



Cooperative Economies for Collective Leadership:
New Paradigms for Funding Community-Determined Efforts to Advance Child Wellbeing and Equity

Thursday, April 22, 2021



*2021 NOW Webinar Series
Nurturing Family Leadership:
Community-Centered Equity Practices*



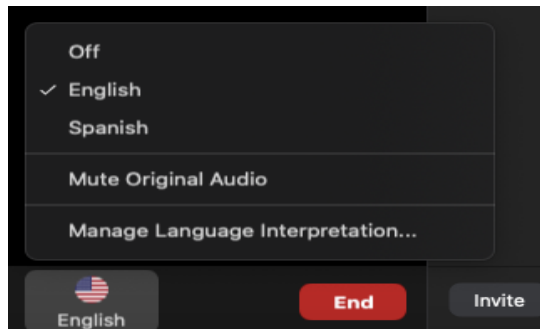


Session Outline

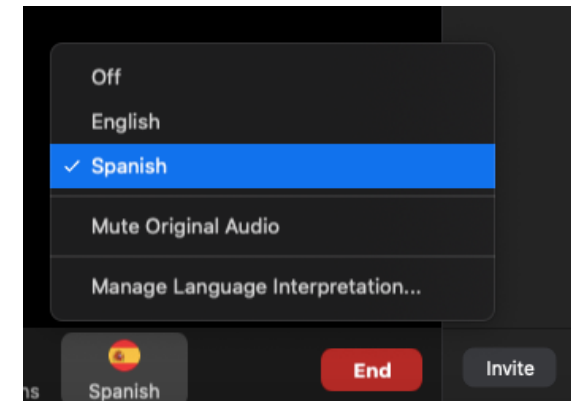
1. Welcome & Overview
2. About Vital Village
3. *Cooperative Economies for Collective Leadership: New Paradigms for Funding Community-Determined Efforts to Advance Child Wellbeing and Equity*
4. Panel Discussion and Audience Q&A
5. Closing

Language Justice: Zoom Webinar Interpretación/ Interpretation

1. In your meeting/webinar controls, click Interpretation. 
2. Click the language that you would like to hear.
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1. En los controles de la reunión o el seminario web, hacer clic en Interpretación.
2. Hacer clic en el idioma que desee escuchar.
3. (Opcional) Para escuchar solo el idioma interpretado, haga clic en Silenciar audio original.

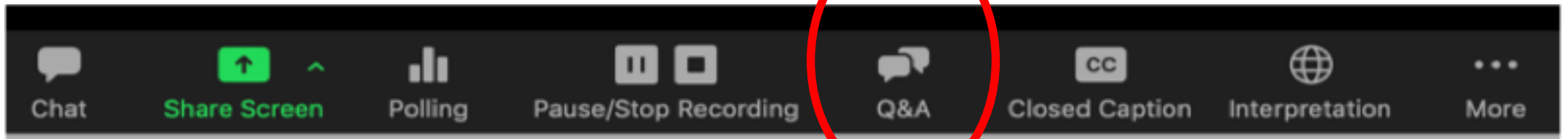


Housekeeping

- Spanish Language Access
 - Community Language Cooperative (CLC) based in Denver, CO
- Slides and recording will be posted on the NOW Forum (<https://www.networksofopportunity.org>)
- Submit questions on dashboard
- Use the chat box for comments

Q&A

- Submit your questions by clicking on the Q&A icon at the bottom of your screen



About Vital Village Networks

Vital Village Networks is a national collective of diverse change-makers and organizations committed to pioneering sustainable approaches to transforming child, family, and community wellbeing

