrees granted, and populations served, they became ever more radical places. ²⁷² This was the time when fields such as women's studies, ethnic studies, and Black studies first appeared in universities and it was a time when the university hosted radical discussions about how the economy could be made more fair and more free. The Black Panthers, it should be remembered, got their start in a campus reading group in Oakland.

Viewing the same historical moment of educational expansion and wage increases, neoliberal economists, including Milton Friedman and James M. Buchanan, for their own part, "suspected some kind of causal connection between free public education and the rising militancy of the student movement." ²⁷³ Students should not be waged, these economists argued. On the contrary, they should be indebted. As Melinda Cooper

has argued, the neoliberals sought to “replace public [spending on education] with private deficit spending.” Grants would be converted to loans. Tuition would be made more expensive. Federal and state subsidies would be curtailed. Today, of course, we know which vision became dominant. At the same time, we realize that the height of that radicalism politically also marked the beginning of a certain contraction economically. In her wonderful study, Cooper notes that even the original American neoliberals themselves could not have “anticipate[d] how closely [today’s] student loan market would approximate their policy prescriptions.”²⁷⁴

As the MFA transformed into a teaching degree throughout the 1970s and 1980s, a credential to remain in the university system that itself provided the degree, universities curtailed their expansion of long-term employment through tenure and substituted majority short-term contracts through adjunct positions—one nascent moment of artists’ transformation into decommodified laborers. Nonetheless, and with full knowledge of the economic scene, the number of arts graduates has increased 31 percent since 2002.²⁷⁵ Adjusted for inflation, university tuition has risen 259 percent since 1971. The increase relative to wages and accounting for gender disparity in wage rates means that in 1971 men could have expected to pay 6.2 percent of their income on tuition and women, 17.8 percent. By 2012, men would pay on average 26 percent of their income; women would pay 41 percent of

theirs. From then until now, the gradual availability of credit for students via loans would both ameliorate the difficulty of increasing tuition for individuals and exacerbate the problem collectively, as the availability of loans leads to an inflationary increase in tuition.²⁷⁶

Tuition at both private and public schools began its alpine ascent at this moment, as well. Rising tuition meant that available money could be channeled through student loans, which became (1976 for public loans; 1984 for private loans; both strengthened in 2005) impossible to discharge through bankruptcy. Soon after, the US government began guaranteeing private loans to students under the FFEL program and did so until 2010. Still, as of 2014, more than 75 percent of student loans were secured by US Treasury obligations.²⁷⁷ Finally, public and private colleges and universities increasingly turned to bond markets to fund construction and infrastructure. These bonds would be secured by rising tuition, discounted by the state, and, as *The Economist* has noted, offer institutional as well as wealthy individual investors another safe harbor: they are low risk and tax free. In each scenario, universities produce much needed liquidity for financial markets and allow for the private capture of public wealth—this is the trick of post-’70s finance.

One effect of this influx of money has been to erase many of the distinctions between public and private universities, indeed to reconfigure what public education means. The federal

government guarantees some of the money that flows into private colleges and private universities through loans and research funding, while flagship public schools have essentially become private in their funding since they increasingly have less direct state support to draw on. Likewise, consortiums such as the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities have been crucial in lobbying for continued and increased access to public funding for private institutions. Humanists, for their part, have been slow to view the public financing of private education at the university level with the same degree of abhorrence they view the voucher system in secondary education.

Yet even as the public versus private distinction lessens in higher education, the profit versus nonprofit distinction, one which even a few years ago seemed tentative, looks for now to have endured. Indeed, *The New York Times* recently reported that “some owners of private colleges turn a tidy profit by going non-profit.” Nonprofits pay little to no real estate taxes and may be donated to for a tax deduction. The tax breaks allotted to nonprofits enable private schools to “build up” rather than “spend down” their endowments. Endowments make more capital investment possible. This pressures public schools to strive for similar endowments, through private fundraising and tuition increases. And only nonprofit entities may float municipal bonds, themselves tax-exempt.

Appendix D: The Landscape of BIPOC-Led Creative Co-op Study and Training

Contact us if you would like to support the completion of our working document, The Landscape of BIPOC-Led Creative Co-op Study and Training so that our detailed spreadsheet can become an interactive map and website.

Appendix E: The Solidarity Economy Ecosystem

Cooperatives are one part of the larger Solidarity Economy, a term used internationally to describe sustainable and equitable community-control of work, food, housing, and culture using a variety of organizational forms.²⁷⁸ The Solidarity Economy principles include cooperation, participatory democracy, intersectional equity, sustainability, and pluralism.²⁷⁹

A number of organizations that support the Solidarity Economy in the United States have emerged in the past decade, and in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number and diversity of entities providing support to Solidarity Economy organizations. However, although artists and culture-bearers participate in many of these as workers and beneficiaries, few of these entities place an emphasis on art and culture.

The main types of Solidarity Economy support organizations in the United States include:

- Incubators, accelerators and work-spaces focusing on development of SE social enterprises
- Financial, funding, and impact investment services organizations
- Education and research institutions
- Forums and networks
- Advisory and policy organizations

The main services these organizations provide include:

- Support to develop business plans and social impact plans
- Access to finance
- Seed capital financing/funding
- Social impact investment/funding
- Operations financing/funding
- Scale-up financing/funding
- Educational services
- Market facilitation
- Policy-making
- Support for the inclusion of vulnerable members
- Sustainable development support

The main types of Solidarity Economy support organizations that exist in other countries that are missing or underdeveloped in the United States include:

- Chambers of commerce, industry associations, and business advisory bodies
- Government and regional authority support structures
- Federations of place-based networks/organizations

- Formal schools and universities that specialize in Solidarity Economies
- Access to patient capital
- Small business administrations that champion the Solidarity Economy as it intersects with arts and culture

Key Social and Solidarity Economy Organizations and Networks

International Solidarity Economy Networks and Task Forces

- The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (TFSSE) aims to raise the visibility of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) within the UN system and beyond. The members and observers of the Task Force have committed to undertake collaborative activities to: enhance the recognition of the role of SSE enterprises and organizations in sustainable development; promote knowledge of SSE and consolidate SSE networks; and support the establishment of an enabling institutional and policy environment for SSE.
- Global Social Economy Forum is an international association of regional governments and civil society networks engaged in the promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as a means to achieve

an inclusive and sustainable regional development. As of May 2020, GSEF brings together 75 members on the 5 continents coming from 36 countries, including 26 regional governments and 35 SSE networks.

- International Centre of Research and Information on the Public, Social and Cooperative Economy (CIRIEC) is a network of companies, organizations, and experts interested in economic activity oriented towards collective support.
- Research Network For Social Enterprise (EMES) is a research network of established university research centers and individual researchers whose goal has been so far to gradually build up an international corpus of theoretical and empirical knowledge, pluralistic in disciplines and methodologies, around SE concepts: social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social economy, Solidarity Economy, and social innovation.

- Community Economies Research Network (CERN) is an international network of researchers, activists, artists, and others who are interested in ways of enacting new visions of the economy.
- RIPESS North America²⁸⁰/ US Solidarity Economy Network²⁸¹ (national), RIPESS is a global network of continental networks committed to the promotion of Social Solidarity Economy. The member networks themselves (Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania) bring together national and sectoral networks, thus ensuring strong territorial anchoring.

