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# Lights, Camera, Revolution! Using Pedagogical Videos to Teach about Worker-Owned Co-operatives in Business Schools

Myriam Michaud and Luc K. Audebrand

Despite its advantages in terms of sustainable development, the co-operative business model is still little known and largely underestimated by the general population. Even in business schools, it is given scant attention, if any, in the curriculum. As a result, the co-operative model remains a 'hidden alternative' for many students. In this article, we argue for a cross-disciplinary integration of the co-operative model into introductory management courses. To show how such an integration is possible, we present the process by which a series of short educational videos on worker co-operatives was created. We describe the different steps in creating this educational material, highlighting the collaboration between the academic and business communities in the creative process, and outline the advantages of the co-operative model for illustrating contemporary themes in various areas of management. In conclusion, this article offers a reflection on how an organisational model that at first glance appears 'undervalued' in the academy can prove to be a great resource for illustrating complex concepts, stimulating reflection, and initiating discussions on 'alternative' models.

## Introduction

Despite student interest in models that question the profit-maximising principle of business (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2015; López-Navarro & Segarra Ciprés, 2015), the co-operative model is rarely considered in university education (Chamard, 2004; Hill, 2000; Kalmi, 2007; Laurent, 2000). Yet, co-operatives occupy an important place in the economy, representing a significant share of businesses and jobs in several industries and countries around the world (Paredes & Loveridge, 2018; Stickers, 2020).

In fact, co-operatives remain singularly absent from mainstream business school education. They are marginalised, at times even belittled, in economics and management textbooks (Chamard, 2004; Hill, 2000; Kalmi, 2007; Laurent, 2000). It is nevertheless surprising to note that the economic theory underlying the co-operative model is broached, and even supported, by economists foundational to modern economic theories (e.g., Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Alfred Marshall, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, John Maynard Keynes), theories that, as taught today, largely skip over co-operatives (Whyman, 2012). This point is not merely an interesting fact, however. This 'disappearance' of co-operatives from university textbooks poses epistemological problems. As Kalmi points out, textbooks play a significant role in defining fields of knowledge; hence, "the absence of material on co-operatives in textbooks means that many students do not become familiar with the concept" (2007, p. 626). In other words, textbooks help forge and perpetuate our idea of what is valid or not, and what is important or not important.

Yet, the co-operative model is not completely absent from academia. One can find a few courses that anecdotally discuss co-operatives, and even courses dedicated to them, in various universities. For example, according to a 2005 survey conducted by the University of Victoria, 38 of Canada's 96 universities (Universities Canada, 2021) 'address' the co-operative model (Lan, 2005). The co-operative model is addressed in at least one course in 11 institutions and is the subject of at least one specific course in 23. In addition, the co-operative model is taught in the business schools of 16 universities, out of a total of 57 business schools. Lastly, at least 28 institutions offer a specific co-operative business programme. However, these courses and programmes are mostly aimed at students who are already aware of, or even already interested

in, the model. Yet even in these universities, a student may complete all their business education without co-operatives ever having been discussed in their classes (Findlay, 2004).

The limited representation of the co-operative model in university education poses several problems (Kalmi, 2007). Firstly, it is simply not representative of reality, since co-operatives do very much exist, and they occupy an important place in the real economies of many countries. There are more than 1,500 co-operatives around the world with sales exceeding US\$100 million; the 300 largest of these have combined sales of more than overall total US\$2,000,000,000,000 (Carini et al., 2020). The absence of the model in education contributes to fuelling the perceived hegemony of the dominant model of share capital corporations and neoliberal capitalism (Ansart et al., 2014; Audebrand et al., 2017).

Secondly, it poses a practical problem: graduates who will go on to work for co-operatives — or the social economy more generally — will not have had the opportunity to develop an understanding of alternative organisational models (Demoustier & Wilson-Courvoisier, 2009). The risk is great if managers responsible for developing co-operatives act on conceptions inherited from the dominant capitalist model, which may lead to the trivialisation, or even degeneration, of the principles and values of the co-operative organisational model. Indeed, senior managers' lack of understanding of the co-operative model is considered to be one of the main factors behind demutualisations (Fulton & Girard, 2015; Zamagni & Zamagni, 2010). In other words, poor representation of the co-operative model in university education is both a symptom of a trend towards the capitalist model and contributes to this phenomenon (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016).

Thirdly, the co-operative model is little known, poorly understood, and lacks recognition. An organisational model may have concrete strengths and still not be considered legitimate in the organisational field. Co-operatives, neglected by universities as objects of study, have a hard time being acknowledged as a driver of our modern economy, even in the era of corporate social responsibility. Yet, co-operatives are hybrid organisations, combining a social or societal purpose with an economic logic (Michaud & Audebrand, 2014). As such, they do not conform to reference organisational models and face even greater challenges of legitimacy (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Dart, 2004). Such a lack of recognition may lead to a reluctance on the part of stakeholders to support an organisational form they do not know or understand (Huybrechts et al., 2014).

