

COPE Project

GAP ANALYSIS IN SWEDEN
– COOMPANION ÖSTERGÖTLAND



CONTEXT

The history of co-operation in Sweden goes far back in time and largely follows the history of co-operation in the rest of Europe. As early as 1801, the first mutual insurance company was established and during the first half of the century, above all, producer cooperation grew. At the end of the 19th century and around the turn of the last century, there was an increase in consumer cooperation, with a clear influence from, among others, British grocery stores. In 1923 Sweden's first tenant cooperative, HSB, was formed and extensive housing cooperation emerged in Sweden. Today, all the large, Swedish cooperatives have their roots from this time

During the 80s and 90s, the co-operation went through a revival of sorts and a "new co-operation" emerged. Parental cooperative preschools, rural schools as staff cooperatives and various forms of artists' and craft cooperatives gradually became more common. So-called work-integrated social enterprises / work cooperatives were also started, mainly to create meaningful jobs for people far from the regular labour market.

Compared to many other countries, the cooperative model is less in demand in Sweden. One explanation for this, can be found in the extensive welfare construction that the country underwent after the Second World War and until approx. mid 70s. The cooperative model as a solution to the challenges of society was not in demand, mainly due to the fact that a strong public sector provided for basic needs and income disparities were the lowest in the Western world.

In Sweden, co-operation is not a form of association of its own, if you want to start and run a co-operative, the form of choice is usually Ekonomisk Förening (Economic Association) and this company form is relatively unknown and surrounded by a lot of prejudices. The norm for entrepreneurship in Sweden is Aktiebolag (Private Limited company).

There is also a form of company called Ömsesidiga Bolag (Mutual Companies). This form only occurs in insurance operations and some of Sweden's largest insurance companies are Ömsesidiga Bolag.

The turnover for the 100 largest cooperative companies in Sweden in 2019 was € 44,2 billion. To this sum another € 21,4 billion can be added as turnover of the largest mutual companies that same year.

Within this total, there is a significant range, the largest (ARLA) had a turnover of € 12,2 billion (but in this context it should be mentioned that Arla is not entirely Swedish). Of the all-Swedish companies, Lantmännen Ekonomisk Förening with 21 member associations is the largest with a turnover almost half of Arlas. As a further comparison, that the company with the lowest turnover of the 100, had a turnover of € 4,3 million. In total, the co-operation accounts for about 10% of GDP in Sweden.

Another measure of size is the number of employees. Seven of the 100 largest companies had 1,000 or more full-time employees and just over a quarter had fewer than 20 full-time employees. Five of the 100 largest companies had no employees at all. For comparison, it can be mentioned that only 0,4 per mille of all Swedish companies have 1,000 employees or more.

The number of full-time jobs in total, with the 100 largest Economic Associations and the Mutual Companies together was approx. 77,500 in 2019. However, it should be added that many employees were part-time and / or short-term employees and this means that cooperative and mutual companies together have an estimated close to 100,000 employees in total.



Regarding the number of members in the associations, KF-Coop and the Consumer Associations are in a class of their own with about 3,5 million members.

This is followed by OK associations with 1 million and HSB associations with 650,000.

The members representation on the boards was 747 members, of which 30% women.

The largest and most well-known cooperative companies in Sweden represent a few industries, such as agriculture, food, food processing, wholesale, energy production and transport. At the level below, we find education including preschools, housing, healthcare & care as well as building & construction.

The overall picture is that those who provides consumer services for daily needs are run by individual consumers. For production goods, business services and rare purchase services, it is mostly producing companies that run the business and among energy companies it is common for both households and companies to be included as members.

In the cultural sector, individual cultural practitioners are involved as producers, and in care, school, care, it is common for both user-driven (clients themselves or their relatives) as well as employee-driven companies.

It is also not uncommon for both users and employees to be members of one and the same Economic Association.

Source: Svensk Kooperation and SCB, Statistics Sweden.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Reporting the quantitative part of the on-line survey from the Swedish partners Coompanion and Mikrofonden

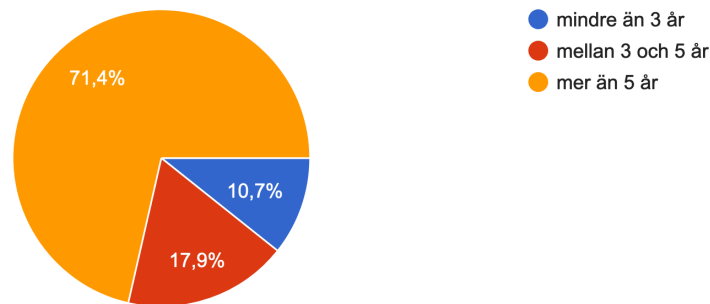
We have in total 56 responses. We openly invited business advisers and financiers to complete the survey. The majority of those who responded have a background in cooperation, but some have less knowledge about cooperation.

1. *Have you been an instructor promoting entrepreneurship education for how long?*
 - *Less than 3 years (blue)*
 - *Between 3 and 5 years (red)*
 - *More than 5 years (yellow)*



Hur länge har du varit rådgivare/utbildare inom främjarsystemet?