National Networks / Coalitions

- SeedCommons (national)
- New Economy Coalition (national)
- CommonFuture (national)
- USSEN (US Solidarity Economy Network)

Examples of Sector-based Networks:

- Center for Cultural Innovation's *AmbitioUS* program (artists and cultural organizers)
- the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives (worker co-ops),
- the Participatory Budgeting Project,
- The Free Press (media)
- Geo.coop (media)
- Grounded Solutions (Housing)
- Foundation for Intentional Community (Housing)
- Right to the City (Tenants Organizing)
- the Allied Media Conference (media)
- HowlRound Theater Commons (performing artists)
- Community Economies Research Network (academics)
- Justice Funders (donor organizing)

Local and Regional Cooperative²⁸² Associations

- Arizmendi Association of Cooperatives
Oakland CA
(415) 683-3335
arizmendi.coop
- Austin Cooperative Business Ass'n
Austin, TX
acba.coop
- Baltimore Roundtable for Economic Democracy (BRED)
Baltimore, MD
baltimoreroundtable.org
- Carolina Common Enterprise
Durham, NC
(828) 713-1668
commonenterprise.coop
- Co-op Cincy
Cincinnati, OH
(513) 549-3381
coopcincy.org
- Cooperation Buffalo
Buffalo, NY
cooperationbuffalo.org
- Cooperation Jackson
Jackson, MS
(601) 355-7224
cooperationjackson.org
- Cooperation Richmond
Richmond, CA
(510) 778-5886
cooperationrichmond.org
- Cooperation Worcester
Worcester, MA
cooperationworcester.org
- Cooperative Economics Alliance of New York City (CEANYC)
New York, NY
gocoopnyc.com
- Cooperative Maine Business Alliance
Maine
(207) 619-2810
maine.coop
- Cooperatives United for Sunset Park (CUSP)
Brooklyn, NY
(718) 633-4823 Ext. 2
cusp.coop
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund
Epes, AL, (205) 652-9676
federationssoutherncoop.com/
- Greater Boston Chamber of Cooperatives
Boston, MA
boston.coop
- Green Mountain Worker Cooperative Alliance
VT
facebook.com/GMWCA
- LA Co-op Lab
Los Angeles, CA
(323) 528-2076
lacooplab.com
- LA Union Cooperative Initiative (LUCI)
Los Angeles, CA
(424) 244-0633
luci.coop
- Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA)
Philadelphia, PA
(215) 971-3803
philadelphia.coop
- Riverwest Cooperative Alliance
Milwaukee, WI
rca.coop
- South Sound Cooperative Network (CoSound)
Olympia, WA
- Southern Grassroots Economies Project
New Market, TN
f4dc.org/ARCHIVES/sgeproject.org
- The Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives—NoBAWC
Oakland, CA
(510) 736-2667
nobawc.org
- Valley Alliance of Worker Cooperatives
Northampton, MA
valleyworker.coop
- Vermont Employee Ownership Center
Burlington, VT
(802) 338-7448
veoc.org

Industry Networks

- Madison Worker Cooperatives (MADWorC)
Madison, WI
madworc.org
- NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives (NYC NoWC)
Brooklyn, NY
(646) 363-6311
nycworker.coop
- Ohio Employee Ownership Center
Kent, OH
oeockent.org
- Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA)
Philadelphia, PA
(215) 971-3803

Appendix F: 1.2 Million Out of the 1.4 Million People Who Make Their Primary Earnings in the Arts Did Not Attend Art School

Contributed by Vicky Virgin of BFAMFAPhD

84 percent of all working artists did not go to art school (conversely 16 percent did, 237,738 divided by 1,465,417 = 16.2%).

10 percent of art graduates are working artists (237,738 divided by 2,331,609 = 10.2%).

BFAMFAPhD member Vicky Virgin updated their 2014 *Artists Report Back* findings by looking at artists' occupations, educational attainment, and field of degree recorded by the Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is the largest survey that collects data about artists, surveying roughly 1 out of every 100 persons in the nation. This is an annual survey that is designed to sample one percent or about 3 million households in the United States, gathering detailed data that was previously collected in the Decennial Census.

NOTE: A myriad of issues arise when using data to study artists. The authors of *Artists Report Back* write:

We used two variables to identify this population: "primary occupation" (secondary occupation is not collected in this survey) and "field of degree," a relatively new variable directed at those who have a bachelor's

degree. We will refer to people who have bachelor's degrees in the arts as "arts graduates" and to people whose primary occupation is writer, author, artist, actor, photographer, musician, singer, producer, director, performer, dancer choreographer, and entertainer as "working artists."²⁸⁴

Arts Graduates

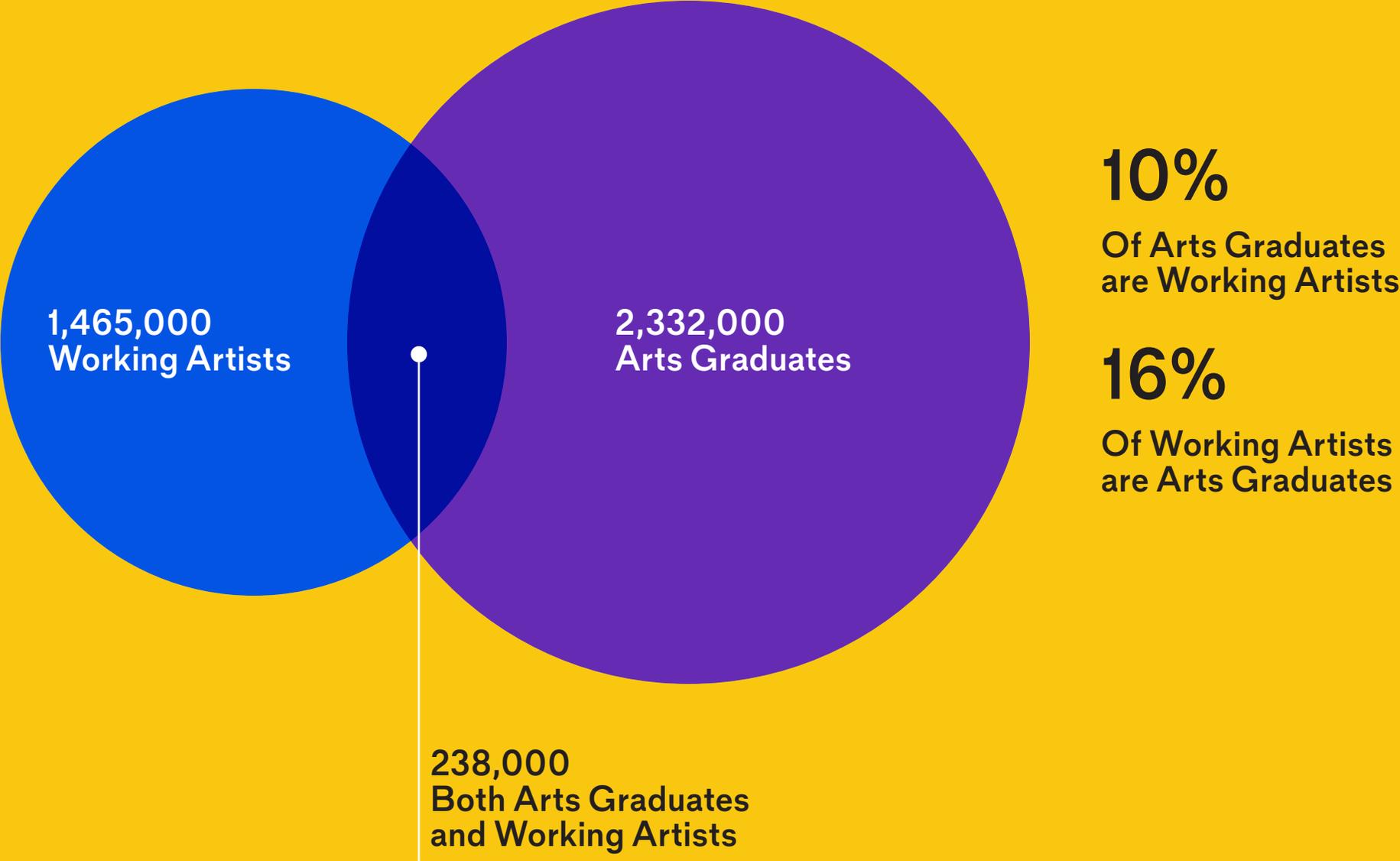
We looked at people with bachelor's degrees in music, drama and theater arts, film, video and photographic arts, art history and criticism, studio arts, and visual and performing arts, living in the United States in 2019. The ACS does not collect the field of degree for master's degrees, so we define "arts graduates" in this report as people with BAs or BFAs in the arts, who may or may not have an MA or MFAs in the arts.