This 'decoupling' of the co-operative model and higher education is even more surprising given that the co-operative movement has historically been very involved in continuing adult education. Indeed, education is at the heart of the co-operative model; it constitutes one of the seven globally recognised co-operative principles. The first co-operatives quickly implemented public education initiatives. For example, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers was especially engaged in education, devoting a defined part of their surpluses (2.5%) to educative initiatives and the settlement of a library for their members (Fairbairn, 1994; Thompson, 1994). Québec's co-operative movement was considered a pillar of adult education in the second half of the 19th century, especially in finance (thanks to Desjardins' credit union) and in agricultural circles (Dion, 1970; Larose, 1991-2). The Antigonish movement, which was very important in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but also in the rest of the country and in the United States, rested on co-operation and education as mutually reinforcing pillars (Leclerc, 1982). A last anecdotal but telling example, the founder of the umbrella organisation of Québec co-operatives (i.e., Conseil québécois de la co-opération et de la mutualité) is also behind the founding of the Faculty of Sociology at Laval University (Simard & Allard, 2014). In short, the co-operative movement and adult education have historically gone hand in hand. Yet today, the co-operative model is, if not absent, at least marginal in post-secondary institutionalised education.

In this article, we detail the process of creating a pedagogical tool intended to encourage teaching the co-operative model at a Québec business school. We first describe the context that led to the creation of educational videos on worker co-operatives before outlining their educational objectives and the factors that facilitated their creation. Then, we present the

content of each video, along with suggested learning activities that educators may implement in various courses. We conclude with a reflection on the advantages of this pedagogical tool for teaching the co-operative model, and more generally, for business education.

## Background

In order to achieve their socio-economic objectives and scale up, co-operatives need properly trained employees, managers, and directors. Co-operatives provide employment to more than 100 million people around the world, including at least 180,000 people in Canada (Duguid & Karaphillis, 2019). It is important that their managers receive an education appropriate to their role. As member-based organisations, co-operatives are run by their members, who are elected to their boards of directors (Huhtala & Tuominen, 2016). Yet, as Borzaga and Galera note, 'mainstream managerial practices are often inadequate for managing co-operatives' (2012, p. 16). They go on to observe that the relative absence of co-operative-specific education often means managers will 'adopt practices and tools inconsistent with the mission of co-operatives' (Borzaga & Galera, 2012, p. 16). Recent cases, including the demutualisation of Mountain Equipment Co-op (see Hadfield, 2020), show that even large, well-established co-operatives cannot take their managers' and directors' knowledge of the co-operative model for granted (Pigeon, 2020).

Beyond the needs of co-operatives, there are other reasons to teach co-operative models, including that this unique business model is a powerful pedagogical tool. It illustrates important issues in economics and management (Kalmi, 2007) and raises apt questions about norms (Hill, 2000; Chamard, 2004). According to Chamard, such questions include the following:

... the extent to which democracy should be part of our economic lives as well as our civic lives; how do economic units actually behave outside of economic theory; what impact does the form of business have on economic incentives; are there alternative economic systems beyond pure capitalism or central planning; in the real world, how does the co-operative form impact on power in the marketplace? (2004, p. 36).

Audebrand et al. (2017) suggest that the co-operative model is particularly well suited to developing students' 'paradoxical thinking', enabling them to move from 'either/or' to 'both/and' type thought (Smith et al., 2012, p. 467). According to Dehler et al., paradoxical thinking refers to 'the ability to comprehend the complicated interplay of opposites by picturing a paradox in its more complete surroundings,' which includes its historical, ideological, political, and social context (2001, p. 506). The growing complexity of organisations and challenges of sustainable development make this an essential skill for the leaders of tomorrow (Axley & McMahon, 2006; Holt & Seki, 2012; Waldman & Bowen, 2016).

Co-operatives are characterised by the tensions inherent in their structure, which "generate a rich and complex material for instructor and student engagement" (Audebrand et al., 2017 p. 3). Co-operatives are user-owned, user-controlled, and user-benefiting (Dunn, 1988; Zeuli & Cropp, 2004), yielding stimulating paradoxes. For example, co-operatives must face the paradoxes between the opposing forces of democracy and hierarchy in their governance (Diamantopoulos, 2012; Storey et al., 2014). In terms of strategy, they must maintain their 'alternative' nature, while adapting to their business environment (Boone & Özcan, 2014; Cheney et al., 2014; Curl, 2012; Webster et al., 2011). Lastly, they also have to reconcile their social and economic objectives (Audebrand et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2013).

In their article, Audebrand et al. (2017) offer different strategies (called 'experiential pedagogical tools') that rely on the co-operative business model to develop paradoxical thinking among their students, such as case studies, games, simulations, and service learning. These strategies can be used in a variety of courses to delve deeper into some contemporary business management concepts: for example, stakeholder democracy in corporate social responsibility; collective decision making, employee participation, and empowerment; entrepreneurship sensitisation and management of small- and medium-sized enterprises. Audebrand et al. (2017) hypothesise that

resistance to the co-operative model stems from teachers' own lack of information about this business model.