56 svar



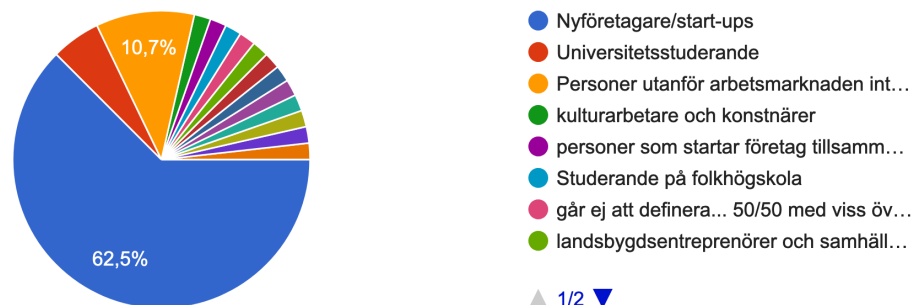
We can state that we have many experienced advisers! Is it the case that we who enter the cooperation movement become so in love with it that we do not want to leave? It takes a lot of experience and large networks to do the work we do. It is also the case that we build up our team of advisers and develop the skills we have based on the experiences we have with us. We must constantly evolve and be flexible.

1. Who is your main target group?

- Groups in pre-start-ups phase (blue but also sometimes part of others hence +62,5%)
- Students at University (red 5,4%)
- Unemployed people interested in entrepreneurship (10,7%)
- Other

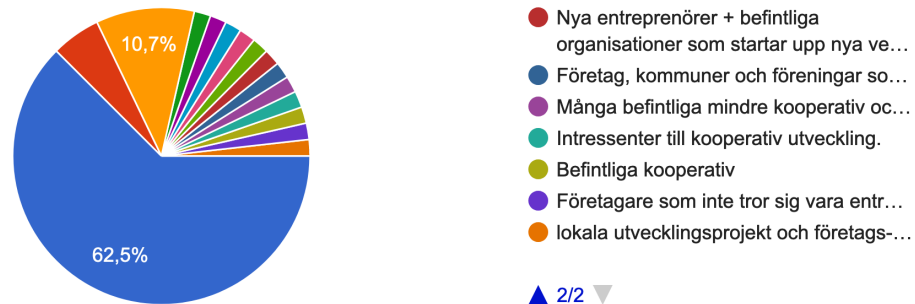
Vilken är din främsta målgrupp?

56 svar



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56 svar



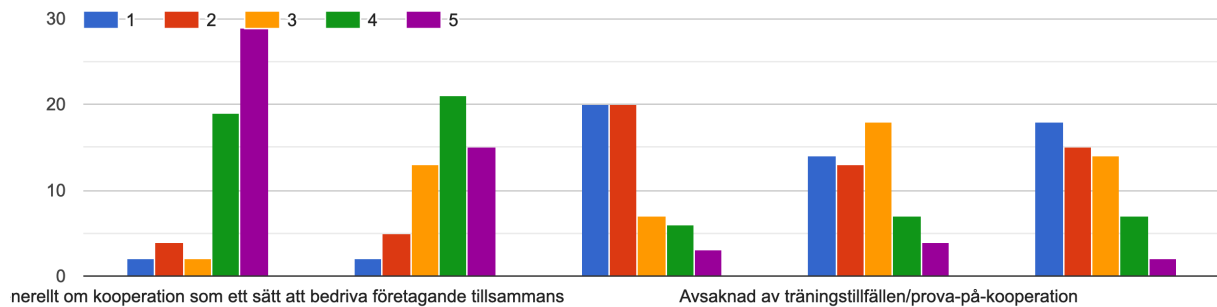
About 60% of new entrepreneurs/startups constitute our main target group. But at a closer look there may be more in that category, because persons answering the survey have chosen to describe it in a different, broader way. It has felt important to include words such as cooperatives or social entrepreneurs. One respondent has written "entrepreneurs who do not think they are entrepreneurs". A large group (6 responses) specifically concerns people outside the labor market who are interested in entrepreneurship. I think it is largely about the type of tool/entrepreneurship called ASF in Sweden (work-integrating social enterprises) which is an important tool for several companion offices.

What does this say about the image of what Coompanion stands for? How do we communicate externally and internally what we stand for? Do we risk becoming unclear and difficult to grasp or is the width a strength? I see it as an obvious strength in our work that we are so broad and inclusive. That we work with societal development, but I think about clarity. For example, in comparison with other organizations that are advisors for other types of businesses which only have the goal to earn money?

