



# Let's stop "belling the cat"

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# Belling the cat



8





# Motivations

## – Why do coops cooperate across borders?

- **Entrepreneurial reason**
- **Institutional reason**
- **Ethical reason**

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# Motivations

## – Why do coops cooperate across borders?

- **Entrepreneurial reason**

- Internationalisation of business of a coop

- Subsidiary + Cooperate with local coops

- Transnationalisation of coops

- Bottom-up – creation of transnational coops or common subsidiaries by existing coops
- Top-down – creation of transnational coops from scratch / cooperativisation of multinational coops' subsidiaries
- Among coops in the same sectors for scaling up their business

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# Motivations

## – Why do coops cooperate across borders?

- **Institutional reason**

- Among federations and non-business units for strengthening institutional cooperations, such as exchanges, education, training, lobbying for regional authorities etc.

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# Motivations

## – Why do coops cooperate across borders?

- **Ethical reason**

- Development perspective

- Empowerment of coops in developing countries
- Networking between coops in the North and in the South

- CSR : Support coops in developing countries

- Fair trade

=> Still anecdotal

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# Lessons from experiences

- **ICA-AP Malaysia Business Office**

- Initiative supported by 4 ICA members (JP, CH, KR and MA) from consumer and agriculture sectors
- Objective - Facilitation of CtoC businesses among AP members
- Difficulties in realizing CtoC business except training programs
  - No information on possible trade items – who should make this information?
  - Mismatch of different level of requested quality

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# Lessons from experiences

- **Coospace - CICOPA**

- Idea of “Coop business facebook”
- Difficulties in realizing CtoC business
  - Difficult to initiate and to reach critical mass – “Belling the cat”
  - Who will invest time and energy for uncertain space?
  - Why should coops come to this space for finding their business partners instead of finding their surroundings?
  - What is the business model of the space?
  - Language barrier

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## Some premature ideas

- **Different roles for different actors**
  - Creation of “spaces” – institutional actors based on political legitimacy
  - Facilitation of “spaces” – cooperative entrepreneurial actors motivated by entrepreneurship
- ⇒ How can we find legitimate entrepreneurial actors? Should institutional actors be “gate-keepers”? How? (e.g. Data request of a German entrepreneurs for identifying coops in garment industry)

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## Some premature ideas

- **“Cooperative” – ethical label?**
  - Do coops have to behave like ethical purchasers?
  - Are all coops ethical producers?
  - Is CtoC itself enough for guaranteeing ethical legitimacy? If not, what do we need further? – Alliance with fair trade movement + new ethical certification for coops?
  - How can we make CtoC as “commodity” rather than special and costly project?

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# Let's challenge challenges!

- Everybody know (in theory) why we have to do CtoC.
- No dramatic answer !
- Various experimentations at all levels – trial and errors
- Need to learn from experiences

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# Thank you for your attention!

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