In light of the foregoing, it is relevant to avail ourselves of cross-disciplinary strategies to integrate the co-operative model in business education by introducing the same concept in different courses and at different levels of study (Prégent et al., 2009). This approach is a complementary strategy to creating whole courses or programmes dedicated to co-operatives. The goal is to develop pedagogical material for professors who teach different classes and have different specialties, so that they can integrate the co-operative business model into their own teaching strategies. Thanks to these tools and activities, professors can include the co-operative model as part of their usual teaching, without necessarily having extensive knowledge of the topic.

## **Project Description**

In 2020, we launched a series of eight educational videos on worker co-operatives (available in French only, see <http://www.fsa.ulaval.ca/educo-op>) that can be used in different courses and programmes at various levels of university instruction (i.e., undergraduate, postgraduate). Involving people from the field as well as professors, each video discusses a specific aspect of management as experienced in co-operatives. The scripts for these videos feature a recent graduate who wants to know more about worker co-operatives, as she is considering creating one herself. To answer her questions, she meets various people who work in or with worker co-operatives.

The initial and general idea for the project was to familiarise undergraduate business students with the co-operative model, and more specifically with worker-owned co-operatives. We chose to focus on this model for a variety of reasons. First, we believe that worker co-operatives are less well known than other types of co-operatives, and there are more prejudices against them. Secondly, this model is more accessible from an entrepreneurial perspective, and thus easier for students to project themselves into. Thirdly, this organisational model brings particularly stimulating paradoxes to bear. To achieve our objective, we decided to create 10-minute videos that could be used in various teaching contexts.

On top of this general objective, we had four more specific goals. First, to show that worker co-operatives exist in several lines of business and industries, as well as in a range of sizes and ages. It was important to demonstrate the diversity of co-operatives so that students do not associate them with just one line of business or activity. We wanted to show that one can create and manage worker co-operatives anywhere businesses are found and that co-operatives can meet concrete needs.

The second specific objective was to ensure that these educational videos would be relevant to courses that reach a large number of students. To that end, we focused on mandatory undergraduate business courses, which many students take, and which are offered several times per year. These courses include entrepreneurship, human resource management, accounting, marketing, strategy, and sustainable development. We then contacted the professors who teach or co-ordinate these courses to discuss the project, particularly to find common ground; an angle that would allow us to raise one of their course concepts as well as introduce the co-operative business model. We also wanted the videos to be able to be used in different pedagogical contexts, for example: to illustrate a concept, open a discussion, stimulate reflection, or as the background for an evaluation exercise.

The third specific objective was to provide various perspectives in each video, which was achieved by examining different disciplines and involving different participants. Thus, for each video, we elected to present the 'theoretical' perspective of a professor, the 'field' perspective of an intermediary organisation (i.e., federation, coalition, consulting firm, financial organisation), and the 'empirical' perspective of worker members. For each video, the professor addresses



an important concept from one of their classes (i.e., responsible marketing, sustainable development, or entrepreneurial education). A representative from an intermediary organisation then addresses the same concept, but from the perspective of the co-operative model. Lastly, worker members then explain how things happen in their own co-operative, providing a concrete illustration of the concept.

This triangulation offers several complementary perspectives on the same subject, from the most abstract (theory) to the most concrete (practice). From a pedagogical point of view, this method allows students who would like to take action in whatever way — e.g., buying products from co-operatives, working in a co-operative, or starting a worker co-operative — to feel that it is possible. Of course, each video cannot be exhaustive, but by providing three points of view, some blind spots can be prevented.

The fourth objective, which stems from the third, was to work with the ecosystem of the co-operative movement in Québec, highlighting its richness and diversity. Indeed, we felt that it would not be sufficient to merely show that worker co-operatives exist in different lines of business. We also wanted to show students who wish to create, support, or work in worker co-operatives that they can obtain the support necessary to do so. The concept of the business ecosystem (Barco Serrano et al., 2019) is important whatever the entrepreneurial project, but it is even more important when the project is carried out on the margins of the dominant system (Boone & Özcan, 2014; Lévesque, 2016). Thus, there is even more reason to show that a strong ecosystem exists (i.e., financing, coaching, networking), and that it is accessible to those interested in the co-operative model. By involving representatives of intermediary organisations, we show the richness of the ecosystem surrounding worker co-operatives in the province of Québec and illustrate the potential for co-operation between universities and the co-operative community.

## **Implementation Methodology**

The success of a large-scale educational project depends on several factors. In retrospect, we believe that seven factors contributed to our success in creating and distributing videos on co-operatives. We present these factors here in chronological order, as some took place prior to creating the videos, and others after.

