

WORKER CO-OPS: AN INTRODUCTION

Canadian Worker Coop Federation

Session #2

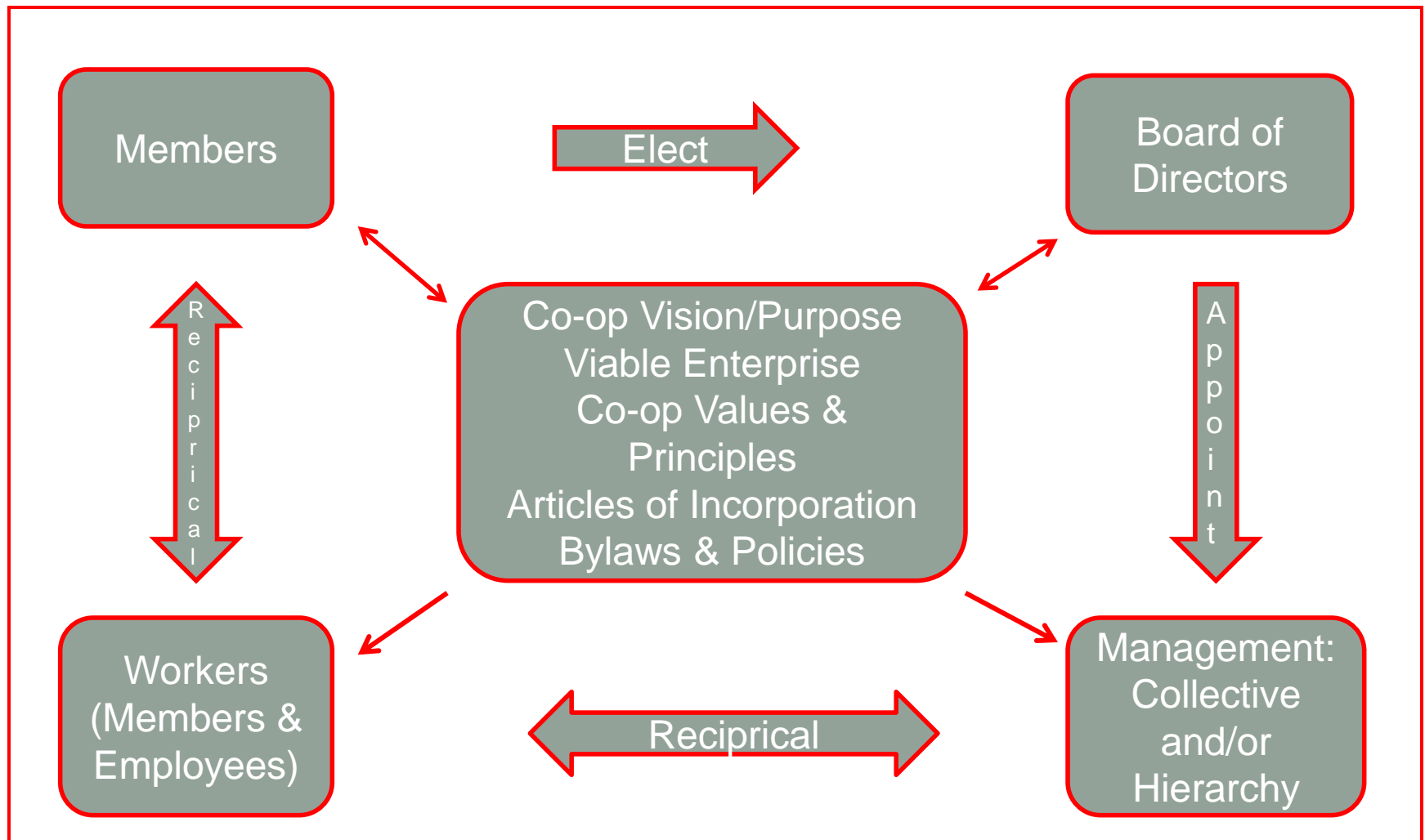
Introductions

- Who are you, in what worker co-op do you work?
- What are two things that you like about the way your co-operative is controlled/managed by the members?
- What do you think are important skills and knowledge members must have to control their co-operative effectively?