1. Please rate the importance of the following aspects pertaining to obstacles encountered when creating new cooperatives: (1 less relevant (blue), 5 more relevant (purple))

- limited knowledge of the cooperative model (most important)
- lack of financing tools designed for cooperatives (second)
- long and complicated process and requirements for creation (least important)
- lack of trainings (third)
- lack of cooperative audit and control tools (forth)

Vilka är de största hindren för att få till fler kooperativa företag som du ser det? (1 mindre relevant, 5 mer relevant)



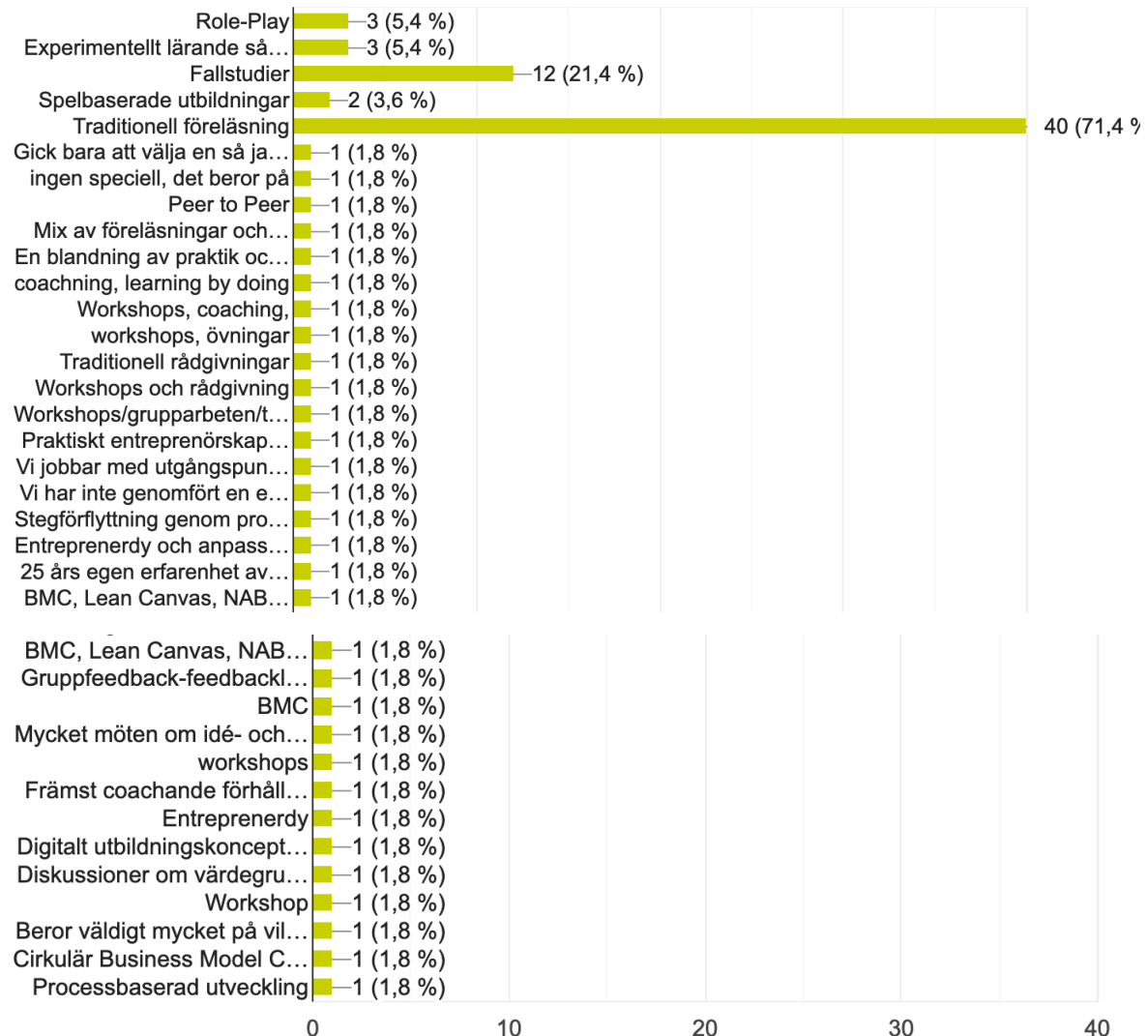
The single biggest obstacle identified is "The general lack of knowledge about cooperation as a way to conduct business together"! It feels tough to take on that challenge because we cannot sit alone on the solution. We need efforts at everything from local, municipal, regional, national and international level. "Lack of financial instruments for cooperatives" comes in a clear second place. Good then that we are the partners we are in Empowerment+ Coompanion and Mikrofonden. Or is that why we get these answers...?

1. Which of these learning methods do you use to improve learning development?
 - Role-Play
 - Simulation
 - Case study (second place)
 - Games- based training
 - Lecture (first place)
 - Other (well....we like to add our own methods 😊 most described are not methods but mor tools to combine into methods)

Vilka av dessa metoder använder du inom entreprenörsutbildning?