### **Knowledge of the co-operative field**

The most important factor was undoubtedly our keen knowledge of the co-operative field in Québec. As mentioned above, we considered it important to show the richness and diversity of the co-operative ecosystem and, even more important, to introduce the students to actors who play a central role in this ecosystem to illustrate their accessibility. We have the privilege of personally knowing representatives from several co-operative groups, including the Conseil québécois de la co-opération et de la mutualité (CQCM, Québec council of co-operatives and mutuality), Réseau CO-OP (CO-OP network), Consortium, Co-opérative de développement régional du Québec (CDRQ, Québec regional development co-operative), and Pôle CN (see Appendix 1 for a brief overview of these organisations). We were easily able to contact them to explain our project and encourage them to participate. Moreover, the videos were produced by a worker co-operative, Productions 4 Éléments (P4E) whose members are themselves very involved in the co-operative milieu. No mere contractors, P4E helped increase the diversity of the actors involved and the quality of the content.

### **Financial partners**

A second factor that contributed to the success of the project was finding two major financial partners who agreed to support the project. The production of high-quality educational videos remains expensive, and universities rarely have the funds for it. With the help of a philanthropic development advisor for the university, we developed a plan to meet potential financial partners

willing to support our project. A philanthropic development advisor's assistance is crucial to effectively presenting one's ideas and the conditions that will make a partnership win-win. In the end, we found two financial partners in the field of the social economy who allowed us to defray the costs of producing the educational videos: Fondaction, a savings fund founded by a Québec trade union confederation; and Co-operators, a pan-Canadian co-operative financial institution. Thanks to their backing, we were able to create educational videos of a high aesthetic quality, with the support of qualified professionals at all stages of production.

### **Personal contact with professors**

The third factor was personal contact with professors. University professors have very busy work schedules and do not necessarily have time to participate in audiovisual projects that fall outside their job description. That said, their involvement was essential: it makes each video more credible, and it encourages the use of these educational videos in different courses. Here again, it was critical to emphasise the win-win aspect of the situation by highlighting the opportunity to present a concept that is important to that professor (e.g., responsible marketing, identity work), while also allowing us to introduce worker co-operatives.

### **Ties to contemporary themes**

The fourth success factor, related to the previous one, was the relevance of the issues and topics discussed. In the minds of some people, the co-operative model is outdated and therefore not appropriate to resolving current issues. The co-operative model thus needed to be associated not only with modern, growing, vibrant co-operatives, but also with relevant, contemporary topics. For that reason, our videos discuss responsible marketing, professional identity, "tri-profitability" (Upward & Jones, 2016), and horizontal management. For example, Upward & Jones (2016, p.106) suggest "tri-profit" is "a new inclusive conceptual metric to replace profit", instead of the triple bottom line that "adds" a layer alongside the economic profit without reconceptualising it. These are themes at the heart of students' and instructors' current concerns.

### **Diversity of featured speakers and their accounts**

A fifth factor that contributed to the success of our videos was the diversity of the accounts given. For each short video, we sought testimonials from worker co-operatives in various lines of business. Our objective was to show that co-operatives are not isolated to just a few unattractive sectors or confined to rural areas. In preparing the eight videos, we aimed to diversify our participants such that rural and urban co-operatives were represented, but also co-operatives from both traditional and emerging sectors.

### **Launch event**

In order to generate interest in worker co-operatives and our educational videos, we organised a launch on the university campus. In addition to releasing the videos, the goal for the launch activities was to foster encounters between professors from different faculties with co-operative actors. We hosted a panel of five professors from various disciplines, all of whom had carried out research projects with co-operatives. This panel provided examples of research that can be carried out with co-operatives, making it more useful for professors attending the event. The panel was also relevant for the co-operative actors, as it showed them that university researchers are open to studying co-operatives and supporting their development. More than a simple promotional activity, the launch became an educational activity, demystifying the co-operative business model for some, and demystifying academic research for others.

### **Guidance on using the videos**

Lastly, the authors of this article wrote educational guides — including, for example, discussion plans, questions for further discussion, and exam questions — intended to support instructors

who want to use these short videos in their courses. These educational guides also help draw out the themes of the videos, the tensions and paradoxes contained therein, and issues to further explore. We are also planning to adapt these guides for college-level classes, again by collaborating with actors in the field.

## Content of the Educational Videos and Guides

This section aims to provide an overview of the content of each video as well as the suggested educational activities to accompany their use in different courses. We provide a summary for each video. The main themes addressed by the speakers (professors, intermediary organisations, member workers) are then listed in a table. Lastly, we provide a few examples of educational activities to delve deeper into the content of the videos for different teaching contexts (courses). Details of the partners and contributors are provided in Appendix 1.

### Video 1. Collective entrepreneurship: Starting up

This video discusses entrepreneurship as a fundamentally collective event, as well as how worker co-operatives make this idea concrete (see Table 1). Issues related to starting up a co-operative are discussed; in particular, team cohesion, adherence to the business model and its values, and making effective use of the governance structure. Dialogue and collective decision-making, and the mechanisms enabling them, are identified as crucial to the success of a worker co-operative.

