



League of Cooperative Workers

2019

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Purpose and background

The purpose of this document is to set a basic framework where unemployed people can be organised into small groups (cells) to produce in their own basic needs. These cells can be linked to each other through a larger network, namely the League of Cooperative Workers (LoCW).

Vision

A society where all its members contribute positively to its own wellbeing.

Mission

To create and facilitate a formalised structure where unemployed people can organise themselves into small self-serving groups.

Project concept

Unemployed people will be invited to establish and join cells of the LoCW in their immediate area. Each cell is designed to have 20 members in the beginning. This size of each cell can be expanded up to 100 as they grow. Members of each cell will be allocated a job in line with their skills, which they will do to the benefit of the other members of their own cell. The reward each member gets is a coupon from the cell, which they can use to acquire goods and services from the other members of their cell.

Create cells of workers

Values

The LoCW and its members strive to:

- Give more to the world than take from it.
- Respect nature, people, property and authority.
- Work hard and share.
- Be non-violent and peaceful.
- Be friendly, caring and respectable.
- Be neat, tidy, clean and ordered.

League members, management and control

The LoCW is an organisation created by the International Party (IntP) and therefore stands under the direct control of the Executive Committee of the IntP. Members of LoCW-cells are not required to be members of the IntP also. However, the administrator of each LoCW-cell needs to be a member of the IntP. Internal management decisions in each cell shall be taken by a simple majority vote of all the cell members. These decisions can be overruled by the IntP Executive Committee.

Cells to mostly govern themselves

Finances of LoCW-cells

Administrator responsible for finances

The administrator of each LoCW-cell will be responsible for financial bookkeeping of that cell. He or she will also have to safeguard the cash of the cell and do purchases. The books and balances should always be transparent to all cell members. Cell-money can only be used to pay for communal goods and services. No cell-member may be paid in money. Cell-members can only be paid with a coupon which gives them a share of the produce of the cell.

Cell structure

Cells should have flexible structures

The table below presents a basic structure to start a self-serving cell, though the structure should be flexible to improve itself accordingly as circumstances change. An important principle is that cells should manage themselves and solve their own problems. They should adjust their own structure and find the best ways to operate. They should learn from each other and share successful methods.

Contributions by members

Some occupations will need materials, such as seeds, fertiliser, wood and textiles. These material should eventually be supplied by the cell, once the cell generate enough income from sales. However, for starters, the members should contribute materials to the cell. Sometimes they can contribute in a pool to the benefit of all the members. For example every member can contribute food items to the cook to prepare meals for the whole group. In other cases members can provide material not for the group, but specifically for their own use. For example, a member can provide textiles to the clothes maker to make a dress for her. Or if a roof needs painting the owner of that house can provide the paint to the handy man to paint the roof.

Table 1: Structure of a self-serving cell

Nr	Type of job	Workers needed
1	Administrator	1
2	Security	1
3	Wellness worker	1
4	Cleaner	1
5	Clothes washer	1
6	Cook	3
7	Waiter	3
8	Vegetable gardener	3
9	Child carer	1
10	Frailty carer	1
11	Handyman	1
12	Carpenter	1
13	Clothes maker	1
14	Contract worker	1
TOTAL		20

Job descriptions

The responsibilities of each job type, along with the skills needed, is listed below. Jobs are not limited to only these responsibilities. Cells are flexible to adjust them according to their own circumstances and needs.

Table 2: Job descriptions

Nr	Occupation	Responsibilities	Skills
1	Chairperson & Administrator	Bookkeeping & administration, delegate tasks, keep order & discipline, resolve disputes, quality inspections, give and organise training, liaise with other cells, etc.	Administration, bookkeeping, honest, ethical, fair, strict.
2	Cleaner	Clean the communal areas and houses of cell members.	Bodily fit, sharp eye for hygiene, perfectionist.
3	Clothes washer	Washes and irons the clothes of the cell members and their children.	Bodily fit, sharp eye for hygiene, perfectionist.
4	Cook	Cook and prepare food for the cell members.	Cooking, bodily fit, passion for good and healthy food.
5	Waiter	Serves food to cell members at a communal eating place. Assist cooks, set tables, clean tables and wash dishes.	Good manners, friendly, good posture, sharp eye for hygiene, perfectionist.
6	Child carer	Looking after and educating the pre-school children of cell members while they are at work.	Soft spoken, can read to children, caring, friendly.
7	Frailty carer	Assist and looking after members and their direct family who are ill or disabled.	Compassion, bodily fit, knowledge of caring and nursing.
8	Wellness worker	Pampering members with hairdressing, nail treatment, massages, listening to personal issues and give advice.	Hairdressing, nail treatments, massages, caring, can listen, wise.
9	Security	Protect the lives and property of cell members. Assist other workers where someone is ill or absent or the need exist. Talk to members regularly. Identify problematic behaviour.	Alert, bodily fit, fair, caring, strict, communicate.
10	Vegetable gardener	Produce fresh vegetables in a community garden. Herd farm animals if possible. For the use of members and surpluses sold to generate income for the cell.	Gardening, vegetable farming, animal rearing.
11	Handyman	Maintenance of member and cell properties. Fixing breaks and leaks, upgrading and improving where possible.	Plumbing, tiling, painting, electricity, carpeting, metal working and building.
12	Carpenter	Make furniture of wood and other materials for use by the cell and members. Produce surpluses for sale to generate income for the cell.	Carpentry, artisan skills.
13	Clothes maker	Make clothes for other members. Surplus clothes are sold the generate income for the cell.	Sewing and needlework.
14	Contract worker	Doing contract work to outside firms to generate income for the cell.	Various, such as construction, mining, security, factories, farms, services etc.

