CHARACTER & COOPERATIVE CREATION: STEWARD'S GUIDE

HANDOUT

YOUR OBJECTIVE: Walk your group through the Character and Cooperative creation process. Each person will need to roll dice for each character identity element or cooperative enterprise trait. At the end, all group members should have a character complete with name, backstory, and tie to the group. The group should have a cooperative in a known sector, industry, urban/rural, niche, and with a tie to the group.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Guide the group through creating their Characters** by rolling each of the following identity elements and use the rolling key to determine their identity-

    - Employment Status
    - Income
    - Age (optional)

    Ensure that participant fill in their resulting character data on their Character Sheet.

2. **Guide the group through creating the Cooperative** by rolling each of the following cooperative characteristics and use the rolling key to determine the cooperative -

    - Sector
    - Industry
    - Niche
    - Urban or Rural

3. **Engage the group in determining the exact type of cooperative they will roleplay,** within the framework rolled in the previous step.
    A. Ask each participant to write up a specific business type that fits the rolled stats on a piece of paper.
    B. Crumple up the pieces of paper, put in a pile, and mix the pile
    C. Draw one, and – if the group thinks it is able to comfortably roleplay – announce the specific coop type the group will roleplay. If the group doesn't feel comofortable, keeping drawing until an appropriate option is found.

4. **Instruct participants to imagine their Character's backstory and its tie to the cooperative project.**
    A. Have participants respond in writing to the prompts on their Character Sheet to guide their imagination. Let participants know that they can check in with you or the session trainer(s) if they're having difficulty.

        - Even if a set of identity elements seems incoherent, remember that there are all kinds of people in this world – and, cooperation is for everyone because it takes all kinds!

        - If the rolled elements ultimately do result in an incoherent character, assess which element is the most incongruent and have the participant re-roll it. Only adjust one stat at a time.

5. **Have participants roll for skill development** by rolling a ten-sided die to gain up to ten points to spend on any of the listed skills. All skills can be acquired at different levels - "basic" (1 point), "skilled" (2 points), and "expert" (3 points).

    · Group Process Experience
    · Industry-Specific Experience
    · Financial Management
    · Writing
    · Humor
    · Marketing
    · Wild Card (anything you choose!)

6. **Instruct participants to pick their "Leadership Style (LS)"** by circling one of the six options on the Character Sheet (and listed below for reference). Explain that the LS defines a lot of how the character interacts in the group processes.

    · Individualistic & Rule-Governed
    · Individualistic & Chaotic
    · Mainstream & Rule-Governed
    · Mainstream & Chaotic
    · Collectivist & Rule-Governed
    · Collectivist & Chaotic

7. **Ask for a volunteer to add on the role of "Facilitator" to their character.** This means the participant will serve as the group's Facilitator in the roleplay – i.e. they will facilitate the meeting as their character. Encourage participants to consider their alignment and identities to inform when considering the role.