Table 1: Video 1 — Speakers, themes, and educational activities

Speakers and themes			
Featured speakers		Field	Topics covered
Academics	Maripier Tremblay James Eaves	Faculty members, University of Laval, Québec (Entrepreneurship)	Traditional vs collective entrepreneurship Challenges of collective entrepreneurship
Co-operative ecosystem	Isabel Faubert-Mailloux	Executive director, Réseau CO-OP	Advantages and success factors
Co-operatives	Les Grands Bois Courant alternatif	Microbrewery, rural Electricity, urban	Reasons for choosing collective entrepreneurship; issues and challenges

  

Examples of educational activities		
Course	Activity	Sample questions
Entrepreneurship	Individual written exercise or group discussion	We've studied what traits typify an entrepreneur. Which among them are common to both individual and collective entrepreneurship? Which are specific to individual entrepreneurship? Collective entrepreneurship?
	Individual or group reflection	What entrepreneurial traits (characteristics) do you identify the most with and why?
Human Resource Management	Exam, written exercise, or discussion	What recruitment advice would you give to Courant alternatif? How might they target, recruit, hire, and retain people who are compatible with the organisation

### Video 2. Professional identity and worker co-operatives

This video brings together the development of one's professional identity with worker co-operatives made up of specific professionals (See Table 2). Creating a company as a collective is presented as a way to meet peoples' needs for alignment, so that everyone can be 'on their game.' The choice of legal entity for the organisation is closely linked to personal values, member involvement, and the distribution of surpluses.



Table 2: Video 2 — Speakers, themes, and educational activities

<b>Speakers and themes</b>			
<b>Featured speakers</b>		<b>Field</b>	<b>Topics covered</b>
Academics	Caroline Housieaux	Faculty member, University of Laval, Québec (Human Resource Management)	Professional Identity Professional alignment
Co-operative ecosystem	Sébastien Girard	Regional director, CDRQ	Co-operatives and professions: obstacles and advantages
Co-operatives	St-Brigitte de Laval* Le Pivot	Health, rural Architecture, urban	
<b>Examples of educational activities</b>			
<b>Course</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Sample Questions</b>	
Entrepreneurship, management, or leadership	Discussion, mind map, or written reflection	What range of values underly your profession? Which of these values do you identify with? In your opinion, what professional environments will allow you to live in harmony with your values?	
Entrepreneurship	Group discussion or individual or group research	What conditions favour starting up a business and the development of an entrepreneurial spirit? What does the literature have to say about this? Research the resources for a given line of business or a given area: what can you conclude from them? Is entrepreneurship sufficiently supported in this field?	

### Video 3. Financing and capitalisation

This video discusses the financing of worker co-operatives. We present the main steps in financing co-operatives, as well what approaches favour good relationships with business partners (see Table 3). Students also learn how support and guidance from finance specialists bring a strong added value to the creation and growth of a co-operative. The concepts of qualifying shares and preferred shares are defined and linked to the empowerment of worker co-operatives.

Table 3: Video 3 – Speakers, themes, and educational activities

<b>Speakers and themes</b>			
<b>Featured speakers</b>		<b>Field</b>	<b>Topics covered</b>
Academics	James Eaves	Faculty member, University of Laval, Québec (Entrepreneurship)	Strategies for approaching financial partners
Co-operative ecosystem	Pierre Charrette	Trainer and Financial Analyst, RISQ*	Steps in financing, as well as resources and strategies.
	Annabelle Tremblay	Economic Development Advisor, SDLE**	
	Dianne Maltais Janek Thibault	Senior advisor Innovation and Solidarity Finance. Director, Business Development, Caisse solidaire	
Co-operatives	Mousse Café Co-op FA	Coffee shop and boutique; rural Environmental education; provincial	Innovative approaches to financing
<b>Examples of educational activities</b>			
<b>Course</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Sample Questions</b>	
Entrepreneurship, management, accounting, or project management	Individual or group research	What are the various funding or financial support resources for a given line of business or region? Share your results with your group or the class.	
Entrepreneurship, management, leadership, corporate social responsibility, or project management.	Individual or group exercise	Choose a business project, whether real or fictitious. What arguments and what sort of pitch would you use for different kinds of people: business partners, financial partners, distributors, customers, or another relevant stakeholder?	

#### Notes

\*RISQ (Réseau d'investissement social du Québec) : Québec social investment network.

\*\*SDLE (Service de développement local et entrepreneurial): local entrepreneurial development service.

## Video 4. Human resource management

This video explains participatory management and how it contributes to the decentralisation of power in organisations. We ask how to put this business model into practice. The viewer also learns how each worker co-operative has a unique management structure, one example of which is the board of directors. The topics of organisational culture, self-management, and the physical organisation of the workplace are also discussed (see Table 4).

Table 4: Video 4 – Speakers, themes, and educational activities

Featured speakers		Speakers and themes	
		Field	Topics covered
Academics	Marie-Ève Dufour	Faculty member, University of Laval, Québec (Human Resource Management)	Participatory management issues
Co-operative ecosystem	Mathieu Dionne	Strategic HRM and Consulting services Co-ordinator, Réseau CO-OP	
Co-operatives	Café Touski	Restaurant; urban	Self-management
	Belvédère	Communications; urban	

  

Examples of educational activities		
Course	Activity	Sample Questions
Entrepreneurship, management, or human resource management	Individual or group research	Research and compare two of the following terms: participatory management, self-management, horizontal (flat) organisation, Teal organisation, or liberated (freedom-form/F-form) company.
Strategy, corporate social responsibility, or human resource management	Discussion or debate	What role can employees have in determining the strategic objectives and development of an organisation? What role should they have?