Housing

Basic cell not designed to provide housing

The design presented in this document makes no provision for housing. The reason is that housing construction needs a huge amount of materials, which are expensive to buy. Only once cells earn a lot of external money through contract workers and sales of food, furniture and clothes, will they be able to start investing in housing construction. Therefore, in the beginning the cells will be established in communities who already have some form of shelter, even if it is informal structures.

Coupon system

Coupons worth 40 hours of work

Cell members will each get a coupon every cycle of 10 days, which is worth 40 points. One point is allocated to each hour they work. To earn 40 points every 10 days, each member will have to work 40 hours every 10 days. That is equivalent to 4 hours every day, or 8 hours every second day. There will be two types of coupons: the first type will be valid only in the 10-days of each particular cycle. These are used for goods and services which are consumed on a regular basis such as food, cleaning and security. The second type of coupon can be spend within about every 30 days. They are used on more durable goods such as furniture and clothing.

Provision for mutual fund & admin fee

The coupons will also make provision for and administration 'fee' to provide for the labour of the cell administrator. Then there also needs to be a mutual fund contribution, which provide for the labour of the contract workers through which the cell earns money. This money will be spent on the cell-members again so they will indirectly get the benefit of the mutual fund fee. The money earned from contract workers can be used to purchase food and materials and also production machines and property.

Coupon-balance sheet

Explaining the coupon-balance sheet

The table below presents an example of a coupon-balance sheet that every cell member will receive on a 10-day cyclical basis. The 'Service/Good' indicates what every member can buy, and the 'Provided by' indicates from whom they have to buy it. The 'Price per unit' shows how many points is needed to buy one unit of each service. The 'Units in a day' indicates how many units of each item a member can consume in one day. For example, a mother and her son can consume 6 meals every day, but only one hour of wellness treatment on each of two separate days.

Saving some coupons

The items in the blue shaded area can be saved for 30 days. Thus, a member can save their 2 points for maintenance they receive every 10-day cycle for three such cycles until they have 6 points. Then they can use that 6 points to hire the handyman for 6 hours once during the third 10-day cycle.

The cost of meals

Meals are not measured in hours, therefore their prices are different. The price of a meal is 0.3 points, of which the cook, waiter and vegetable gardener each get 0.1 points, which is equivalent to 6 minutes of work. That is because we think one cook can prepare a meal for 20 people in two hours' time. To serve meals to 40 people (20 cell members and their 20 children), two cooks will be needed. If a cook works 6 hours per day, a cell will need 3 cooks to allow one of them some off time.

Table 3: Coupon-balance sheet per cycle

Nr	Service/Good	Provided by	Price per unit	Units in a day?	Points needed	Points spent per cycle of 10-days:									
						Day-1	Day-2	Day-3	Day-4	Day-5	Day-6	Day-7	Day-8	Day-9	Day-10
1	Administration fee	Administrator	2	1	2	2									
2	Security officer	Security	2	1	2	2									
3	Wellness treatment	Wellness worker	1	1	2		1					1			
4	House cleaned	Cleaner	1	1	2			1						1	
5	Clothes washed & ironed	Clothes washer	1	1	2				1						1
6	Meal (preparation)	Cook	0.1	6	6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
7	Meal (serving)	Waiter	0.1	6	6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
8	Meal (food)	Vegetable gardener*	0.1	6	6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
9	Child caring	Child carer	0.4	1	2	0.4		0.4		0.4		0.4		0.4	
10	Frailty caring	Frailty carer	0.4	1	2	0.4		0.4		0.4		0.4		0.4	
11	Maintenance	Handyman	1	2	2					2					
12	Furniture	Carpenter	1	2	2						2				
13	Clothes	Clothes maker	1	2	2							2			
14	Mutual fund	Contract worker	2	1	2	2									
TOTAL		20			40										

**If a cell do not have access to land to cultivate vegetables, they should source food through other means*

Meals for children

Note that parents would like their children (or other dependants) to eat with them. For this reason cell members will get 6 meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner for 2 people). If both a mother and a father are cell members, then they will get 12 meals every day (for two parents and two children). If a cell member needs more meals, they can purchase it from other members who do not use all their meals, or they can purchase them from the cell administrator. The price for these meals should be negotiated among those who are involved, though a rough indication is R25 per meal in 2019.