Working Artists

We defined working artists as people whose primary earnings come from working as writers, authors, artists, actors, photographers, musicians, singers, producers, directors, performers, choreographers, dancers, and entertainers. We excluded designers and architects from both the data

related to "arts graduates" and from the data based on primary occupation (working artist), because the higher earnings of designers significantly alter the median earnings of our field. We understand that "working artists" are often identified by level of commitment, and not remuneration,²⁸⁵ but we cannot track practicing artists who do not make their primary earnings in the arts using the ACS. In fact, no nationally representative data exists for practicing artists. While many artists are missed in our report, we chose to investigate the data we could isolate to learn more about working artists and arts graduates nationally.

1.2 Million Out of the 1.4 Million People Who Make Their Primary Earnings in the Arts Did Not Attend Art School



Appendix G: The Legal Future of Solidarity Economy Grantmaking

by Sustainable Economies Law Center

Since 2016, the 501(c)(3) Sustainable Economies Law Center has raised dozens of grants that we've used to fund several cooperatives. We began doing this because we saw a glaring gap: A growing number of funders had taken an interest in supporting cooperatives, but practically none were willing to make direct gifts to cooperatives. Often, foundations cited their lawyers, who are prone to encouraging the well-worn path of funding 501(c)(3)s. The Law Center funds cooperatives because they are essential to the economic transformation needed to—in the IRS wording of charitable purpose—“relieve the poor, distressed, and underprivileged” and “combat community deterioration,” among other things. We believe it's essential that more foundations cultivate the knowledge necessary to identify and fund those cooperatives that are engaging in economic and social transformation, thereby advancing charitable purposes.

At the Law Center, we've taken extra care to understand the boundaries and possibilities of 501(c)(3) and foundation law, and will share a few takeaways below.

The boundaries of “charitable purpose” have expanded.

In the past decade, the boundaries of “charitable purpose” have shifted in ways that are somewhat invisible to foundations and to the public. The shift can mainly be observed in the activities for which the IRS does and does not grant tax exemption. The Law Center has been in a unique position to observe this, having provided legal support to dozens of organizations that have pushed the boundaries. We've seen many activities receive tax exemption even when the IRS might previously have considered them too commercial in nature or too oriented toward private benefit. Now, the IRS is seeing that charitable purposes can effectively be advanced in circumstances where communities organize to meet their own material needs through cooperation and mutual aid. In their applications to the IRS, nonprofits pointed to evidence of their community's economic challenges and feelings of disempowerment, then cited the growing body of literature indicating that self-organizing and community-led solutions may be the most effective at addressing such problems.

This shift has opened doors for private foundations and public charities to play an expanding role in funding cooperatives with grants and PRIs.

The boundaries of “educational purpose” have expanded.

Previously, the IRS was prone to recognizing activities as educational only if they carried some hallmarks of institutional education, such as classroom instruction, credentialed instructors, organized presentation of a curriculum, and administration of testing. Today, we have evidence to show that such instructional methods are less effective than hands-on, practical, social, and experiential modes of learning. We also know that people everywhere need spaces where they can experience and practice democratic participation and new economic structures, because it is only through such experience that people can gain confidence to shift away from the disempowering and extractive structures of the dominant system. With conscious structuring, cooperatives and mutual aid groups may be the most effective training grounds for the Solidarity Economy and can thereby broaden the scope of activities viewed as “educational.” This, too, expands the space in which foundations can fund cooperatives.

“Expenditure responsibility” can be joyful and educational.

When granting to non-501(c)(3)s, private foundations have more legal compliance responsibilities than public charity foundations do. Private foundations must do “expenditure responsibility” and oversee the grantee and its use of funds. Some foundation staff have expressed that this is a thing to be avoided, due to added administrative burden. We suggest a different approach: View expenditure responsibility as an opportunity to get to know the inner workings of grantees, to deepen learnings about Solidarity Economy work, and to share learnings with the public. From this perspective, expenditure responsibility could be enlivening! It is not necessary to spell out a prescriptive use of funds in a grant agreement; rather, it is important to spell out a process of communication between the foundation and grantee, so the foundation can have an ongoing window into the decisions, activities, and expenditures arising from the grant, to give assurances that the grant is advancing charitable purposes. The documentation and reporting requirements of expenditure responsibility need not be viewed as a bureaucratic burden, but could instead be treated as an opportunity to document transformative work and share stories with the public.

Shifting from “mission-related” to “program-related” investing.

The legal terms of endowments vary widely, and staff of foundations may misunderstand the options available for managing, investing, and granting such funds. It’s important to inquire and test any assumptions that a foundation’s assets must or should be held in perpetuity and managed in ways that generate financial return. First, some foundations refer to the bulk of their assets as “endowments” even when the use of such assets is, in fact, unrestricted. Other assets may be restricted, but it’s critical to look at the exact nature of these restrictions. Has a restriction expired? Can the restriction be altered on the basis of unforeseen circumstances (such as severe threats to communities from climate change, inequality, or White supremacy)? Can the restriction be altered by a board decision, staff decision, or donor decision?