## Video 5. Marketing and worker co-operatives

In this video, we examine an increasingly popular concept: responsible marketing. We link the principles and values of the co-operative business model to the '4 Ps' of marketing (product, price, place, and promotion). Fairwashing, greenwashing, authenticity, and brand image are defined. Lastly, issues around unfamiliarity with co-operatives as a business model and its consequences for co-operatives are discussed. (See Table 5).

Table 5: Video 5 – Speakers, themes, and educational activities

Featured speakers		Speakers and themes	
		Field	Topics covered
Academics	Jessica Darveau	Faculty member, University of Laval, Québec (Marketing)	Responsible marketing strategies The risks of 'washing'
Co-operative ecosystem	Benoît Caron	General Manager, The Consortium	Co-op brand positioning
Co-operatives	Mambo Mambo	Marketing agency, urban	The 'Co-op' brand as a commercial advantage

  

Examples of educational activities		
Course	Activity	Sample Questions
Marketing or corporate social responsibility	Research and presentation	Research and compare three recent co-op advertising campaigns. How is the co-operative model used (or not used) to consolidate the company's brand image? How does this campaign fit with responsible marketing?
Marketing or entrepreneurship	Small group discussion or class debate	In your opinion, can mentioning the fact that a company is a co-op help create a favourable brand image? What are the benefits and stigmas associated with the co-operative model?

## Video 6. Social responsibility and sustainable development

This video focuses on how worker co-operatives fit within the paradigm of corporate social responsibility. Worker co-operatives are presented as a responsible business model based on principles and values that are in keeping with the objectives of sustainable development. We define and illustrate the concepts of stakeholders, social and environmental responsibility, and tri-profitability (Upward & Jones, 2016) — see Table 6.

Table 6: Video 6 – Speakers, themes, and educational activities

Speakers and themes			
Featured speakers	Field	Topics covered	
Academics	Luc Audebrand	Faculty member, University of Laval, Québec (Responsible management)	Stakeholders Triple bottom line
Co-operative ecosystem	Félix Buisnières	General Manager, Pôle-CN	Co-operative principles and sustainable development
Co-operatives	La Barberie	Microbrewery; urban	Links to the local community and sustainable development;
	Vallée Bras-du-Nord	Sustainable tourism; rural	benefits for member employees

  

Examples of educational activities		
Course	Activity	Sample Questions
Corporate social responsibility, entrepreneurship, or marketing	Research or group discussion	What are the demonstrated advantages of buying local from a social, economic, and environmental perspective? What are the drawbacks or limitations?
Corporate social responsibility, entrepreneurship, or management	Group discussion or debate	The featured speakers in this video seem to affirm that the fact that a co-operative belongs to its members (employees) gives co-operatives a head start in terms of social responsibility. Do you agree? Why or why not?

## Video 7. Scaling up strategies

This video focuses on growth and scaling up strategies for worker co-operatives. How are these strategies different for a co-operative compared to those for a traditional business? Featured speakers from the field provide testimonies that shatter preconceived ideas regarding the relationship worker co-operatives can have with profit and growth. Strategy, scaling up, acquisition, well-being, and market shares are discussed (see Table 7).

Table 7: Video 7 – Speakers, themes, and educational activities

Speakers and themes			
Featured speakers	Field	Topics covered	
Academics	Johnny Boghossian	Faculty member, University of Laval, Québec (Strategy)	Growth and market power Stability as a strategy
Co-operative ecosystem	Marie-France Bellemare	Advisor, TIESS*	Scaling up strategies
Co-operatives	CTAQ**	Health/paramedic, urban	Investment and development strategies
	Promo Plastik	Manufacturing, rural	

  

Examples of educational activities		
Course	Activity	Sample Questions
Strategy, corporate social responsibility, or management	Individual reflection, individual written exercise, or group discussion	In your opinion, is growth the implicit end goal of business strategies? Can degrowth be a legitimate organisational objective?
Strategy, management, entrepreneurship, or corporate social responsibility	Individual research or research in small groups	Research each of the scaling up strategies presented. What are the advantages and drawbacks of each? In what respects are they compatible, or not compatible, with the objectives of sustainable development?

### Notes

\*TIESS (Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire): Innovative areas in the social and solidarity economy. Marie-France Bellemare has since moved to become General Manager of non-profit Insetech (<https://www.insetech.ca/en/about/>)

\*\*CTAQ (Co-opérative des techniciens ambulanciers du Québec): Québec emergency medical technician co-operative.