56 svar



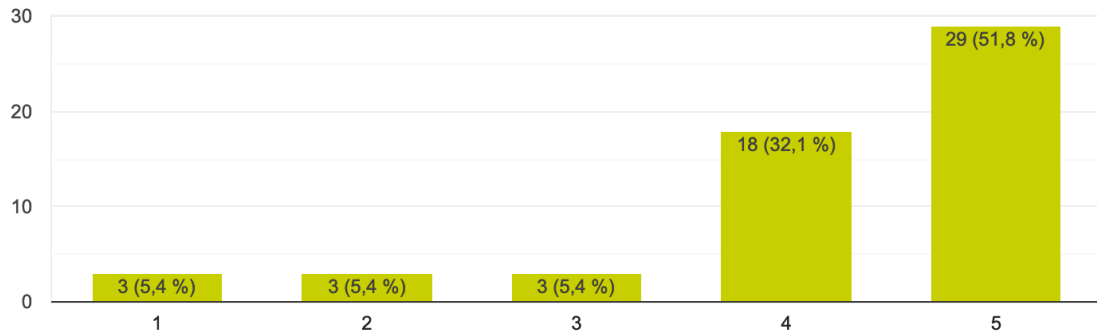
Many respond to traditional lectures as at least one of the ways they work (At least 40 responds or 71.4% but then there are some who have combined it together with other tools). Then it is of course the case that most people want to add their own twist so there are a lot of different kinds of answers to this question. Then there are several who describe that they use different types of digital tools / models / templates. Wondering what falls under that heading. Case studies comes second with a bit more than 20% and Interactive theater and role play have unexpectedly been used as many as 10%).

Many people use case studies. Several also mention workshops. But then you can think about what method it is...? It's more of a form than a method, isn't it?

1. *How important is it to present the cooperative model as an alternative business model? (Linear scale 1 to 5, 1 not relevant – 5 very relevant)*

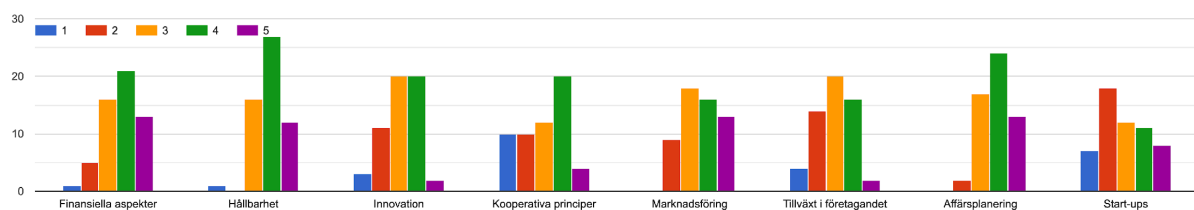
Hur viktigt är det för dig att presentera kooperation som affärsmodell?

56 svar



The most surprising thing here is that there are 9 people who do not think it is particularly important to present cooperation as a business model? What does it say if you are employed as an advisor at Coompanion or Mikrofonden? But sometimes maybe we do not use the terminology “cooperative model”? Some advisors use the term “starting/doing business together” even though they are actually talking about the cooperative model.

Vilket av följande ämnen utforskas mest vid dina utbildnings/rådgivningstillfällen? (1 mindre utforskad -5 mer utforskad)



Financial aspects and sustainability are what you work with most in education and counseling. The cooperative principles not so much. Why? Does it feel outdated? But sustainability is one of them, right? How is the question interpreted? You carry with you the essence of the cooperative principles, but you do not express it with those words? Same as question 5 regarding this.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS



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The analysis is based on 10 individual interviews and two focus groups consisting of a total of 6 people employed at Coompanion – all asked the same questions. This qualitative approach was complemented with a quantitative questionnaire sent both to Coompanion advisors as well as officials within the overall Swedish support system for entrepreneurship. All are situated in various parts of Sweden. The empirical data is available at Coompanion Östergötland.

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUSGROUPS

1. For how long have you been an instructor promoting entrepreneurship education? How did you accumulate the knowledge you currently have?

Coompanion is a highly variable advisory platform, with a unique positioning regarding cooperation and social entrepreneurship. The advisors experience goes from 1 year to 34 years in the business advisor sector. All advisors have some form of academic background, most of which are not within the entrepreneurial or business sector. There are exams in architecture, school teacher, tourism science, biologist etcetera but all have experience from entrepreneurship and/or cooperative business development through practice. Of course, there are also advisers with examine from higher education within entrepreneurship development and similar.

2. How do you and your organization work in the promotion of the cooperative entrepreneurship with adults? (i.e., working individually or with groups)

The counselling is provided free of charge for start-ups and each office also work with projects to support the sector. They also work with systemic development in collaboration with the rest of the public promotion system for entrepreneurship.

3. How do you reach your target group?

The target group is reached to a large extent through collaboration with other parts of the public support structure. Often through officials / employees who have the task of referring to Coompanion or with whom Coompanion is on good footing. Furthermore, start-up groups are found through references to a large extent. Outreach activities that can take place through information initiatives or networking with the structure that can then create references are also important activities. Several advisors also rely to a large or clear degree on personal networks to reach the target group.

Social media and newsletters are used to a lesser extent - several interviewees experience Coompanion as weak in this area. An office has benefited from an email list with over 2000 contacts (before the GDPR came out). Recently, Coompanion Sweden has taken greater responsibility for marketing via social media, to which several advisers refer.

Quotes:

"They are coming to us. We have a good reputation here in the Region. Our Region has had the most cooperative start-ups in relation to population size in recent years. Some project support has helped, including integration measures. We are oftentimes chosen above other parts of the support structure today."

"You have to keep in mind when choosing which information initiatives to implement and against which target group. If you inform, for example, unemployed young people, you get counselling sessions, but no registered start-ups. Teachers send some young entrepreneurship-students for advice, but the same thing there - it rarely creates start-ups. "If you inform together with the structure to reach entrepreneurs in a start-up context, then there will often be more start-ups for real."