In recognizing the great potential for social and economic transformation now, it is not necessary that every foundation adopt a spend-down approach. At the very least, foundations should free assets from the confines of rules governing “prudent” fund management for assets that need not be restricted in this way. This allows foundations to shift from making mission-related investments to making program-related investments for deeper impact. These two phrases can create confusion, but their differences are pivotal. “Mission-related” is a colloquial phrase referring to investments made with consideration of the

relationship of the investment to the foundation’s charitable purpose, but which still require the foundation to avoid jeopardizing the foundation’s assets. By contrast, investments made to advance charitable purposes, or “program-related” investments, are not bound by prudent management rules, and can instead be structured to maximize community benefit, rather than to secure a financial return for the foundation. By shifting to program-related investing, foundations can resource the most transformative work being done by groups that may not meet “underwriting” standards of conventional investments.

Knowledge is power.

A little bit of learning about the law can go a long way. Since most lawyers are unfamiliar with the Solidarity Economy and with the possibilities for funding it, we recommend that foundation staff take some time to learn about the shifting terrain of charitable purposes, the requirements of expenditure responsibility, rules governing access to the use of the foundation’s assets, possibilities for program-related investing, and financial tools to support the Solidarity Economy. We wish there were more resources to support this learning, so the Sustainable Economies Law Center and friends are piecing together a resource library here. Among other things, you’ll find links to cartoon videos on 501(c)(3) law, the prudent investor rule, foundation investing, and more. We’re so grateful to the foundation staff who are deepening their knowledge on the Solidarity Economy! We figured the least we could do is give you cartoons and other tools to make this learning process a joyful one.

Appendix H: Colleges Where Parents Take Out the Biggest Loans to Pay Tuition—6 of the Top 10 Are Art Schools

Eight of the colleges in the top 50 colleges where parents borrow the most are art schools, with six of them landing among the 10 most expensive schools in terms of PLUS borrowing.²⁸⁶

10

Loyola Marymount University

Los Angeles, California

Graduation rate: 82%

Median loan amount: \$60,500

Default and delinquency rate: 4%

Low-income borrowers: 43%

9

American Musical and Dramatic Academy

New York, New York

Graduation rate: 66%

Median loan amount: \$61,411

Default and delinquency rate: 10%

Low-income borrowers: 60%

8

New York University

New York, New York

Graduation rate: 85%

Median loan amount: \$66,687

Default and delinquency rate: 5%

Low-income borrowers: 46%

7

Savannah College of Art and Design

Savannah, Georgia

Graduation rate: 65%

Median loan amount: \$66,714

Default and delinquency rate: 6%

Low-income borrowers: 51%

6

School of Visual Arts

New York, New York

Graduation rate: 68%

Median loan amount: \$70,445

Default and delinquency rate: 9%

Low-income borrowers: 60%

5

Berklee College of Music

Boston, Massachusetts

Graduation rate: 63%

Median loan amount: \$72,056

Default and delinquency rate: 8%

Low-income borrowers: 44%

4

High Point University

High Point, North Carolina

Graduation rate: 63%

Median loan amount: \$73,101

Default and delinquency rate: 6%

Low-income borrowers: 32%

3

Ringling College of Art and Design

Sarasota, Florida

Graduation rate: 67%

Median loan amount: \$76,470

Default and delinquency rate: 3%

Low-income borrowers: 56%

2

Pratt Institute

Brooklyn, New York

Graduation rate: 69%

Median loan amount: \$76,882

Default and delinquency rate: 6%

Low-income borrowers: 54%

1

Spelman College

Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Atlanta, Georgia

Graduation rate: 77%

Median loan amount: \$84,671

Default and delinquency rate: 9%

Low-income borrowers: 66%

1

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Cooperatives

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Appendix I: Sample Grant and Loan Program for Creative Cooperatives



GRANT & LOAN FUND FOR EARLY-STAGE ARTS, CREATIVE, AND CULTURAL COOPERATIVES

Application Deadline: Monday, October 5, 2020 by 12:00 p.m. PT

Application Review: October 2020

Grant Period: Program Period (November 9, 2020 - February 4, 2022)

Loan Product Support and Administration (November 9, 2020 - February 4, 2022)

PROGRAM

Artists, creatives, and culture bearers are among those at the forefront of advancing emerging and alternative economies that shape our world. They are using shared ownership models like cooperatives to exercise autonomy and shared ownership as a way to realize independence and financial stability and self-determination. For example, they are important for innovating ways to make technology work better for artists when it comes to retaining ownership, procuring payments, and protecting copyright—innovations that protect individuals against corporate interests. Moreover, artists' cooperative enterprises hold promise not only for artists, whose nonprofit, commercial, and gig-economy support structures are not self-determining or sustaining enough, but also for their communities for whom their cooperative activities benefit.

We define "artists," "creative industries," and "culturally rooted" enterprises broadly. They include being a fine artist, maker, designer, creative entrepreneur, and a cultural practitioner. Artists' cooperatives can be serving identity-based communities (e.g., LGBTQ+ makers, Black XR content producers, or anti-corporate musicians) or place-based communities (e.g., Southwestern Native American crafts artists or Minneapolis-based Black hair and beauty stylists). Cooperatives can be place-based, place-agnostic, or platform-based (i.e., internet-based), as long as they operate in and are headquartered or incorporated in the U.S. or its territories. In addition, although the Fund will favor businesses legally incorporated as cooperatives, the Fund is open to all types of business entities that clearly demonstrate shared ownership of decision-making and profits—501(c)3 nonprofits, LLCs, benefit corporations, and collectives that operate with binding agreements of reciprocity amongst their members.

The Grant & Loan Fund for Early-Stage Arts, Creative, and Cultural Cooperatives is a collaboration between **the Center for Cultural Innovation's (CCI) AmbitionUS** national initiative; **Seed Commons**, a national cooperative of locally rooted non-extractive loan funds; and **Uptima Business Bootcamp**, a member-owned business accelerator that provides hands-on education and resources to entrepreneurs. The Grant & Loan Fund has three distinct components: 1) general operating support grant funding, 2) a non-extractive loan product provided by Seed Commons, and 3) cooperative-specific business and technical assistance during the program provided by Uptima Business Bootcamp.

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BACKGROUND

The Grant & Loan Fund will provide \$125,000 in general operating support grants of up to \$25,000 each to five creative-industry cooperative enterprises. We encourage applications from cooperative enterprises at their early-stage (i.e., there is a commitment to starting the cooperative or the cooperative is newly incorporated) or early-stage growth (i.e., still a young cooperative with an opportunity to realize new growth with additional capital). In all cases, they must demonstrate cooperative ownership and governance based on a sustainably profitable business model and bylaws (or its equivalent) that indicate shared decision-making power. We also prioritize enterprises that specifically serve, are rooted in, and/or are of marginalized communities, whether these communities are place-, identity-, or affinity-based (e.g., Black creative content producers or creative entrepreneurs serving those who are differently abled). Although not a condition of eligibility, we are prioritizing supporting cooperatives wherein a combination of a \$25,000 grant from CCI, a loan of up to \$50,000 from Seed Commons (terms to be customized to awardees' potential), and technical assistance from Uptima would be catalytic in the cooperative's further development.