## Video 8. Teaching through collective entrepreneurship

In this video, teachers from various schools (elementary, secondary, and college) discuss the importance of educating young people about the co-operative model. Establishing co-operative school projects allows students to learn to co-operate from a young age and to develop entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. Co-operative business projects led by young people of different age groups are presented and their positive educational impacts are identified (see Table 7).

Table 8: Video 8 – Speakers, themes, and educational activities

Speakers and themes			
Featured speakers		Field	Topics covered
Academics	Luc Audebrand Maripier Tremblay Mathias Pepin	Faculty members, University of Laval, Québec (Responsible management Entrepreneurship)	Co-operative model education Experiential learning
Co-operative ecosystem	Rosalie Lemieux	Youth worker, CQCM*	The 'young co-op' approach
Co-operative projects	Roselle Trinh-Viêt Isabelle Nadeau Benjamin René	Teacher, Elementary school Teacher, Secondary school Teacher, College	Relevance of co-operative school projects
Examples of educational activities			
Course	Activity	Sample Questions	
Primary and secondary education	Creation of an evaluation tool	How could you evaluate the skills students have developed through their participation in a collective business project in a school environment?	
Primary and secondary education or entrepreneurship	Small group discussion or class discussion	What do you think of collective business projects as pedagogical tools? In your opinion, what are their strengths and weaknesses?	

### Note

\*CQCM (Conseil québécois de la co-opération et de la mutualité): Québec council for co-operation and mutuality.

## Conclusion

Pedagogical tools like the videos presented in this article are of interest to management educators for at least four reasons. First, such tools allow professors to integrate an organisational model that interests the younger generation into their teaching. As we mentioned earlier, younger generations want to work for businesses that correspond with their values, which are increasingly aligned with sustainable development — as are worker co-operatives, as research has shown (Bocken et al., 2014; Borzaga & Spear, 2004; Sarracino & Fumarco, 2020). For example, organisational democracy fosters respect for human rights (Neuhäuser & Oldenbourg, 2020).

Secondly, the use of pedagogical tools dedicated to the co-operative model allows teachers to illustrate the variety of organisations and business models. Bocken et al. (2014, p. 48) cite co-operatives among the “innovations of sustainable business models”. These innovations translate to changes in a company’s operations and value chain, aiming to have a significant positive impact or tangibly reduce its negative impacts on the environment or society. The responsible entrepreneurship literature is also increasingly opening up to alternative business models and new business model canvases are leaving room for issues of democratic governance and profit-sharing (Pepin et al., 2021).

Thirdly, these pedagogical tools allow teachers to illustrate and delve further into various contemporary issues in management. Challenges such as participatory management, tri-profitability, or inclusive governance deserve to be approached through different perspectives,

from the most conventional to the most transformative. Unfortunately, students are often presented the same large companies as examples (e.g., Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft), which reduces the field of possibilities. This not only leaves less room to discuss small and medium-sized businesses, but also leaves less room to discuss a variety of business models. Yet, it is often small, alternative businesses that come up with the innovative techniques that are later adopted by larger businesses.

Fourthly, these tools provide teachers with stimulating learning activities based on the inherently paradoxical nature of co-operatives, thus engaging students in reflection (Audebrand et al., 2017). Most teachers wish to help their students develop reflective skills rather than stuffing them with information. Indeed, 'developing reflexive skills' is often found in course learning objectives. The 'paradox mindset' (Sleesman, 2019) fostered by hybrid organisations is a form of reflexive thinking, as well as a way of developing one's creativity.

In conclusion, our initiative illustrates the creative and pedagogical potential of co-operation between teaching institutions and the co-operative environment. The participation of teachers, support staff (fundraising, event organisers), co-operative specialists from the support ecosystem, co-operative members, and the video production co-operative were crucial to the success of the project. In the end, these videos about co-operatives are fundamentally the result of co-operative work. Students will benefit from the involvement of actors in the co-operative movement, who humanise the co-operative model and make it concrete, while demonstrating its role in our modern economy.

## The Authors

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Luc K. Audebrand is Full Professor of Social and Solidarity Economy at Université Laval (Québec, Canada). In addition to his research interests in collective entrepreneurship, Luc focusses on the management of paradoxes in alternative organisations and collaborative dynamics within and around alternative meta-organisations and has published articles in *Organisation Studies*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *M@n@gement*, and *Journal of Management Education*. He is also the scientific director of Université Laval's social engagement initiative, whose objective is to promote the participation of students, professors and employees in the community. Since 2018, he is responsible for the MOOC on responsible management at Université Laval.