Governance and Management: Creating Your Co-operative Vision

- Effective governance and management are what will enable your co-op to successfully create its vision while embodying the Co-operative Values and Principles in all its activities.

Summary of Governance & Management



Member Participation

- Joint-ownership and democratic control require member participation.
- Participation requires:
 - (a) people actively engaging to make sense of their environments and using this knowledge to guide their choices;
 - (b) people being in positions in which they have the capacity (knowledge, ability, commitment) and responsibility for actions of importance to the co-operative's activities and results;
 - (c) they have shared a vision of the common good toward which they are striving; and
 - (d) this common good also has an important component of individual and organizational success.

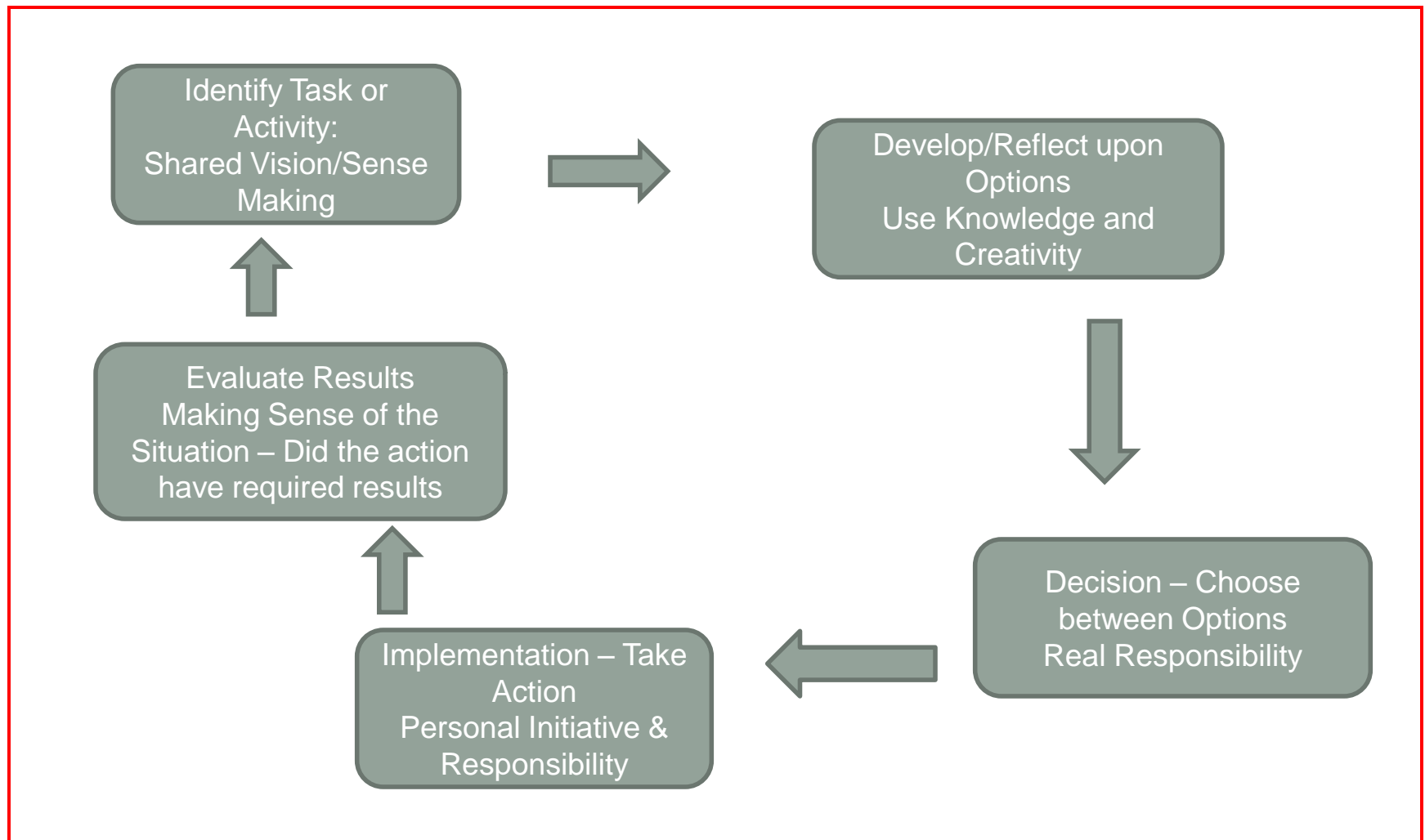
Governance and Management Tasks

- Responsible For - The actions and decisions the members, workers (operational roles), directors and managers are empowered to carry out (develop budgets, approve new members, etc.)
- Authority From – From where do they receive their Authority to take these actions and decisions? – (law, bylaws, operations policies, job descriptions, etc.)
- Accountable To – To whom are the individual, teams, committees etc. accountable? (members, work team, manager, board of directors, etc.)

