

CO-OP VISION & PRINCIPLES¹



The Southern Africa Community Grantmaker Leadership Cooperative was established in 2005 as an initiative of the Synergos Institute with the vision to bring together senior leaders of community grantmaker organisations in a knowledge-sharing and peer-learning partnership to strengthen social justice philanthropy in Southern Africa. The Cooperative aims to enhance the growth and sustainability of the independent development funding sector in the region by developing the knowledge and capacity of leadership personnel, with a special focus on sustainability and governance issues.

At the core of this vision is a belief that community grantmaker organisations should maximise their social impact and benefit to the communities that they serve.

There are 6 underlying principles to this approach:

1. A peer network

For setting and monitoring individual, organisational and collective goals.

2. A forum

For the exchange of knowledge and information, policy and technical innovation, lessons from practice (both successes and failures) and appropriate strategies and tools for building organisational sustainability and acting as a collective voice.

3. Bridging role

The community grantmaker sector playing a critical bridging role between the civil society development organisations, developmental donors, governments and business.

4. Participatory engagement

A diverse methodology employed at Co-op events that enables active participation, mutual sharing, openness, critical thinking and peer learning.

5. Adding value

Community grantmakers adding unique value through their capacity to channel resources effectively to community-driven development at local level.

6. Sustainable grantmaker organisations

Provision of strategies and tools for building organisational sustainability, creation of full understanding of current donor environment and the ability to adapt to changes, strategies for communicating a mission and vision that is attractive to potential donor communities, models for developing appropriate institutional designs involving a strong leadership, effective Board and governance practices, and appropriate staffing engaged in achieving sustainability.

¹ First draft as at November 2009 Retreat.

CO-OP VALUES

The following core values have been identified from various Co-op documentation, communications and engagements since its establishment in 2005:

Respect

for diversity in the region, in the membership and within client communities / grantees, as well as mutual acknowledgement of all members as recognised and experienced leaders in the sector

Sharing, Learning & Reflection

all members behaving in a manner that enables growth as member organisations and as individual leaders in the sector, as well as growth of client communities / grantees

Creating and respecting safe space

the methodology at Co-op events, mutual engagement and event organising process to facilitate mutual support, nurturing of bonds of trust, confidences being respected, joint learning, critical thinking, dialogue and leadership development

Accountability

regular attendance of Co-op events, continuous interaction between events, transparent communication and decision-making, adherence to timelines and commitment to punctuality

Innovation

as part of NGO sector ensure that democracy works better, act as watchdogs and pioneer innovative approaches to addressing social problems and promoting social justice

Social justice

solving problems by addressing their root causes and advancing systemic and sustainable change; promoting fair access to resources and equality of opportunities

Empathy

acknowledge each others' needs, respond sympathetically and patiently to stress and frustrations, diffuse conflict situations, do not act confrontational.