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## Appendix 1: Partners, Support Ecosystem, and Co-operatives

### Financial partners:

- Fondation: Québec investment fund created by the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (Confederation of national trade unions). <https://www.fondation.com/english.php>
- Co-operators: Canadian financial services co-operative. <http://www.co-operators.ca>

### Creative partners:

- Productions 4 Éléments: Worker co-operative in video production and graphic animation. [www.p4eco-op.com](http://www.p4eco-op.com) (in French only)
- Réseau CO-OP: Boussole entrepreneuriale: Developed Boussole entrepreneuriale ('Entrepreneur's compass'), an interactive diagnostic tool that aims to help aspiring entrepreneurs choose the right business model for them. <https://boussoleentrepreneuriale.com/en/>

### Content partners (in alphabetical order):

- Caisse Solidaire (Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins): a financial co-operative specialising in the social economy and dedicated to responsible investment. <https://caissesolidaire.co-op/> (in French only)
- CDRQ (Co-opérative de développement régional du Québec; Québec regional development co-operative): supports co-operatives in starting-up, development, and turnaround across all regions of Québec. <https://cdrq.co-op/> (in French only)
- Consortium (Consortium de ressources et d'expertises co-opératives; Consortium of co-operative resources and expertise): shared services centre for co-operatives, mutual companies, and non-profit organisations. <https://leconsortium.co-op/en/>

- CQCM (Conseil québécois de la co-opération et de la mutualité; Québec council for co-operation and mutuality): provincial group of co-operative networks and federations in Québec. [www.cqcm.co-op](http://www.cqcm.co-op) (in French only)
- Pôle CN (Pôle des entreprises d'économie sociale de la région de la Capitale-Nationale; Centre for social economy businesses in the Capitale-Nationale region): Business group dedicated to social economy companies in the Capitale-Nationale (Québec City) region. <https://polecn.org/> (in French only)
- Réseau CO-OP ('Co-op network'): A federation of worker co-operatives, Réseau CO-OP provides support for start-ups and business development. <https://reseau.co-op/> (in French only)
- RISQ (Réseau d'investissement social du Québec, Québec social investment network): venture capital fund dedicated to supporting the emergence, development, growth, and consolidation of Québécois social economy enterprises. <https://fonds-risq.qc.ca/?lang=en>
- SDLE (Service de développement local et entrepreneurial, local entrepreneurial development service): supports business creation in the Charlevoix region <http://www.mrccharlevoix.ca/> (in French only)
- TIESS (Territoires innovant en économie sociale; Innovative areas in the social and solidarity economy): liaison group and social economy knowledge transfer organisation that aims to promote social innovation <https://tiess.ca/> (in French only)

### **Co-operatives (in alphabetical order):**

- Belvédère: based in Montreal offering communications services including website design, developing advertising campaigns, public relations, and graphic design. Established in 2014, it counts ten worker members. <http://co-opbelvedere.com/en/>
- Co-op FA: conducts environmental education projects for schools, citizens, and organisations in 15 regions across the province of Québec. Founded in 2007, it initiated a 'carbon exchange' project in schools in France and Québec. <https://co-opfa.com/> (in French only)
- Courant Alternatif: a small electrical worker co-operative located in Québec City that provides services for residential, commercial, and institutional clients. Founded in 2011, it employs six people and counts three members. <https://courantalternatif.co-op/>
- CTAQ (Co-opérative des techniciens ambulanciers du Québec, Québec emergency medical technician co-operative): CTAQ brings together more than 500 workers in the emergency medical/ambulance sector from four regions of Québec (Capitale-Nationale, Portneuf, Saguenay, and Charlevoix) to provide paramedic services. <https://www.ctaq.com/en/home/>
- La Barberie: the first worker co-operative microbrewery in the province, located in Québec City. It has been in operation since 1997 and counts about 30 employees, 14 of whom are members. <https://www.labarberie.com/en/>
- Les Grands Bois: a microbrewery located in the Portneuf region, who produces and bottles beers flavoured with local products and features a showroom for independent artists. Founded in 2015, it employs about ten people. <https://www.lesgrandsbois.com>
- Mambo Mambo: Based in Québec City, Mambo Mambo offers communication services including branding, print design, and website design and development. Founded in 2013, it counts six worker members. <https://mambomambo.ca/>



- Mousse Café: a café-restaurant and a boutique in a family-friendly environment located in a former convent in the Charlevoix region. <https://moussecafe.ca/en>
- Pivot: the first architecture co-operative in the province of Québec, founded by designers and architects in 2017. This Montréal-based co-operative employs about ten members. <http://pivot.co-op/>
- Promo Plastik: a manufacturing company in the field of promotional printing on plastic objects; an example of a 'co-operative takeover'. Purchased by its employees and converted into a worker-owned co-operative in 1992, it now has about fifteen employees, 11 of whom are members. <https://www.promoplastik.com/?lang=en>
- SBDL (Sainte-Brigitte de Laval) Health Centre: located in Sainte-Brigitte de Laval, on the outskirts of Québec City, the co-operative brought together fifteen specialists from different fields. Founded in 2017, the co-operative closed its doors during the COVID-19 pandemic following the government's refusal to grant them a general practitioner.
- Touski: Founded in 2003, Co-op Café Touski was a self-managed restaurant in the centre-sud ('centre-south') neighbourhood of Montreal. The co-operative closed its doors in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.
- Vallée Bras-du-Nord: Founded in 2002, working in the field of ecotourism and manages tourist development in the region of Portneuf, Québec. It also offers a work transition programme as well as an outdoor training programme for teenagers. <https://www.valleebrasdunord.com/index-english>