8. **Pass leadership to the Facilitator** once the Character and Cooperative creation process is complete.
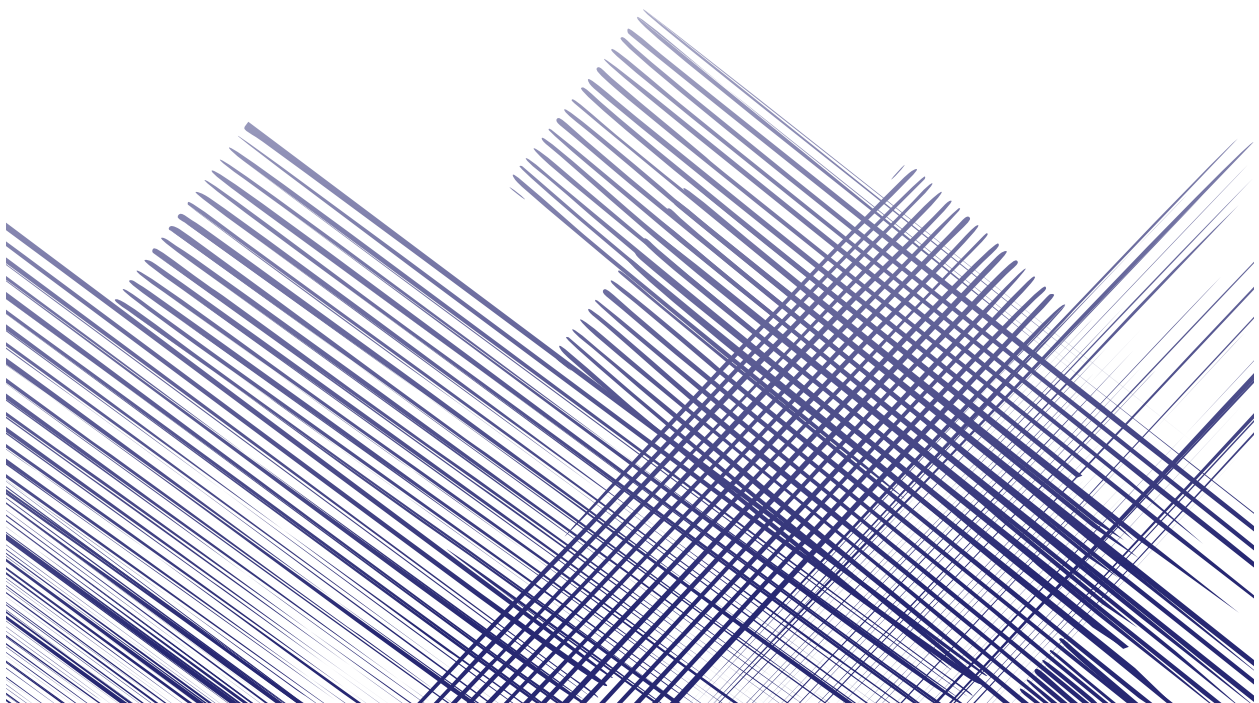
CHARACTER & COOPERATIVE ROLLING KEY

HANDOUT

Use the following tables to create a character and a cooperative project by rolling dice for each identity and cooperative element, respectively. Participants should roll "Percentage Dice" using one of the following dice and methods →

- **Roll one ten-sided die twice in a row** to identify, first, the digit in the tens place and, second the digit in the ones place.
- **Roll two ten-sided dice of different colors or styles**, with the tens and ones digits assigned to each die ahead of the roll.
- **Roll one double digits ten-sided die (e.g. 00, 10)** to identify the digit in the tens place and roll one ten-sided die to identify the digit in the ones place.

	ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	FROM	TO
CHARACTER	**EMPLOY-MENT** bls.gov	Full-Time	1	78
		Part-Time	79	95
		Looking for Full-Time	96	99
		Looking for Part-Time	100	100
	INCOME (annual) census.gov	No Income	1	13
		1 - 19.9k	14	45
		20k - 39.9k	46	68
		40k - 59.9k	69	81
		60k - 79.9k	82	89
		80 - 99.9k	90	93
		100k+	94	100
COOPERATIVE	**SECTOR**	Worker	1	25
		Producer	26	50
		Purchasing	51	75
		Consumer	76	100
	SPECIAL STATUS	Multi-Stakeholder[1]	1	29
		Nothing Special	30	70
		Conversion	71	100
	INDUSTRY[2]	Sales & Marketing	1	12
		Social & Public	13	51
		Financial Services	52	85
		Utilities	86	100
	LOCATION	Urban	1	81
		Rural	82	100

NOTES:

1. **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER:** If rolled, re-roll until two of the following three sectors are represented – Worker, Producer, Consumer. While other stakeholder types and combinations exist, the possibilities are limited in this activity to simplify roleplaying.

2. **INDUSTRY:**
   - **Sales & Marketing** - e.g. farm supply & marketing, grocery & consumer goods, arts & crafts, entertainment
   - **Social & Public Services** - e.g. housing, healthcare, daycare, transportation, education
   - **Financial Services** - e.g. credit union, farm credit, mutual insurance, analysis
   - **Utilities** - e.g. broadband, electricity, water

CHARACTER & COOPERATIVE ROLE SHEET
WORKSHEET

CHARACTER DETAILS

NAME	
EMPLOYMENT	
INCOME	
OTHER...	

SKILLS	LEVEL basic, skilled, or expert

LEADERSHIP STYLE circle one	
Individualistic & Rule-Governed	**Individualistic & Chaotic**
Mainstream & Rule-Governed	**Mainstream & Chaotic**
Collectivist & Rule-Governed	**Collectivist & Chaotic**

What is your economic backstory (e.g. education or training history, role of identity in economic experience, work history)?

