

ENTERPRISING TOGETHER!

Leverage from
the EU
2007-2013



The cooperative of new opportunities

Counselling services for co-operative entrepreneurship

Tampere region co-operative centre has promoted the establishment of new co-ops for 12 years. The Tampere Region Co-operative Centre offers free counselling and education services to beginning co-operative entrepreneurs and anyone interested in co-operative entrepreneurship.

The cornerstones of the Co-operative Centre's activities are customer service, trustworthiness and innovative thinking. Relevant to operations are promoting entrepreneurship, the ability to work together with many different quarters, continual emphasis on relationships with special interest groups as well as the personnel's strong commitment and strong belief in its own work. The results of activities have been accomplished by active and high quality co-operation with different special interest groups. The Co-operative Centre operates in Pirkanmaa in close co-operation with the region's other business counselling organisations.

Information dissemination

Active information dissemination about co-operatives as a business model has created interest in cooperative entrepreneurship. The Co-operative Centre has produced several brochures about cooperative entrepreneurship. In addition, the Co-operative Centre actively maintains and updates the informational website (www.osuustoimintakeskus.net). The Co-operative Centre has also actively disseminated information in annual press releases and has annually written articles about cooperatives.

Positive and modern image of co-ops

The Co-operative Centre has created a positive and modern image related to co-operative entrepreneurship. The Co-operative Centre has succeeded in winning over local decision-makers and financial backers with the results of their operations. Support from these quarters is critical to continue operating. The goals have been met and the results have been achieved despite tight financing and uncertainty about continuing operations. In addition, the Cooperative Centre has provided customers with excellent service, according to the results of a customer satisfaction survey conducted by an outside provider.

Best practice: "Enterprising together! -project (2009-2013) with the ministry of employment and economy

Nationally the goal of the "Enterprising together!" project is to spread the Co-operative Centre's knowledge and skills related to co-operative

entrepreneurship, built up over 12 years of experience, to be used by business counsellors and career counselling services. An additional goal is to heighten the profile of co-operative entrepreneurship and to increase knowledge about its possible uses in entrepreneurship and as a tool for employment. The "Enterprising together!"- project has been underway for only less than a year, so results are expected within a few years.

Inclusive co-ops

- targetgroup includes those who wouldn't usually think of becoming an entrepreneur
- empowerment of members
- participatory and democratic
- growth of self-reliance
- social capital bonds
- working together

Responsible co-ops

- local entrepreneurship
- members' control → democratic and economic efficiency
- social wellbeing
- valuebased economy
- positive effects on regional wellbeing

Results

- the number of smaller co-operatives in our area has **increased about 500%** (1998-2009)
- the average turnover of a smaller co-op was 270000 euros in 2008. (in 1998: 97 000 euros)
- it is estimated that each co-op employs the equivalent of 6,3 fulltime workers (salaries are paid for 24 employees/co-op = part time workers)
- total amount of turnover for smaller co-ops in Pirkanmaa was about 38 Meuros in 2008 (in 1998: 2,91 Meurs). **So there has been an increase of over 1200%**.

www.osuustoimintakeskus.net
www.co-op.fi

Tampere Region Co-operative Centre / Enterprising together! -project

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Small co-operatives – great ideas!

Co-operative Wheel of time

The co-operative forms an umbrella organization of various different creative artists – whos main speciality is fire theatre. The co-operative entrepreneurship is particularly appealing to those from the fields of performing and creative arts in Finland.

www.ajanpyora.net



Music –co-operative Octave

A rare case in Finland of an employee Buy Out –co-operative in which the employees continued the activities of the music school after the retirement of a long time and nationwide respected proprietor Maija Salo.

www.musiikkikoulu.net



Nuutajärvi Gallery co-operative – NUGO

Nuutajärvi glassvillage glassart artisans combined sales and marketing co-operative demonstrates the power of joint co-operation between enterprises.

www.nugo.fi



School restaurant Thyme Tampere

Rudolf Steiner's school restaurant Thyme is a model of co-operative self-sufficiency. Over 50% of the food served in the restaurant is organic and the members of the co-operative comprise the restaurant's staff, school teachers and student's parents.



Co-operatives in ProAcademi

Business economics orientated students at Tampere University of applied sciences have established a wide range of co-operatives as part of their studies at the university. Team entrepreneurship offers an excellent opportunity to both study and do business together. The co-operative as a means of entrepreneurial education is experiencing significant growth all over Finland.

www.proakatemia.fi