Investing in artist-led cooperatives with integrated early-stage financing will encourage their development and bolster their potential for success as viable businesses. Yet, early-stage capital is some of the hardest money to come by, particularly for cooperative enterprises. Our aim is threefold: (a) to provide grant capital to early-stage creative-industry and/or culturally rooting cooperatives and platform cooperatives based in the United States and its territories, (b) to de-risk lenders' support of these enterprises with a loan guarantee and business assistance by Uptima, and (c) to encourage the development of cooperatives of color, particularly those intentionally serving Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, trans, and disability populations.

Ultimately, we hope to shine a spotlight on, validate, and support cooperatives and platform cooperatives in the arts, creative, and cultural sectors. The cooperative structure holds promise for artists to retain ownership of creative content and to assert artists' ownership as normative behaviors in digital commerce and ownership of online assets, as culturally relevant and resonant anchors of specific place-based or identity-based communities. This program will also support a type of cooperatives that expand ownership beyond a single business owner to include not only founders but also, potentially, to a wider group of artists, community members, users or consumers, and beneficiaries whose participation perpetuates an ethos of democratic decision-making in order to share assets and power.

CCI is collaborating with Seed Commons and Uptima Business Bootcamp. Seed Commons is known nationwide for building the infrastructure for a just, democratic and sustainable new economy. Seed Commons channels investment to marginalized communities that have faced the brunt of the extractive economy, deindustrialization, and systemic discrimination, making community-controlled finance available to cooperatively-owned businesses that create jobs, build wealth, and challenge inequality. Uptima Business Bootcamp provides entrepreneurs with greater access to hands-on education, mentorship, resources, and community to create thriving businesses. Uptima Business Bootcamp is a cooperative of member-users of their services and grantees of the Grant & Loan Fund will have the option to join their cooperative.

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ELIGIBILITY

At this time, this is a one-time-only program. We encourage all entities who fit the eligibility requirements—including entities that are not officially a cooperative business but are on track—to apply for the program.

To be eligible for consideration, applicants must:

- Be based in the United States or a U.S. territory.
- Be in an early-stage, ranging from pre-startup (i.e., in the process of incorporating as a cooperative business), to the early days of running the legally incorporated cooperative business (e.g., developing products or services), to having been incorporated with business growth potential (i.e., already launched and in operation but needing capital to grow toward profitability). The following are some examples of qualifying cooperatives:
 - Pre-Startup can include any of the following:
 - The applicant has commitment, but has not legally incorporated as a cooperative yet. (Applicant will need to demonstrate seriousness of intent, such as, through an already-launched public-facing website or platform, social media reach to cultivate membership, formal roles and responsibilities that anticipate stakeholder groups, legal paperwork or correspondence indicating a pathway to cooperative incorporation [a legally recognized cooperative business or any other type of corporation wherein there is demonstration of cooperative governance and profit-sharing].)
 - Applicant's entity is in the "friends and family" stage with most of their financial support coming from their intimate network of personal contacts.
 - May be in the early stages of an already-formed cooperative, but cannot grow to the next level without an infusion of capital.
- Operate in or serve the artistic sector, creative industries, or cultural communities. Artists may not be the sole purpose, membership, or business, but artists (broadly defined) need to specifically benefit from your cooperative.
- Fulfill a need that is not just profit-based (e.g., help creative entrepreneurs retain ownership over digital content, create a sense of culturally shared identity, or de-corporatize who and how consumers retain control over their content). Preference will go to cooperatives that serve cultural communities that would particularly benefit from the alternative economic-model of cooperatives, such as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Immigrant, LGBTQ+, and/or disability communities.

Some indicators that an applicant may be ready to apply for a loan, in addition to the grant, include:

- Have a minimum annual budget size of **\$50,000**.
- Have founding members who authentically reflect the communities of co-owners, consumers, and users the cooperative is trying to support and serve.
- Offer a product or service that has market demand.
- Has a clear notion of achieving greater revenue, and has a good plan to repay the loan.

The following are **ineligible** to apply and receive support:

- Currently financial support from CCI, Seed Commons, the Working World, or any of the local Seed Common partnering funds. (If you received a grant or loan from any

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one of these groups in the past, but the obligations were satisfactorily closed, you may apply.)

- Relationships, through money or family, with any board or staff members of these organizations.

GRANTS AWARDED

Grant Support: The program will award up to five cooperatives with \$25,000 each in general operating support grant funding and can be used in any way that helps the cooperative, including for salaries, legal fees, expertise, and product or platform development. The grant and grant agreement will be with CCI, through its AmbitioUS initiative. The grant period is a 15-month period, November 9 - February 4, 2022.

In addition to the grant, each grantee will also have the opportunity to receive:

Loan: Seed Commons will provide a non-extractive loan of up to \$50,000, with repayment terms customized to each borrower and your unique repayment plan (i.e., interest rates, payment schedule, and duration of the loan). (As reference, Seed Commons loans carry a standard interest rate of 8%, with flexible repayment terms based on net profits of your enterprise (i.e., loans are only repaid after your other expenses are covered). Applicants will have the opportunity to select the following options "Grant only" or "Grant and Loan." If an applicant selects wanting to be considered for both a grant and a loan, but upon discussion with Seed Commons, learns they may not be either ready for or well-served by a loan, then CCI reserves the right to either still provide the grant if the grant would still be catalytic to their proposed progress OR to not make a grant to that applicant if the combined capital was integral to the proposal. Therefore, being notified that your application is being considered for a loan means that you are competitive but may not ultimately receive either loan or grant support.

Technical Assistance: Uptima Business Bootcamp will provide customized business and technical assistance. Examples of their services include (but in no way indicates what may be provided) cooperative business models, business planning, budgeting, and capital raising strategies. Their support of each applicant will vary, with the majority of their time helping borrowers successfully repay their loan.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed by staff of CCI, Seed Commons, and Uptima Business Bootcamp. This panel of reviewers will assess proposals based on:

- Intention of the enterprise reflects the commons-based and democratic ethos of mission-driven cooperatives.
- Stakeholder categories reflect that the cooperative serves groups of people with needs that are not sufficiently being met through other systems of support, and thereby serves a public good.
- Cooperative has a viable product or service that has the potential to earn a profit, and this information reflects an informed understanding of challenges and potentials.
- Long-term sustainability and profitability of the cooperative.

Although not required, we will also prioritize:

- Demonstration that a combination of grant, loan, and technical assistance can be catalytic to the development and viability of the cooperative.
- Cooperative is led by and intentionally serves historically underserved communities that have been discriminated against or excluded from opportunities to access

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affordable and supportive capital. We will look for intentionality and not vague references to how underserved communities will be served.

- Cooperative, especially platform cooperatives, will help influence the digital economy through their innovative development or use of technology (e.g., smart contracts, copyright, digital currency, digital wallets, etc.).

TIMELINE

Applications Open: Monday, August 17, 2020

Deadline: The application must be received by CCI by Monday, October 5, 2020, by 12:00 p.m. PT.

Review Process (October 2020): A selection panel of representatives from Seed Commons, Uptima Business Bootcamp, and CCI, as well as people with experience in the arts and cultural and enterprise development, will adjudicate applications. This process will be administered and facilitated by CCI to ensure that panelists provide thoughtful assessment, fair judging criteria to all proposals, and reflect the diversity of the applicant pool.