How are you connected to this coop idea?

Anything else about yourself you can share (e.g. hobbies, favorite outfit)?

COOPERATIVE DETAILS

NAME		**INDUSTRY**	
SECTOR		**LOCATION**	
STATUS		**OTHER...**	

STEERING COMMITTEE AGENDA
HANDOUT

TIME: 65 minutes, suggested agenda item lengths are included as minutes in parentheses

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS (15)**
   Get introduced and oriented
   - Introduction Format
     - Name
     - Identity (share your preferred gender pronouns, age, etc.)
     - Economic Backstory (explain your employment status, income level, education level, etc.)
     - How are you connected to this coop idea?
     - Anything else?

2. **GOALS, DECISION-MAKING, & AGENDA REVIEW (5)**
   Review the following items to set the tone and get everyone on the same page for the meeting's prupose and process
   - Meeting Goals
     - Gather and hear from all those interested in participating in discussing the possible development of a new cooperative
     - Begin developing a shared vision for the cooperative enterprise
     - Determine each person's motivations and capacity for participation in developing the cooperative
     - Build trust among the group, as well as collective momentum for continuing work on the cooperative
   - **Decision-Making:** Any decisions will be made by a majority vote of those present unless another method is decided by the assembled group
   - **Agenda Review:** Look over the meeting agenda together, provide any needed clarification, consider proposals for amending the agenda – especially in the context of the question, "Will this agenda help us meet our goals?"

GROUP PROCESS CONCEPTS

◄ **STEERING COMMITTEE**
A body within a project or enterprise that supports the guiding of its work. Its main concern is the making of strategic decisions concerning the future realization of the project or enterprise.

◄ **FACILITATE**
Generally, an act that makes a task easier for others; in the context of a meeting, making an experience more inclusive and effective through effective facilitation of the discussion/s inherent in spontaneous communication exchanges during a scheduled group meeting. *(Seeds for Change, "A Consensus Handbook" 2013: Leeds, UK, p 220)*

◄ **QUORUM**
The minimum number of relevant members who must be present at a noticed meeting for those members to conduct business (i.e. make decisions) in the name of the group.
   → E.g. - a majority of voting members, a supermajority of 65% of voting members

◄ **DECISION-MAKING METHOD**
The process by which a group determines an opinion or course of action.
   → **Voting –** everyone provides their vote and, typically, a decision is made if a pre-determined percentage of voters agree (e.g. 51%, 85%, majority, etc.
   → **Consensus –** everyone involved must be able to live with the final outcome of the decision.

3. VISION DISCUSSION (15)

Move through the following questions by, first, journaling responses on Role Sheets. Then, begin discussion by sharing responses.

- What is your ideal vision for this cooperative?
- What would it mean to you and your life?

4. ASSESSING CAPACITY (10)

Move through the following questions in a roundrobin or popcorn discussion format.

- What can you contribute to realize that vision?
- What limits are there to your participation?

Steering Committee Participation Straw Poll: Without knowing the logistical details, who is interested in serving as a member of the Steering Committee at this moment?

- The question will be posed again at the end of the meeting, so this is an informal assessment to inform how much each person should weigh in on some of the logistical items (e.g. if not interested, expressing a strong opinion about when the Steering Committee should meet doesn't make sense).

5. STEERING COMMITTEE LOGISTICS (15)

Move through and make decisions about the following items. Ensure decisions are recorded.

- Meetings
  - How often should the Steering Committee meet over the next three months to begin work on the project?
  - Where and when will the next meeting take place?
  - Are the meeting open to anyone or just specific people?
- **Membership & Roles**
  - After hearing the general meeting requirements of a Steering Committee member, who will commit to serving?
  - For those uninterested or unable to serve on the Steering Committee, suggest the preferred means of communicating the progress of the Committee? Are there any contributions that you would like to make to support the project in the future?
  - Who is willing to form the agenda and facilitate the next meeting? During the next meeting, you can discuss leadership of the Steering Committee and how facilitation can be handled in perpetuity.

6. CLOSING & NEXT MEETING (5)

Query the group for the following information in order to close out the meeting.

- What items do members want to see on the agenda for the first meeting of the Steering Committee? e.g. Quorum & Decision-Making Method, Steering Committee Purpose
- Any action items from this meeting?
- Reminder of the time, place, and facilitator of next meeting