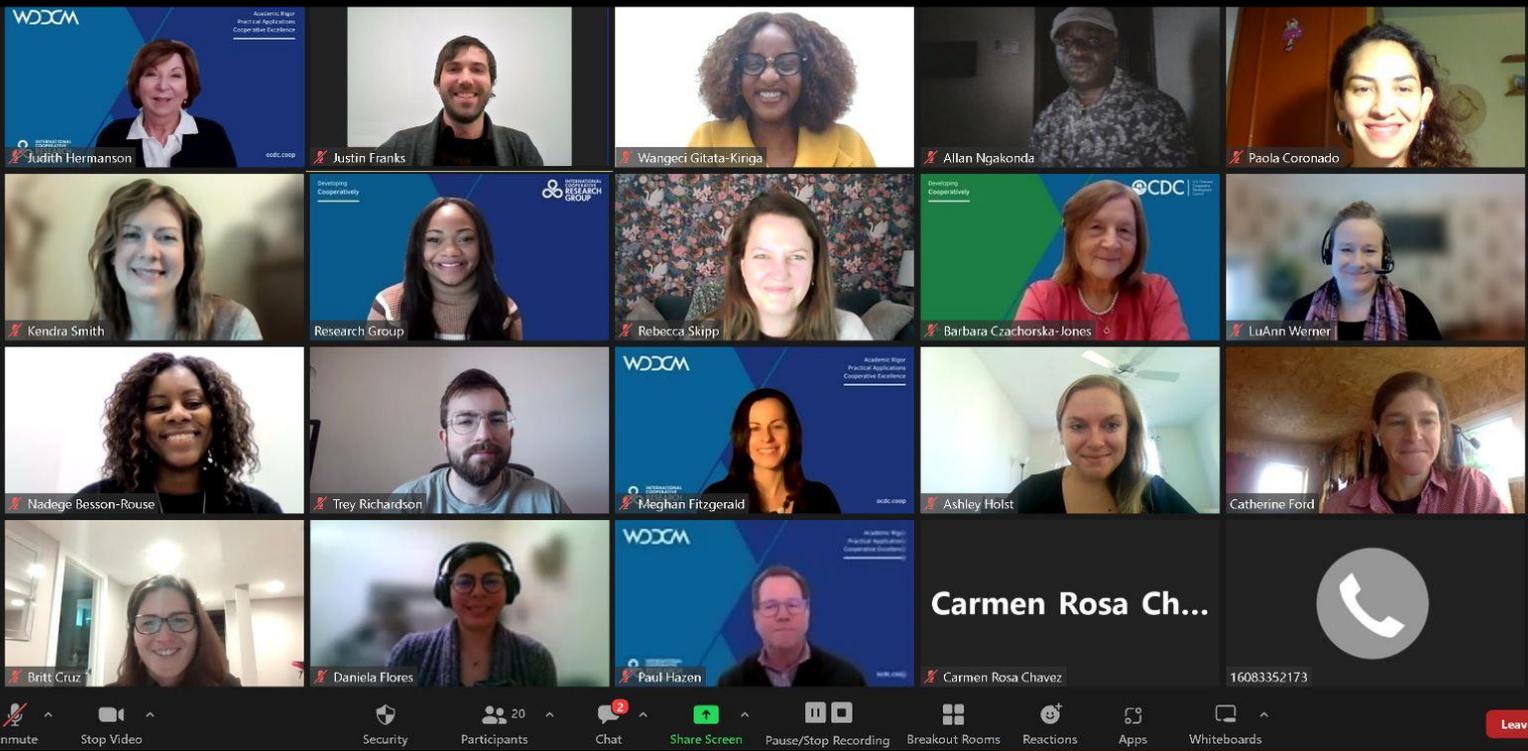




OCDC/ICRG VIRTUAL ANNUAL LEARNING EVENT 2022: Reflection & Resonance for Cooperative Impact





The OCDC/ICRG Annual Learning Event (ALE) 2022: Reflection & Resonance for Cooperative Impact

Welcome

Following requests from the CDO community, OCDC and the ICRG held a **Virtual Annual Learning Event**, on **Tuesday 13th December 2022**, as a complementary session to the in-person event held the previous week. The program was a two-hour session on Zoom and was designed to give an opportunity for those who were unable to attend the in-person event for various reasons, a chance to give their input and hear from colleagues. The idea was to build on what had been discussed, so that those who had attended the in-person session could still gain new experiences and insights, as well as getting those for the virtual session to feel heard.