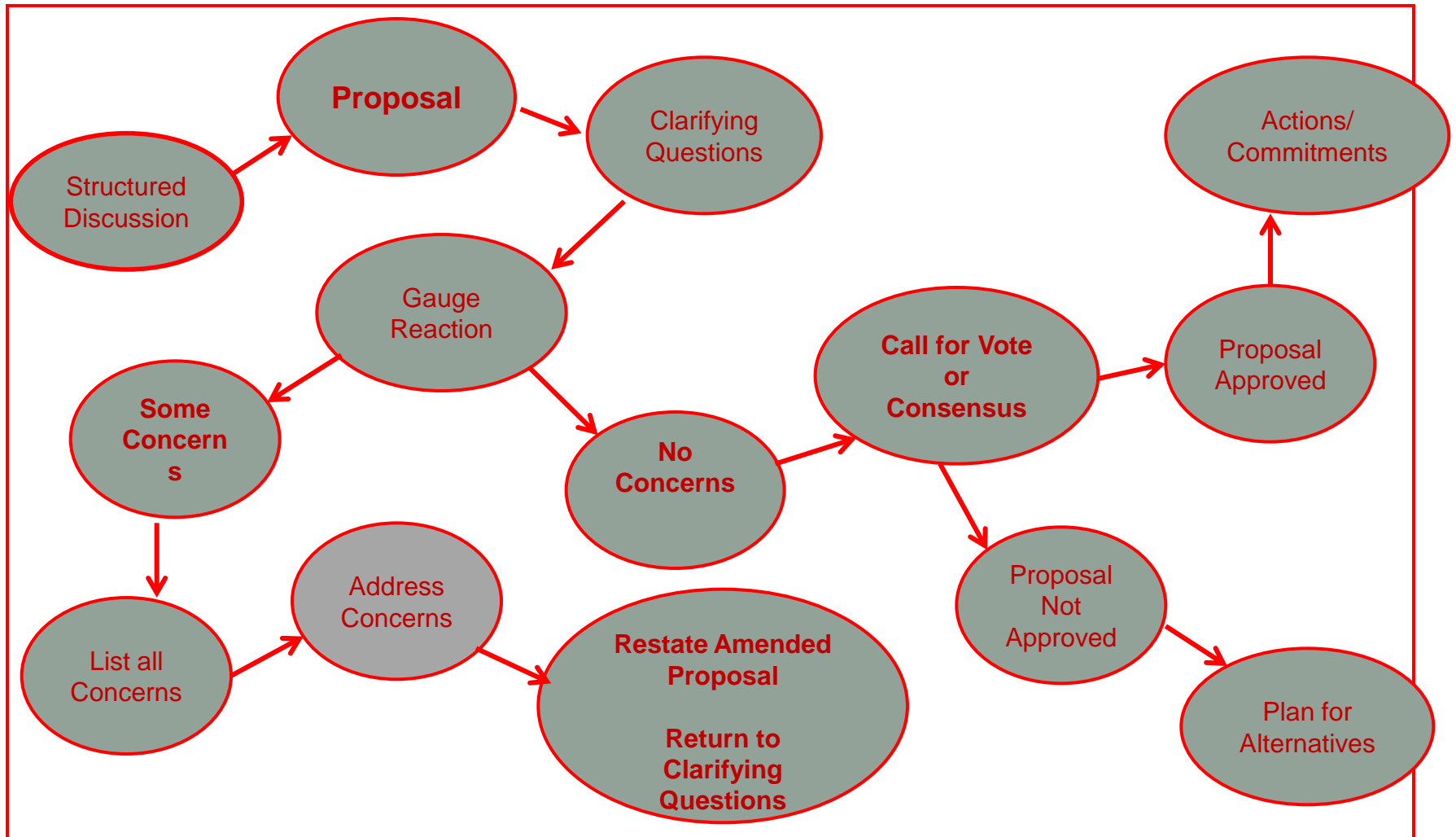
Decision Making/Task Matrix - Sample

Task/Decision	Who	Proposal Development	When/Where	Decision Process	Implementation Task or Outcome
Approve wage policy	Members	Board, Wage Committee, Management	General Meeting	Majority vote	Management/ Administration
Elect Directors	Members	Nominating Committee	General Meeting	Majority Vote	Board of Directors
Approve Annual Budget	Board	Management/Finance committee	December Board Meeting	Consensus	Board, Management, Members & Employees
Production Schedule	Production work team	Management, sales administration	Weekly at Friday team meeting	Consensus	Production work team
Provide Superior Product or Service to Client	Worker (employee or member)	Service Policy Guidelines, Management	Daily or as required	Policy Guidelines with Individual Judgement	Worker and Management
Organize Annual Meeting	Governance Committee, Board, Management	GC, Board, Management	March 1 to April 15	Consensus	Governance Committee

Decision /Action Process - Participation



Adopting a Motion or Proposal



Consensus and/or Majority Voting

- Does your co-op use consensus or majority voting to reach governance decisions?
- Is the same process used for operational decisions?
- What do you think are the strengths of your co-op's process? its weaknesses?

Challenge of Conflicting Objectives

- Decision-making often requires trade-offs between conflicting desires or goals
- Financial commitment to long-term viability; financial viability may conflict with short-term wage desires (maximizing wage rate)
- Desire to provide member education may be in tension with financial needs or time constraints to serve customers

Mediating Conflicting Desires or Goals

- Always refer back to the Vision and Purpose of the co-operative to ensure a compromise between goals will still serve the Vision effectively.
- Engage in “constructive controversy” to hear all view points and alternatives and to avoid “group think”.