4. Which groups or sectors have reached out to you as an instructor? Where is the strongest demand for the cooperative model?

Coompanions advisers are contacted by groups / individuals within a wide range of industries, ethnic groups, ages, etc. You can notice a difference between different offices / counties and according to the interviewees, it changes between times which industries are more popular. Traditionally, work integration has been a strong part of Coompanion, which means that all actors working with unemployment issues may have reason to make contact. Historically, it has mostly been about work-integrating social enterprises. Other common sectors are CCI and rural development where green industries (cooperative farming) are growing right now but also to some extent cooperative building associations and local development initiatives, like rural service development. In one county, one of the interviewees has advised several families with a foreign background who have create "family cooperatives", within various industries. These have been contacted via references created from integration projects. The cooperative model seems to suit foreign-born people from countries with more collectivist cultures, where the family (clan / extended family) is important.

It is also common for civil society to seek advice when associations want to develop different social business concepts.

Quotes:

"Foreign-born is one such group that contacts us more and more. At first that group was a bit scared and insecure... but then when we showed that we could help them form family cooperatives it became easier. Most of the start-ups were family cooperatives - mother, father, children owned an economic association together. Popular with foreign-born. It is an affordable way to start a company in Sweden which was an important thing and suited very well among former refugees. Sometimes they had debts to refugee smugglers and so on, but could easily start despite this because an economic association is cheap to register at the authorities."

5. Did you organise mentoring activities for groups in pre-start-up phase?



None of the interviewees work with mentorship in regular activities. Mentoring programs are sometimes offered through projects.

6. How do you plan and implement trainings on cooperative entrepreneurship? Are you following training modules?

The advisors use a number of different methods and models. The most common answer is that you tailor based on the target group and situation. You often plan together in the office and you start from both national templates, such as Coompanions manual "Ready Set Go", and in some cases self-developed templates. Workshops are often used as a method and homework is also used when deemed appropriate. Some advisors avoid the word cooperation as the main point but "bake" the subject into a wider range of corporate forms in their activities. An alternative term used by several offices is "Entrepreneurship Together". One office uses Coompanions method book social innovation; as a basic template in counseling. The SDG's are regularly used to link entrepreneurship to sustainability.

More information about templates under question 13 where the topic came into a more structural context during the interviews.

7. Which are the training topics?

The advisors collectively cover a comprehensive range of topics. When you do not master an area yourself, you take in help from other offices. One of the interviewees expressed the training topics as everything connected to Coompanions mission - collaboration and entrepreneurship.

Important topics are social entrepreneurship, social innovation and community entrepreneurship in the broadest sense. These areas include, for example, business development, board training, budget, financing, LEAN Startup, democratic methods, work integration, cooperative history, marketing and fundamental values.

Examples of the mentioned specialist training / advice in special sectors are digital shop, cultivation projects, health entrepreneurship and cooperative building associations and co-housing.

8. How did you present the financial aspects and the business planning?

This question was treated differently between the interviewees. Several expressed scepticisms towards the business plan, which was considered "fuzzy", as it is based more on guesswork than facts. If the bank requires a business plan, the ALMI ¹template was used, and their budget template was also used. The most mentioned ways to introduce a business plan are to use some form of business model canvas - BMC, lean BMC or social BMC - and create a BUSINESS MODEL. The advisors who used the

¹ Almi Företagspartner AB is owned by the Swedish state and is the parent company of a group consisting of 16 regional subsidiaries and the Almi Invest AB subgroup. The regional subsidiaries, which provide loans and business development, are 51 percent owned by the parent company and 49 percent owned by regional owners. Almi Invest is wholly-owned by the parent company and conducts venture capital activities.

business plan could, for example, break down the advice process based on the different parts of the business plan and often different templates were used, including Coompanions own.

One office had made a decision to always use Coompanions method book for social innovations as basis for all counselling sessions - there are methods such as SBMC, business matrix and NABC. Other mentioned tools for business plan advice / training were the software Entrepreneurerdy and Jamboard.

The more mentioned model for introducing financial aspects was the backwards budget - to start from what the contractor must earn per month / year to survive and then adjust the rest of the budget to achieve this goal. The next step will be to adapt the marketing to be able to achieve the goals in the backwards budget.

Interesting comments on this issue are that the advisor should focus on business benefits, not societal benefits, primarily in this area. The entrepreneur often has a good grasp of the societal benefits, but is not usually that good at creating sustainability in the budget.

Quotes:

“The economy is presented at a level that is very basic. Backward budget is important where you calculate what you have to get into your account each month. Can you live on the company's revenue? How much do you have to withdraw? What does the market research say you can do? Can tasks be assigned to others so that you free up time for revenue making activities?”

“Business modeling needs more attention. My experience says there is a lot of fuzziness there today. We are already working a lot on the soft values and it does not need to be strengthened right now. The hard values is what we must strengthen within Coompanion. One way is to provide more real world examples of how long-term profitable and sustainable cooperatives like Arla, Södra skogsägarna etcetera are operating and how they are organised.”