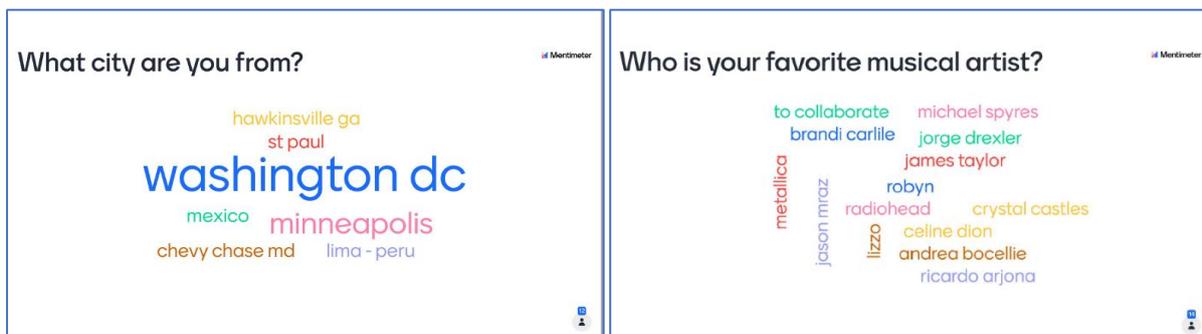
There were some people who attended both sessions and that was not just our main speaker from USAID, Bailey Morton, but also some colleagues from Health Partners and Global Communities. We appreciate their presence, input and enthusiasm for collaboration!

Paul Hazen, Executive Director, OCDC gave the opening remarks and welcomed everyone to the Virtual Learning Event.

Bailey Morton, USAID Representative and Cooperative Development Specialist highlighted that the CDP was unique among USAID initiatives. The sharing of insights, the thought leadership provided through collaborative learning are what make it work and also what make it exceptional. She reminded us that what leading with data especially around the work on inclusion and locally led development can do.

Judith Hermanson, PhD, Director, International Cooperative Research Group (ICRG) at OCDC asked participants to think of themselves as being part of the creative process. To remember that something new is created as collaboration takes place. Working together as the CDP community and uniting around the values of the group to extend the reach of impact. Cooperatives are critically important tools to level the playing field as they are vehicles of inclusion, collaboration, pooled resources and diversity. Different perspectives within the CDP experience as well as within the cooperatives themselves allow for room across the spectrum of collaboration. It is not a standardized, boxed in process, but a broad, adaptable way of getting results.

We used our favorite instant feedback tool – Menti.com and got to know a bit more about who was in attendance. See the results below:





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Group Work: Opportunities for Joint Action

Participants who had attended the in-person session shared some highlights and key takeaways. They also talked about some of the planning for joint work that was discussed during the in-person meeting. Networking was one of the key advantages of the in-person session.

A small group session which deepened some of the work done in the in-person session was held. Given the time constraints, the groups focused on one area each and added to what was already there. This was a challenge, as the results of the Menti showed that people wanted to discuss more and get into more depth. This is noted and will be considered for the next ALE.

The groups focused on the HOW and were divided into **Research, Tools** and **Learning**. The groups were led by people who had attended the in-person event. Barbara Czachorska-Jones, PhD (OCDC), Britt Cruz (Health Partners) and Ashley Holst (Global Communities) respectively steered the discussions.

The results are listed below and more can be heard on the Zoom recording [here](#).

1. RESEARCH: How research could be conducted by CDO members and ways in which collaboration can continue to underscore the process

Methodology – this is important and cooperative members should also be part of the research approach. Their interests and input should be considered when methodologies are being discussed, especially when data is collected from them.

Flexibility – things are often in flux and a level of flexibility is required to keep going and achieve the intended results. Sometimes good to research one issue and not to overload with projects.

Versatility – there are different ways to carry out research. It is not a one-size fits all.

Remember that *each cooperative's membership has its own personality*.

Framework- coop models differ per country. Keep this in mind when developing research questions and methodologies.

Political and cultural background- consider how it is going to impact research.

Areas of Research-

- Governance – quality of decisions and leadership, how good decisions are made and what it means for all members and organizations.
- Enabling environment – Legal framework and business environment.
- Gender and climate, social behavior of cooperatives – understanding inclusion and impact on business viability.

2. TOOLS: How tools can be used effectively in collaboration

Aggregation – having a common site where various tools can be housed and shared among CDO partners. OCDC has an existing repository site. Being re-launched in 2023.

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Inventory – CDOs should consider having a common list of tools so that savings of time and resources are enjoyed by the members. Tools such as the Venture 37 tool, OCDC governance tool, Health Partners assessment tool, etc.

