**Setting Up Cooperative Group for Vocational Training**

“We form a cooperative group, which is a group of business women. The purpose of the group is create a structure in which you will work together to prevent or solve problems so business ventures are as successful as possible. This will also help you hold each other accountable.

You have all learned \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as a skill. I know many women in this area wanted to learn this skill. Our purpose in teaching you this skill is so that you can turn it into a business and earn money for your family.

How many of you think you will be able to make \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ into something that other people in this community will want to buy?

Review the 4P’s lesson info with the group. The following 4 sections of questions are examples of questions to ask if your group taught sewing. If you taught a different skill, please revise questions as needed.

What items do you think the community would be interested in buying using the skills you learned?

How much money do you think someone would pay for that? What are some things you will be able to do with the extra money you earn?

Where will you be able to sell these items? Who will be your primary customers? Are there any other markets/places you could expand to?

How will you promote your items? How will you market your items? What can you do to make people think your items are the best?

Originally many women wanted to learn how to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Why would it be a bad idea for all women in this community to know how to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (Then you can’t sell your items because everyone can do it themselves).

Now we will create a group and officially begin the cooperative:

First we need to come up with a name for your group. (Allow the women time to discuss and report back the name they agree upon for their group).

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Next we need a chair person. The chair person is not someone who learned the skills. This is someone outside of the group and the group needs to elect this person. This person needs to be outside of the group so that they can be an impartial problem solver for the group as needed. The chairperson’s responsibilities are: helping group to solve problems when the group cannot do it on its own, communicate with Youthlinc if they need advice or to report progress of group to Youthlinc.

Go over the Cooperative Group Agreement

Cooperative Group Agreement for Vocational Group (Everyone in group signs this)

As a recipient of the vocational training, materials, and start-up money, you will receive after the boutique, we agree that:

* We will support, problem solve, and encourage other members of the cooperative group to be successful with their business.
* We will meet at least once per month as a cooperative group. Meetings are meant to encourage and support one another in our business endeavors.

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We now need to elect leaders.

Group Leader: This person would agree to serve as the group leader for this cooperative group. Their duties would include: presiding in meetings and group activities, executing group decisions, and representing this group as you work with Youthlinc. (Allow women in group time to discuss and nominate potential group leaders. They then need to vote that leader in (majority rules) after a leader has majority, everyone needs to raise their hand showing that they can support that person as the group leader).

Name of Group Leader\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Group Leader: This person would agree to serve as the assistant group leader for this cooperative group. Their duties would include: assisting the group leader in all undertakings. They would take over the function of the group leader in her absence.

Name of Assistant Group Leader\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: This person would agree to prepare minutes of each meeting. They agree to maintain records and files of this cooperative group and will inform members about each group meeting and other necessary group information.

Name of Secretary \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Items to Discuss with Group:

-Find out how the women in the group will share the supplies (sewing machines, etc…) and record their plan (make sure they include time frames).

-Find out how they plan to replace supplies (fabric, obtain additional sewing machines, etc…) and record their plan (make sure they include time frames).

-Find out the date they will meet as a group each month (ex: second Saturday of the month) and record their plan. Determine start date.

-Determine plan of what they would like to do with the money they earn at the boutique (purchase additional machines/equipment, split the earnings and use personally for fabric or other supplies, pay themselves, etc…) Record plan. (It is important that they understand that some of their money **should** be used to pay themselves and some **should** be used to reinvest in their business. This is critical for us to model for them while there so some of the money they earn in the boutique should be paid to them. They then need to determine what they plan to do with the remaining funds. Many cooperatives opt to purchase additional sewing machines/equipment so that they don’t have to share so much).