9. How do you present the cooperative principles and the cooperative governance model?

The cooperative principles are mentioned by the advisers on various occasions but often quite “ad hoc”, as one of the interviewees put it. Some advisers did not mention them at all. One adviser only mentioned them on returning visits after a couple of months. This is because the hard values in entrepreneurship are so important to get started with to build economic sustainability for expansion and survival. The soft values can be built on later when the new cooperative's budget is in order.

When it comes to governance models, these are also not so common in the advice process. One adviser said that often these questions come in to place when there is a problem in the group, “he who goes in with the most money wants to decide more... how do we solve it” and so on. Another advisor discussed management models in counselling, but not on the basis of any particular template, but on the basis of experience and on the basis of the issues that arise. What do different roles do - CEO, chairman and so on. One adviser had a checklist where the start up group could fill in who does what in the business - open in the morning, take care of bookkeeping and so on.

Quotes:

“99% do not come to learn about cooperative principles but because they have a business idea.”

10. How do you present the topics of sustainability and innovation?

6 out of 10 interviewees specifically mentioned that sustainability is a basic prerequisite that permeates all counseling and training. 6 out of 10 also mentioned that the global sustainability goals (Agenda 2030) were tools for presenting sustainability and innovation issues. The discussions in the focus groups reflected this well. Workshops on sustainability issues were mentioned where, among other things, the Ready Set Go templates could be used, as well as the Social Business Model Canvas. One counsellor gave homework to the startup groups to select 1-3 goals to target with the business.

One adviser never spoke about the global sustainability goals during the advisory process, but instead about economic sustainability, with the Lean Startup model as a guide.

Several advisers mentioned that social sustainability can be forgotten in the corporate sector where economic sustainability and increasingly ecological sustainability are established. Do not forget to ask questions about social sustainability was specifically mentioned by one of the interviewees. Coompanions "Business development social innovation - method book for social Entrepreneurship" was always used as a basis for innovation counselling and training by an office.

A notable aspect was several advisors skepticism of the term innovation. Quotes like "there is inflation in the word innovation" and "development is more important than innovation, exemplifies this. Summing up that line of thought is that not everything can be innovative, usually you just have to establish business models that work and create development.

Quotes:

"Cooperation is a bit of a mind image of SDG 17 in agenda 2030, but we are showing it poorly. Cooperative companies are more sustainable than others. Healthy collaboration is what we need more of. Almost all small businesses know this. You do not compete but you work together with industry colleagues. Coompanion Sweden should work harder to develop tools in healthy collaboration and sustainability (eg goal 17) that benefit the regional offices. Better models for entrepreneurship in healthcare, for example, through cooperation."

11. How did you introduce the topics of entrepreneurial marketing and scaling in business?

In general, scalability was not considered particularly important for Coompanion's target groups. Most people are either out so early that growth in addition to creating basic economic sustainability is not relevant or they are only interested in basic breadwinning business. Several advisers mentioned that they ask questions such as "How do you see yourselves in 5 years" or other questions related to scalability based on the groups own wishes. An adviser mentioned that downsizing can sometimes give better results, such as getting rid of costly resources that weigh down the business.

All advisors initiated general marketing dialogues and tailored based on the groups contextual needs.

One advisor mentioned that the Lean Start Up book clearly addresses both scalability and marketing and is easy to follow in the advice process.

12. Which training methods do you use to improve learning development? (Case study, Games-based training, lecture, Role-Play, simulation,...) which methods do you think are more suitable?

The counsellors pick method based on the situation and their own experience in all situations and mix common methods such as learning by doing, workshops, lectures, case studies and role play. In digital education, it is important to try to keep a ratio of 70%interaction / 30% receptiveness, according to one of the interviewees. The same relationship may apply to physical education as well, according to the same person. Other methods mentioned were creating a vision for the future, dialogue seminars, group dynamics “different personality types coded as colors” and Lean StartUp.

The interviewee who consistently promoted Lean Start-Up said it was important to use to harmonize with the rest of the structure, not least entrepreneurship consulting and education at universities.

Quotes:

“Setting good examples is always important. Without good examples, it will not be credible. Bad examples are also important (as good examples). In trainings, feasibility visits are very important for people to see live what it can look like in reality.”

“You have to practice presenting (pitching) in the start-up groups, here there are often needs, we have noticed. We encourage taking notes and finding structure in the work ahead. Many people learn better by writing down things. You can give a template on, for example, protocols that can then be filled in, which can provide good knowledge from learning by doing.”

“An important basis is to tackle problems as they come, not to educate/train too much but instead learning by doing in reality. That is best way forward. Entrepreneurs should socialize with customers so you should really not advise them to go to training and network meetings.”

13. According to your experience, what is missing or what should be more developed in a training on cooperative entrepreneurship?

Each office has its own culture on how to counsel, provide training and collaboration where certain factors unite, others contradict. There is, of course, a common basis and through adapted continuous improvement work, increased quality should be provided in counselling and education based on the answers given in this feasibility study.