Notification (November 2020) Applicants will be notified of the status of their proposals.

DELIVERABLES

Upon completion of the grant, recipients of the Coop Funding Program grant are expected to submit a final report detailing the use and impact of the funds. Reporting components will include:

- A narrative report detailing how the funding was used, what your next step will be at the conclusion of this grant, and any unexpected outcomes or challenges.
- Final financial accounting of how you used CCI's funds.
- High-resolution photographs in JPEG form and a link to any online videos documenting the impact of your project as a result of CCI's support.
- Those applicants receiving a loan from Seed Commons will have additional reporting requirements throughout the life of the loan, to be agreed upon between the applicant and Seed Commons.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants who meet the program eligibility must submit an online application by Monday, October 5, 2020 by 12:00 p.m. PT.

Applications will be accepted only through CCI's *Submittable* portal.

RESOURCES

To assist you with your application process, please read the Application Preview, Video Submissions Tips & Tricks, and Examples of Competitive Profiles documents on the program's website: ambitio-us.org/investments/grants-loan-fund.

If you have additional questions about the application process, contact info@cciarts.org, address it to Abdiel J. López, CCI's Program Officer, and use the subject line "Grant & Loan Fund."

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Appendix J: Creative Co-op Capacities²⁸⁷

Contributed by Susan Jahoda and Caroline Woolard, authors of *Making and Being*

We emphasize the capacities that we believe are necessary in order to be present with yourself and with others throughout your production process. We use the term capacity to refer to an ability to acquire knowledge and embody a way of being (a quality of presence) in daily actions and practices. We have noticed that artists who are capable of navigating difficult situations—and who continue to enjoy making art for decades—have developed many of the specific capacities below.²⁹⁰

Contemplative Practice

The Center for a Contemplative Mind in Society developed a toolkit called *Creating Contemplative Community in Higher Education* with the following capacities, listed below:

- **Focused Attention:** I am able to practice lucid and attentive awareness, noticing distraction and returning to focused attention.
- **Calmness:** I am able to practice grounding, centeredness, a sense of ease of being, and equanimity.
- **Patience:** I am able to remain present amid delays or repetitions. I am aware of my own feelings of annoyance or frustration, noticing them without acting upon them.

- **Wisdom:** I am able to practice understanding, perspective-taking, and clarity of thought.
- **Compassion:** I am able to practice sensitivity and care with myself and with others, sensing interdependence and connection to all of life.

Studio Habits of Mind

Studio Habits of Mind is a framework that was developed from 2001 to 2013 by the researchers and educators Lois Hetland, Ellen Winner, Shirley Veenema, Kimberly Sheridan, Diane Jacquith, and Jill Hogan at Harvard to describe the benefits of art education.²⁸⁹

- **Develop Craft and Skills:** The materials and tools I use are chosen intentionally and applied with care. I skillfully incorporate new techniques as well as make connections to my previously made artwork/experiences.
- **Engage and Persist:** I challenge myself to embrace my artmaking problems and to develop a distinct focus within my work.

- **Envision:** I imagine and practice many ideas/processes before and during my artmaking.
- **Express:** I am reliably able to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning. I spend a lot of time identifying the sources that form my beliefs, and I assess whether my sources are credible. I see myself in a state of continuous transformation, seeking to identify the root causes and historical conditions that form my beliefs and knowledge.²⁹⁰
- **Observe/Research:** I spend an extensive amount of time observing my subject matter, artmaking processes, and/or the environment around me that I may have otherwise missed.
- **Reflect / Skillful Listening and Communicating:** I am reliably able to think and talk with others about an aspect of my work or working process, and learn to judge one's own work and working process and the work of others. I can listen actively, with curiosity, and can communicate my thoughts and feelings.²⁹¹

- **Stretch and Explore:** I take risks in my artmaking and learn from my mistakes.
- **Understand (Art) Community:** I am reliably able to interact as an artist with other artists (i.e., in classrooms, in regional art organizations, and across the art field) and within the broader society. Art is in parentheses here as it can easily be switched with other disciplines, like science or history.

I am a supportive presence amid difficulty. I am able to give and receive grounded, useful feedback.

- **Coordination / Collective Action:** I am reliably able to take powerful, life-affirming actions rooted in shared values and vision in teams, partnerships, and alliances. I remain responsive to evolving conditions.
- **Conflict as Generative:** I am reliably able to effectively engage and transform interpersonal and organizational breakdown. I ask for and offer accountability and repair, in a way that generates more dignity.

Embodiment in Social Context

Embodiment in Social Context means being reliably able to generate desired actions that are aligned with your values—even under pressure. Embodiment in Social Context draws upon the work of Generative Somatics, founded by Staci Haines in 2000 (originally as GenerationFive).²⁹²

- **Self-Awareness/Embodiment:** I consistently recognize how my thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected to one another. I recognize that embodiment is crucial to ensure that I have access to all the capacities I need. I practice agility and can interrupt my own habits.
- **Connection:** I am reliably able to form and sustain trusting, authentic relationships and to compel others to a shared vision.

Appendix K: Glossary of Working Definitions

Anti-racism is defined as “the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.”²⁹³

BIPOC is an acronym for the term “Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color” or BIPOC rather than People of Color (POC) or African, Latinx, Arab, Asian, Native-American (ALAANA) in order to center Black and Indigenous experience and to acknowledge ways that anti-Black racism and the practiced erasure of Indigenous peoples continues to shape dominant culture, practice, and policy in the United States.²⁹⁴

Community-Based Organizations are hyperlocal networks, groups, and collectives that provide services to their members.

Collectives are groups of people working together to achieve a common goal, often without a legal entity.

Cooperatives “are autonomous associations of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.”²⁹⁵ Cooperative forms include *worker* cooperatives (making things together), *producer*

cooperatives (selling together), *consumer* cooperatives (buying clubs), and *multi-stakeholder* cooperatives (a mixture of these).

Worker Cooperatives are businesses that are owned and governed by workers, with profits shared based on labor contribution and democratic decision-making.²⁹⁶

Consumer Cooperatives are “owned by members who use the co-op to purchase the goods or services that they need. By combining member demand, the co-op can provide better availability, selection, pricing, or delivery of products or services to individual consumers. The model is used in many sectors and includes credit unions, grocery co-ops, telephone and electrical distribution, housing and childcare.”²⁹⁷

BIPOC-led Creative Co-ops are “autonomous associations of BIPOC creative people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises.”²⁹⁸

For example, Creative Cooperatives can be serving identity-based communities (e.g., LGBTQ+ makers, Black XR content producers, or anti-corporate musicians) or place-based communities (e.g., Southwestern Native American crafts artists or Minneapolis-based Black hair and beauty stylists). Cooperatives can be place-based, place-agnostic, or platform-based (i.e., internet-based). A Creative Cooperative

might take the form of a worker self-managed nonprofit.²⁹⁹ **Worker Self-Managed NonProfit** is a nonprofit organization in which all workers have the power to influence the programs in which they work, the conditions of their workplace, their own career paths, and the direction of the organization as a whole.³⁰⁰ A Worker Self-Managed NonProfit is the non-profit version of a cooperative, and is common for creative workers who rely upon grants and investments in the nonprofit ecosystem to sustain their projects. To compare this democratic non-profit to a traditional cooperative, you can think of a traditional cooperative as a Worker Self-Managed “ForProfit”.