- Have discussions well facilitated to ensure full participation, i.e. ensure everyone is heard
- Develop clear criteria for governance and operational decisions

Blood and Oxygen: Critical Criteria

- Two critical criteria for the long-term success of a co-operative.
- What do you think “Blood” and “Oxygen” represent?

Cash and Member Commitment

- When making governance or management decisions always ask how will this affect:
 - Our cash position – our ability to pay expenses and invest in vital assets or activities for the future
 - Our members' commitment to remain a member of the co-operative for the long-term

What is CWCF?

- A national, bilingual, grassroots federation of worker co-operatives, and multi-stakeholder co-operatives with substantial worker control.
- Types of members:
 - Worker & multi-stakeholder co-ops
 - Regional Worker Co-op Federation members
 - Co-op Developer members - through CoopZone
 - Associate members
- Offices in Calgary, Winnipeg, and Kentville, Nova Scotia

CWCF Vision

To be a growing, cohesive network of democratically controlled worker co-ops that provide a high quality of worklife, and support the development of healthy, just and sustainable local economies, based on co-operative values and principles.

CWCF Services

- *Tenacity Works* Investment Fund
- Technical assistance program
- Access to hard-to-find information on WC's
- E-Newsletter
- Lobbying for worker co-op interests
- Annual fall Conference
- RRSP-TFSA program for investment in co-ops of all types, & CED Investment Funds (NS, etc.)
- Group insurance program (The Co-operators)

Closing

- If you were to share one thing from this session with the members of your co-operative, what would it be and why do you think it is worth sharing (What difference could it make in your co-operative's life?)
- Evaluation – What did you like about today's session? How could it be improved?
- Thanks for participating!