Both interviews and focus groups point in the same direction and vary extremely little, although there may be some differences in examples of methods used or views on challenges. An important conclusion is the different approaches to counseling where several senior counsellors are clear that fixed templates and structures are not suitable in cooperative counseling. Another school of thought” is that one should harmonize counseling with the academia’s methods for gaining acceptance and collaboration, as well as maintaining a scientific approach to the work.

The third “school of thought” requires a clearer line of advice with templates, checklists and possibly also software that directs the business development process. The last school of “thought” consists primarily of counsellors who have not been active for so long. This division is of course very generally presented, and nuances are of course present. One office has, for example, developed its own

checklists and strategies with good results that can be seen as something in between an open advisory structure and fixed strategies.

A clear demand is an advisor forum to share this type of experience with each other. One conclusion is also that younger advisers may need more structured support in order to eventually be able to grow into a more flexible role.

The demand for more training in leadership and innovative models such as TEAL, U-lab, Golden Circle and sociocracy as well as a greater focus on the hard values (sustainable business modelling) within Coompanion was given, distributed among different participants. A better joint packaging of the offer to the outside world was also requested by one of the interviewees.

Regarding cooperative education in a general perspective, it was mentioned that cooperation is not at all anchored in the school system in Sweden - education in cooperative entrepreneurship is lacking and knowledge about cooperation is generally low.

Quotes:

“Never templates in counselling. It kind of doesn't work you know, and it gets boring for oneself. You must be able to answer questions. One-way communication does not work well. You should listen to what the group wants and then tailor counselling based on this.”

“Cooperative entrepreneurship is lacking in higher education in Sweden - universities completely lack courses in this. There is no anchoring in the school system / education system in general. The basic understanding is lacking in society at large. A broad educational effort towards the general public is needed - high school, colleges, universities etcetera.”

14. According to your experience, what makes a training successful? Present a good practice from your experience.

Most interviewees saw the adviser's personal treatment of the start up group as decisive. A professional and committed approach and a well-executed counselling service is extremely important. It also creates a good reputation. The material used must be adapted to the group's context. Active listening and a broad approach are often appreciated. Honesty and to be trustworthy is extremely important. Sometimes you have to be honest enough to dissuade from the start up. Always give good examples and a lot of knowledge and give tips about contacts / networks, or where more knowledge can be obtained. Keep the right pace based on the groups need.

Participation in the process is important, the groups experience, goals and dreams must be in focus. The most basic thing is that it should be a pleasant visit (offer coffee / tea).

Checklists can facilitate counseling / training but must not be too guiding.

Quotes:

“Honesty is important, sometimes you have to dare to advise to change models and maybe even advise against start-ups. The driving force must not be just passion about a subject, but passion about being an entrepreneur. Another important piece of the puzzle is the lack of templates and

structure... which means that we listen well and are empathetic, flexible. Not the same structure for everyone, but we adapt to the group context."

"Through our own developed tool social innovation camp, we have understood our position in the market - the gray zone between academia, business sector, civil society and the public sector. We know the language of all these sectors. It is important to keep the mission - societal benefit through entrepreneurship."

15. what are the biggest challenges in your work? and how do you try to overcome these challenges?

The most mentioned challenge was general financing of the Coompanion offices closely followed by the need for continuous improvement work in the networking and collaboration with the structure. A general challenge is to reach those who want to run cooperative business, increase the number of consultations and to become better at finding the unique selling point that create activity. The marketing of Coompanion in social media is lagging behind.

The "projectification" of the activities makes it sprawling and short-term - where do the project results end up?

Three participants mentioned that it is difficult for economic associations to get a bank account and that it sometimes happens that players do not want to sign an agreement with an economic association. This is because you are unfamiliar with the company form.

For younger generations in Sweden, the cooperative business form is unknown and is not taught at all in the school system, other than in individual initiatives, for example through projects (often via Coompanion).

The challenges are tackled in different ways. Honesty in the advising process and taking part in various collaborations is important.

The fact that national office, Coompanion Sweden, has taken a clearer responsibility for marketing in social media was perceived as positive by some interview participants and can be seen as a way of tackling the challenges of reaching the target groups.

Quotes:

"Basic financing is always a challenge for Coompanion. Being able to work with the free hours is a challenge. Everything is so tied up in projects, which controls the activities to a great extent. Trying to weave in business development and training etc. within a project. That's the way "you have to do it" today. "

"Ignorance of cooperation is great in Swedish society. Training in cooperative entrepreneurship is completely lacking from a structural point of view. In the long term, education must take place in primary schools, perhaps already in upper secondary school, but at universities this is needed above all. Otherwise we will not have a fundamental reach in society. "

"In Sweden, you must first work with the feeling, attitude and thinking about cooperation. Young people have no preconceived notions about cooperation, which is good because then they can have a more objective entrance / open vision... because they do not know about it. "

"No connection to the old cooperative sector is a major shortcoming. A collaboration there could have provided real leverage. Otherwise, it's just "little Coompanion" on itself."



QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY ANALYSIS

How long have you been working as advisor/trainer within the support system?

71,4% of the advisors/trainers have more than 5 years experience in Coompanion. We can state that we have many experienced advisers! Is it the case that we who enter the cooperative movement become so in love with it that we do not want to leave? It takes a lot of experience and large networks to do the work we do. It is also the case that we build up our team of advisers and develop the skills we have based on the experiences we have with us. We must constantly evolve and be flexible.