Sector specific – recognizing that some tools are sector specific but keeping in mind that certain elements can benefit other chains and not the entire tool has to be adopted.

3. LEARNING: How learning can be harnessed more effectively and collaboratively

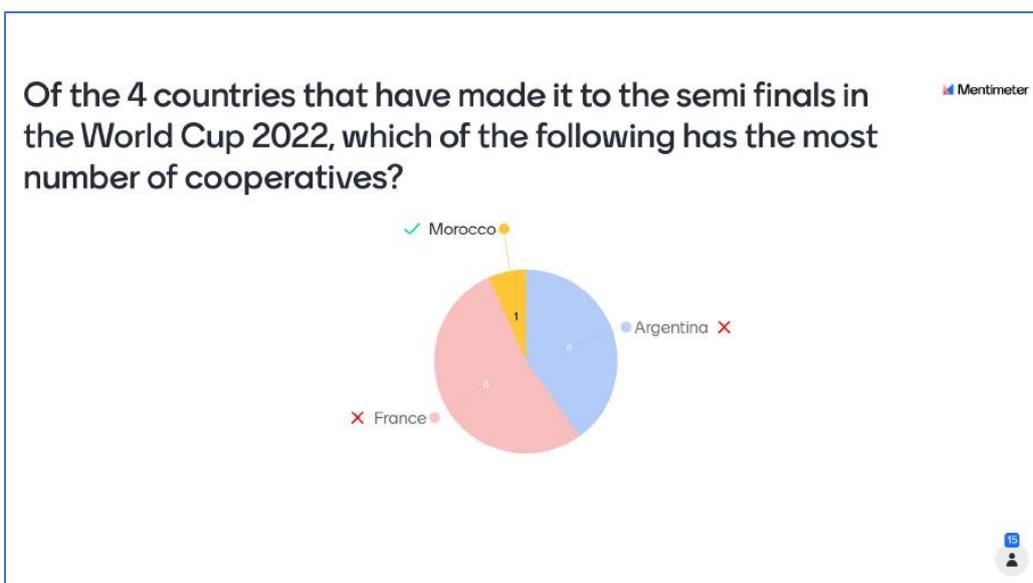
Inclusion – more research on inclusion of women and youth. Better understanding of how this is being done among CDOs.

Digitization – how this is being used as a tool for learning and reach, but at the same time can also act as a barrier to inclusion. This is due to limited access to technology, or even users feeling left behind and not as adaptable.

Community of practice – CDOs can lead in research, communication as part of the learning and consideration to combine the Virtual Learning Sessions with the Collaborative Group.

Ice breaker & World Cup Cooperative Trivia

In between the group work, in the spirit of the FIFA World Cup, there were a few trivia questions centered around cooperatives but specifically in the countries that had made it to the Semi-finals of the 2022 World Cup! The data was thanks to cooperative collaboration and was mainly from the International Cooperative Alliance website on Coops4Development and more can be seen [here](#).





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Conclusion & Next Steps

Judith Hermanson synthesized the session for everyone and reminded us about the work that OCDC does, not only as a convener but also as an active research member of the Collaborative Group. The idea of the ALE is to engage more deeply, respond to CDO needs and suggestions as well as provide a platform for sharing.

Evidence is key for decision making, legislative advocacy and funding.

There are various types of research, such as the **policy facing work** that was What Difference Do Cooperatives Make (WDDCM), others lead to **tools** like the OCDC Governance tool.

Context research that requires specific implementation among others.

Each CDO just like the cooperatives in which we work, has its **own personality**. Some do not wish to focus on research and can partner with OCDC, who will act as their research arm. Others have the bandwidth and resources to research and can also lead in some areas.

OCDC is there to **strengthen the community of practice** and as such has put in considered efforts to update their website, provide a Resource Hub with tools and digital learning materials and research results.

Paul Hazen used a growth analogy and reminded us that cooperative development is a lot like planting a seed – it goes down first before it goes up. We should therefore be patient about the process but also remember to nurture what is being grown by participating and collaborating with each other.

*OCDC will follow up in 2023 with the individual CDOs to further **discuss areas of interest**. There will also be a **mapping** of the bi-monthly Learning Hour and the Collaborative Group meetings. Sharing of the **updates** regarding tools and other resources.*

Menti was run again at the end; results from a partial slide are shown here.

What did you learn from today's session?



Huge interest in research, collaboration and shared learning	That coop development is like a plant- it has to grow down before it goes up!	Ways to include more of the broader CDO community
Important always to understand context	Need for more global participation	The power of cooperatives as a force for change is awesome!

- ENDS -