Cooperative Education in higher educational contexts refers to internship and work-study programs that combine classroom-based education with practical work experience in conventional businesses and nonprofits. This report uses “education about cooperatives” to refer to education in and about democratic workplaces, including collectives, worker self-managed, nonprofits, and cooperatives.

Creatives are fine artists, makers, designers, creative entrepreneurs, culture-bearers, cultural practitioners, and people in “creative industries,” as well as “culturally rooted” enterprises broadly.

Culture Bearers are “individuals who pass on the traditions and lifeways of their people, or who carry ancestral knowledge and lifeways of generations before them. They are considered to be the best source of cultural knowledge for a tribe.”³⁰¹

Decentralization “is the process of dispersing functions and power away from a central location or authority. In a decentralized architecture, it is difficult if not impossible to discern a particular center.”³⁰²

Decolonization “brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. The easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship, evidenced by the increasing number of calls to “decolonize our schools,” or use “decolonizing methods,” or, “decolonize student thinking,” turns decolonization into a metaphor. As important as their goals may be, social justice, critical methodologies, or approaches that de-center settler perspectives have objectives that may be incommensurable with decolonization. Because settler colonialism is built upon an entangled triad structure of settler-native-slave, the decolonial desires of White, non-White, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people, can similarly be entangled in resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further settler colonialism.”³⁰³

Equity: Grantmakers in the Arts defines equity as “the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.”³⁰⁴

Federation is an “association of three or more worker co-ops or democratic workplaces joined together for purposes of mutual aid.”³⁰⁵

Just Transition “is a vision-led, unifying and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. The transition itself must be just and equitable; redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through reparations. If the process of transition is not just, the outcome will never be. Just Transition describes both where we are going and how we get there.”³⁰⁶

Movement Cooperatives are cooperatives that are connected to social movements for

economic, environmental, and racial justice. Movement Cooperatives use collective governance and ownership (when workers make decisions about shared work and shared surplus together) to operate creative spaces. Often, they are BIPOC-led cultural Creative Cooperatives, or autonomous associations of creative people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.³⁰⁷ Movement Co-ops exist to spread power and wealth and are rooted in hyperlocal community.

Movement Federations use collective governance and ownership to connect individual Movement Cooperatives and build, manage, and distribute communal pots of shared resources. Often, they work across regions to bring together otherwise siloed Movement Cooperatives as members of the Federation.

Movement Platforms refer to cooperatively created softwares and resources that allow cooperatives to operate at scale, much like platform cooperatives. We use Movement Platforms as a term to include platforms that are also non-computational and offline, or social as well.

Platform Cooperatives are businesses that use a website, mobile app, or protocol to sell goods or services. They rely on democratic decision-making and shared ownership of the platform by workers and users.³⁰⁸

Neoliberalism is an economic philosophy which entails a belief that private markets will solve all problems and a corresponding defunding of state and public sector services and has likewise eviscerated public arts funding.³⁰⁹

Peer-to-Peer is a term we use to indicate processes that share information, knowledge, and resources without centralized control.

Philanthropic Racial Equity:

Grantmakers in the Arts defines racial equity in philanthropy as “the investment of social and financial resources in policies, practices, and actions that produce equitable access, power, and outcomes for BIPOC.”³¹⁰

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) are “institutions whose histories, policies, practices, and ideologies center Whiteness or the White majority. PWIs, by design, tend to marginalize the identities, perspectives, and practices of people of color.”³¹¹

Racial Capitalism refers to the ways in which racialized subjects made (and make) capitalism possible, including slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide.³¹²

Racism is defined by Audre Lorde as “the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance, manifest and implied.”³¹³

Settler Colonialism has a goal of “removing and erasing Indigenous peoples in order to take the land for use by settlers in perpetuity. According to Laura Hurwitz and Shawn Borque’s “Settler Colonialism Primer,” “This means that settler colonialism is not just a vicious thing of the past, such as the gold rush, but exists as long as settlers are living on appropriated land and thus exists today.”³¹⁴

Solidarity Economy is a term used internationally to describe sustainable and equitable community-control of work, food, housing, and culture using a variety of organizational forms.³¹⁵ The Solidarity Economy principles include cooperation, participatory democracy, intersectional equity, sustainability, and pluralism.³¹⁶

Structural Racism involves “macro level systems, social forces, institutions, ideologies, and processes that interact with one another to generate and reinforce inequities among racial and ethnic groups.”³¹⁷

Systems Change addresses root causes rather than symptoms and thus tends to take a multidisciplinary, long-term approach that requires transforming policies, practices, relationships, and power dynamics.³¹⁸

White Supremacy involves “individual and institutional attitudes, practices, and policies that elevate the White body as the standard against which all other persons’ worth is measured.”³¹⁹

Appendix L: Mad Libs

A Single Cooperative

Dream your future learning cooperative by filling in the blank!

How it works:

Deermouse is a filmmaking cooperative that runs a learning program called Deermouse Learning.
(cooperative) (cultural practice) (cooperative's learning program)

It is run through a learning platform that enables them to teach in a hybrid mix of online & in-person.

The Deermouse Learning program involves sharing filmmaking cooperative creative practices, as well as
(cooperative's learning program) (cultural practice)

teaching how to use equipment and tools, creative techniques, collaborative processes and workflows to learners.
(details on cultural output)

A Single Cooperative

Dream your future learning cooperative by filling in the blank!

Financial model:

- Learners pay for learning through a mix of class tuition, grants, and labor.
- Deermouse Learning is funded from a mix of tuition, some grants, and the cooperative's surplus.
(cooperative's learning program)

Impact:

- Learners are able to learn a sustainable cultural practice from an already-sustainable cooperative.
- Learners also become part of the community, and potentially even part of the cooperative, growing a strong social core ecosystem that ultimately is generative for the social and cooperative health of the school.

A Federated Cooperative

Dream your future federated learning cooperative by filling in the blank!

How it works:

Computer Gardens is a federation, or network of cooperatives that runs an arts & technology learning program.
(federation) (cultural practice)

Each cooperative member of the federation creates a learning program that is assembled together by the federation.

(For example, Deermouse is a member that teaches filmmaking.)
(federation member) (federation member's cultural practice)

Together, the federation assembles everyone's learning program to assemble a shared curriculum based around
creative and critical approaches to art and technology.
(details on cultural output)

The federation can access economies of scale, both by pooling resources, as well as accessing a wider network. Admin and overhead costs are reduced collectively by using platforms and/or a federated board that centralizes some decisions, and pooling together resources and administrative labor. In addition, outreach, visibility, and funding increases.

Platforms could be used to support decision-making within the federation. For example, members of

Computer Gardens can make decisions through an online assembly platform that facilitates more collective decisions about the federated learning program.
(federation)

A Federated Cooperative

Dream your future federated learning cooperative by filling in the blank!