Which is your main target group?

62,5% Start-ups. About 60% of new entrepreneurs/startups constitute our main target group. But at a closer look there may be more in that category, but persons answering the questionnaire have chosen to describe it in a different, broader way. It has felt important to include words such as cooperatives or social entrepreneurs. One respondent has written "entrepreneurs who do not think they are entrepreneurs". A large group (6 responses) specifically concerns people outside the labor market who are interested in entrepreneurship. This is largely about the type of tool/entrepreneurship called ASF in Sweden (work-integrating social enterprises) which is an important tool for several Coompanion offices.

What does this say about the image of what Coompanion stands for? How do we communicate externally and internally what we stand for? Do we risk becoming unclear and difficult to grasp or is the width a strength? I see it as an obvious strength in our work that we are so broad and inclusive. That we work with societal development, but I think about clarity. For example, in comparison with other organisations that are advisors for other types of businesses which only have the goal to earn money?

What are the largest obstacles for more cooperatives?

The single biggest obstacle identified is "The general lack of knowledge about cooperation as a way to conduct business together"! It feels tough to take on that challenge because we cannot sit alone on the solution. We need efforts at everything from local, municipal, regional, national and international level. "Lack of financial instruments for cooperatives" comes in a clear second place.

Which of these methods are used in the entrepreneurial training?

Many respond to traditional lectures as at least one of the ways they work (At least 40 or 71.4% but then there are some who have combined it together with other tools). Then it is of course the case that most people want to add their own twist so there are a lot of different kinds of answers to this question. Then there are several who describe that they use different types of digital tools / models / templates. Wondering what falls under that heading. Case studies comes second with a bit more than 20% and Interactive theatre and role play have unexpectedly been used as many as 10%). Many people use case studies. Several also mentioned workshops.

How important is it for you to present cooperation as a business model?

The most surprising thing here is that there are 9 people who do not think it is particularly important to present cooperation as a business model. What does it say if you are employed as a consultant at Coompanion?



Which of these subjects are explored in your trainings/councillings?

Financial aspects and sustainability are what you work with most in education and counseling. The cooperative principles not so much. Why? Does it feel outdated? But sustainability is one of them, right? How is the question interpreted? You carry with you the essence of the cooperative principles, but you do not express it with those words?

By your experience, what is missing or needs to be further developed in trainings/counseling sessions on cooperative business development?

An overview of the data gives a broad picture. Financing tools, sustainable business models, business management, democratic organisation management, legal and more good cooperative examples are important parts to mention. Working to make the cooperative business model more known in Sweden is also very important.

According to your experience, what are the successfactors in trainings/counseling on cooperative business development?

Many good examples describing the sustainability of the cooperative model and to meet the group in their own context, are important aspects. Getting the group going at small scale quick. The trainer/counsellor needs to listen well to the group's needs, be knowledgeable and provide counselling out of facts and best practice.

CONCLUSIONS

Thoughts on possible ways forward for Coompanion

- Investigate the possibility of establishing an Advisory Forum with mentorship. Here, good examples can be spread in a structured way and experienced senior advisers can support new advisers. The outcome should be continuous improvement work in the national cooperative counselling service.
- Investigate the possibility of creating a more adapted advisor training that matches the daily activities in a clearer way and that promotes financial sustainability.
 - o Investigate new clearer strategies, checklists and templates (or repackaging the existing ones) for new advisors that create comfort in the daily operation - Lean Start Up, Entrepreneurship and local checklists that have been developed and tested in the field; can be starting points. Likewise for "Methodbook social innovation" which is highly appreciated in one of the offices.
 - o Flexibility in consulting and training initiatives will always be an important prerequisite for mastering by Coompanion's employees. Find methods to help the new advisors grow in their role so that in the long run they become less dependent on templates and checklists and instead rely on their experience. Here, mentoring / advisory forums can be an important support, but also new well adapted material.
 - o The Lean Start Up method may be a way for Coompanion to improve its relationships with academia. Consider incorporating it into counselor training.
 - o Develop new advisory material on sustainable cooperative governance models and business models that have been proven over time, such as old Swedish cooperatives like Arla, Södra

Skogsägarna, Fonus, Sparbankerna, COOP and similar cooperatives that have really proven their robustness and economic growth capacity.

o Innovative methodology and models such as U-lab, Golden Circle, TEAL and more can be a good complement to the basic training of new councilers.

o Analyze the possibility of producing support material for “family cooperatives”, aimed primarily at people from new incoming cultures.

o Teach the advisors how to use a backwards budget (describe costs first, then analyse how much you must make in order to make ends meet)

- Analyze the possibility of creating a clearer packaged offer to the market. Clarity makes it easier for other organizations within the structure to recommend Coompanion. Find inspiration in other organisations with better track record than Coompanion, in this regard.
- Analyze tools in healthy collaboration and sustainability (SDG 17). Develop support methodology based on best practice around. How is Coompanion pitched in the right way within the public support system for entrepreneurship” to establish continuous improvement work in networking and collaboration.