Acquiring food

Note that not all cells will have access to a vegetable garden to produce basic food. In these cases cell members should all contribute money to the mutual fund of the cell, from which food can be purchased. The vegetable gardener will then be given a different task, perhaps to work as a contract worker. Money earned from hiring out the contract workers will also go toward this mutual fund.

Child & frailty care

A child or frailty carer can collect 0.4 points for every child that she cares for in a day of eight hours. Therefore she would need to look after 20 children to collect 8 points on that day. She will need to work for 5 days in every 10-day cycle to collect the required 40 points. On the other 5 days parents will not be working and can care for their own children. Therefore, a cell would need only one child carer to look after its children when their parents are working.

Coupons can be swapped

Not all cell-members will have children or aged parents that need child or frailty care. For this reason cell-members should be able to swap their coupons with other cell-members according to need. It may happen that very few members need a specific service, such as frailty care, and then that carer is not able to collect 40 points every 10 days. In these cases a cell should restructure itself and appoint the frailty carer to another service which the cell thinks it would like to have.

Example of coupons

Members to receive a coupon sheet every 10 days

Below is an example of how the coupons may look that each cell-member receives from the cell administrator at the start of every 10-day cycle. To receive a new sheet of coupons, each member must hand back the coupons they collected during the previous cycle for services rendered to other members. If a member did not collect 40 points, then they should explain the reason to the administrator, and the cell should decide on a suitable remedy. Perhaps the deficit can be forgiven, or if not, the particular member will have to work in extra hours to make up the difference.



















Coupon explained

There are 18 coupons on each sheet. Each coupon has a number in the top left corner. Those coupons with a decimal number, such as 5.1 and 5.2, are for cell-members and their dependents such as children. Also written on each coupon are:

- The name of the cell.
- The cycles for which the coupon is valid.
- The name of the cell-member to whom the coupon was issued.
- The intended use of the coupon.
- The value of the coupon in points.

The combined value of all 18 coupons on one sheet adds up to 40 points. Each cell member has to work one hour for every point.

Table 4: Example of the coupons for one cell member in a cycle, worth 40 points

<p>1</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Administration fee Value: 2 points</p> 	<p>7.2</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Meal (serving) Value: 3 points</p> 
<p>2</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Security Value: 2 points</p> 	<p>8.1</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Meal (food) Value: 3 points</p> 
<p>3</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Wellness treatment Value: 2 points</p> 	<p>8.2</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Meal (food) Value: 3 points</p> 
<p>4</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: House cleaned Value: 2 points</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Child caring Value: 2 points</p> 
<p>5.1</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Clothes washed & ironed Value: 1 points</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Frailty caring Value: 2 points</p> 
<p>5.2</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Clothes washed & ironed Value: 1 points</p> 	<p>11</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 to 10 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Maintenance Value: 2 points</p> 
<p>6.1</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Meal (preparation) Value: 3 points</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 to 10 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Furniture Value: 2 points</p> 
<p>6.2</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Meal (preparation) Value: 3 points</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 to 10 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Clothes Value: 2 points</p> 
<p>7.1</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Meal (serving) Value: 3 points</p> 	<p>14</p> <p>Cell name: The Testers Cycle: 8 of 2019 Member name: Alfa Bravo Coupon type: Mutual fund Value: 2 points</p> 

Strategy

For this programme to make a real positive impact on a massive scale, unemployed people will have to join in great numbers and create thousands of cells. However, a pilot project should first be created to test the feasibility of such a system and to learn practical lessons. Once a pilot project runs successfully, the project can be rolled out and duplicated on a wide front. The following are some of the steps needed to start this project:

Steps to follow

1. Identify a suitable community and area for a pilot project.
2. Make contact and involve churches and NGOs in that area.
3. Distribute application forms among the target community.
4. Accept application forms and register viable members.
5. Set a commencement date.
6. Invite the press and issue a press release.
7. Official launch.
8. Monitor progress on a weekly basis.
9. If successful, identify a second community and area and repeat the process.

Conclusion

Short summary

This document presents a basic framework for the creation of self-serving cooperative cells that unemployed people could join. In these cells the members are organised in such a way that they can work for each other, thereby improving their own standard of living and giving them a purpose in life. Cells could be started in small groups of 20 people each. Each member works on average for 40 hours in every 10-day cycle. Members are paid in coupons that they can use to pay for goods and services provided by the other members of their cell. The coupon-balance sheet ensures that the number of hours worked are in balance with the number of hours purchased.