Financial model:

Learners pay for learning partially through class tuition. Because it is federated, Computer Gardens is able to offer lower-cost classes to students, by being able to offset tuition by larger grants.

Computer Gardens is thus funded from a mix of tuition and grants, which are then redistributed proportionally and equitably to the cooperative members and the federation.

Impact:

Learners are able to access lower-cost classes and learn a sustainable cultural practice from an already-sustainable cooperative.

Learners also have access to a larger pool of classes all in one place.

Learners become part of the federation's community, and potentially even part of several cooperatives, growing a strong social core ecosystem that ultimately is generative for the social and cooperative health of Computer Gardens.

Another *Federated* Cooperative

Dream your future federated learning cooperative by filling in the blank!

How it works:

Witchy Poo is a federation, or network of cooperatives that supports its members through a facilitation training program.
(federation) (cultural training)

Members gather together to participate in resources

that focus on

creative facilitation workshops, cultural trainings, movement organizing tools, centering arts and culture to support cooperative culture
(details on cultural impact)

These resources can come from within the federation or members, or from outside organizations.

Financial model:

Each cooperative member of the federation pays a membership fee to join the federation.

The federation hires external organizations, or member organizations to offer benefits, such as

creative facilitation workshops that is assembled together by the federation.
(internal cultural training)

The federation is thus funded by membership fees and other external funding (such as grants, in-kind donations)

Another *Federated* Cooperative

Dream your future federated learning cooperative by filling in the blank!

Impact

By sharing the cost of workshops and shared space, member cooperatives are able to access and learn from a wider variety of resources.
(shared resources)

The federation allows members to communicate and find solidarity and support within an internal network.

Ultimately, the long-term health and sustainability of cooperative community is supported through federations that provide these cultural internal benefits to other cooperatives.

A Movement Platform

Dream your future learning in a movement platform by filling in the blank!

How it works:

Myceliar is a platform that enables online, cooperative teaching and learning .
(platform) (platform impact)

A cooperative develops a platform called Myceliar , that can support learning through
(platform)
sharing learning curriculum, supporting online meetings, hosting learning resources and asynchronous discussions .
(details of platform offerings)

Detailed platform operation:

Teachers/Learning spaces use the platform to host and supply classes/workshops/lessons to the
(offering entity) (offering action) (offerings / services)
platform.

Interested Learners use the platform to browse / sign up for attending classes/workshops from the
(receiving entity) (receiving action) (received "thing")
platform.

The teacher facilitates a cohort-based session with learners through online meetings, learning resources and asynchronous discussions
(details of platform exchanges)

A Movement Platform

Dream your future learning in a movement platform by filling in the blank!

Financial model:

Either:

Learning spaces
(entity) subscribe and/or pay for the usage of the platform (B2B business model).

Or:

Learners
(entity/audience) pay for learning, and a small portion of the payment goes to the platform cooperative (B2C model).

The platform is thus funded by subscription fees and potentially grants.

The initial development of the platform is funded up-front by a mix of investment, grants, and founder labor.

A Movement Platform

Dream your future learning in a movement platform by filling in the blank!

Impact

By bundling learning and financial transactions, the platform makes it easier for
(bundled flows)
teachers/learning spaces to host classes with less overhead and admin labor.
(offering entity) (input)

By gathering many classes in the same place, the platform makes it easier for
(bundled flows)
learners/students to access more classes and meet other learners.
(receiving entity) (outcome / efficiency / convenience)

The platform supports learning that is geared specifically towards

host more cooperative, remote learning classes and trainings.
(learning stance)

Overall, the development and maintenance of this platform

enables many cooperative learning spaces to host more cooperative, remote learning spaces in an efficient way, and for learners to have access to a wider variety of cooperative learning classes and trainings.
(overall impact)

The pursuit of objectivity, always defined by those in power to protect their power, occludes the intuition of the observer—the sixth sense that could be his or her ethical radar and moral compass.

In teaching and learning refusal, we often turn toward art to give language to the intuitive.

Using art to think/feel through theory—to decode power and uncode communities—trains our intuition.

Refusal is not just a no, it is a performance of that no, and thus an artistic form.

—Eve Tuck and K. Yang³²⁰

Endnotes

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- 29 See page 119 for full Recommendations and who is already leading this work.

- 30 See page 119 for recommended actions, and read our full endnotes (starting on page 165) for recommended and cited readings.
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- 32 People’s Hub has been innovating and modeling this work. See Section 4: The Case for Creative Cooperatives and Educational Justice, starting on page 39, to learn about the different ways organizations like People’s Hub are advancing the cooperative sector while offering training.
- 33 See page 31 for examples of higher education and arts and culture foundations and nonprofits shifting to cooperative governance structures.
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Research Collective

We wrote this report because it aligns with our deepest longings to create cooperative spaces of joyful learning.

Core Research Collective Members

Caroline Woolard is a new parent, an artist, and a lifelong learner. Caroline's passion is to imagine and collectively enact spaces of cooperation and solidarity in the arts. In her role as a tenure-track Assistant Professor at Pratt Institute, Caroline aims to connect making art with making a living; she believes educators must introduce students to many possible economies and lifeworlds that can work for artists, in and out of school. This research, and this report, are a part of that work. This is also why she co-authored <http://MakingandBeing.com> with Susan Jahoda and why she co-organizes <http://Art.coop> with Nati Linares and Marina Lopez. You can reach her at carolinewoolard@gmail.com.

Dan Taeyoung is a learner, teacher, spatial designer, technologist, and artist, creating design tools, architectural spaces, and social collectives. Dan is interested in how our environments and relations change the way we

think, feel, collaborate, and play together. Much of their practice involves creating/living in/working in place-based cooperatives and collectives to co-create environments that are intentional about collaborative power, agency, and care. At present, Dan teaches at Columbia University GSAPP, is a co-founder of Soft Surplus and the Cybernetics Library, and is a co-founder/ former member of Prime Produce.

Luana Marques Soares is a Complex Systems enthusiast, emerging cyclist, and a Geography student. Based on the Freirian concept of liberatory education Luana has been tailing their journey to comprehend and hold spaces for collective learning around complex issues involving human relationships between themselves and with the Nature surrounding them. These exploratory pathways have been anchored around a set of collective investigations on different topics such as: network and systems mapping; workshops about diversity, equity, and inclusion; fungi; alternatives to regular education in Brazil; biking; the development and underlying assumptions of sciences; among others. This transdisciplinary and exciting fabric of collaborative investigations for learning is what moves Luana.

Sruti Suryanarayanan is a researcher + embodiment?performance?acting?artist who thinks about + responds to contemporary cultures of teaching / learning / knowledge sharing, and their entanglements with colonial hegemony, trauma, and inheritance, and more recently, their ties to hate violence, by questioning systems + developing tools to encourage questioning. They currently work with South Asian Americans Leading Together, Dia Art Foundation, and the Centre for Conscious Design, among other things. You can see their work at ssuryana.com.

Orbiting Research Collective Members

Ebony Gustave
Eric Triantafillou
Jonathan Lee
Zora Pang

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The Center for Cultural Innovation
1446 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
P: 415.288.0530



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