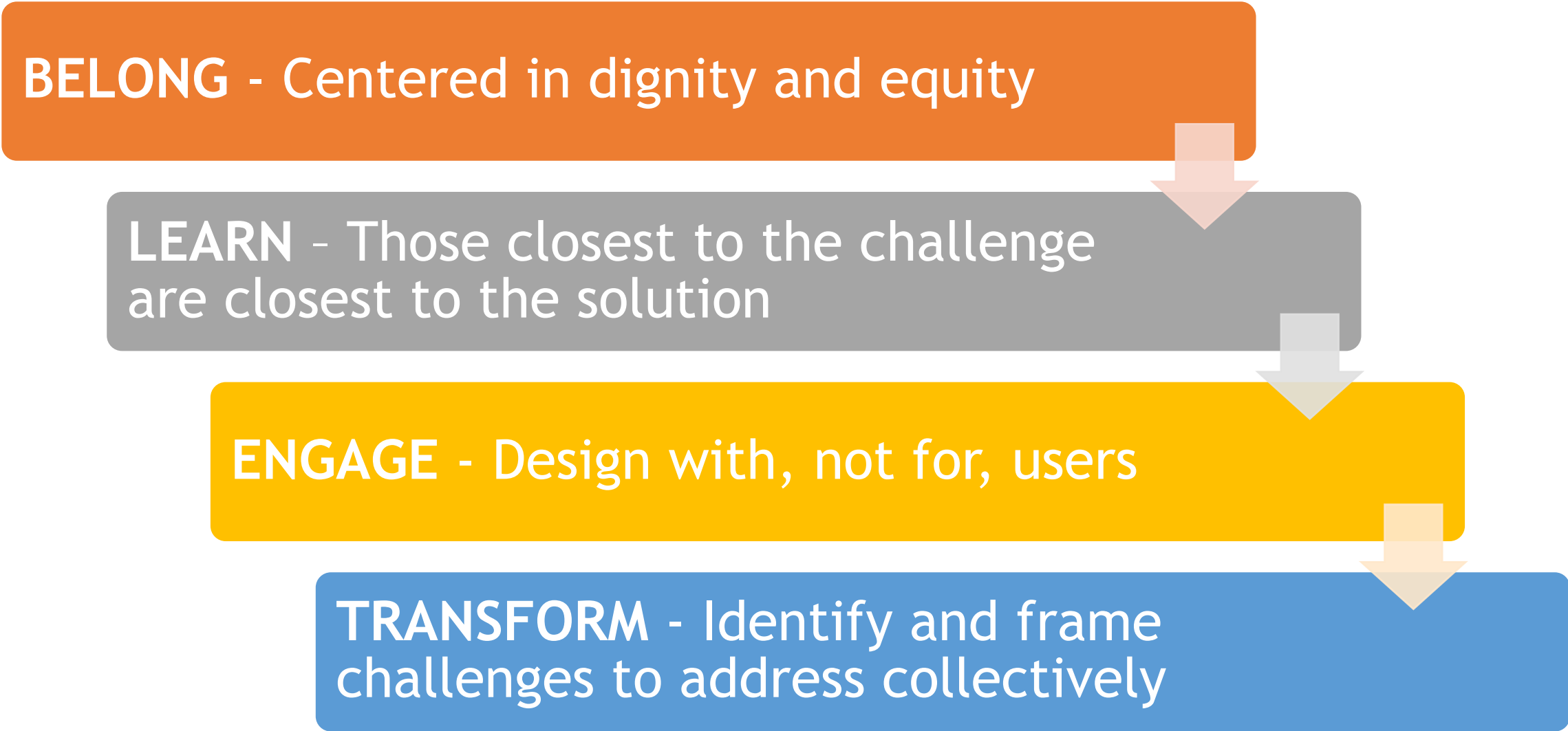
Networks of Opportunity for Child Wellbeing (NOW) is a national initiative powered by Vital Village Networks

NOW exists to achieve social transformation and racial justice by partnering with individuals, organizations, institutions, and coalitions across the country to build their capacity to equitably share power with communities that have faced ongoing racial oppression and marginalization.



Guiding Principles

BELONG - Centered in dignity and equity



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graph TD; A[BELONG - Centered in dignity and equity] --> B[LEARN - Those closest to the challenge are closest to the solution]; B --> C[ENGAGE - Design with, not for, users]; C --> D[TRANSFORM - Identify and frame challenges to address collectively];
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LEARN - Those closest to the challenge
are closest to the solution

ENGAGE - Design with, not for, users

TRANSFORM - Identify and frame
challenges to address collectively

NOW Innovation Forum - Sign up to engage with a network of community leaders



<https://www.networksofopportunity.org/>



Cooperatives

Equity

Collective Wellbeing

Economic Independence

Liberation

Democracy

Cooperatives

Sustainability

Solidarity

Economic Participation

Mutuality

Strategy

Cooperatives: Wellness & Liberation



Featured Speakers



Jessica Gordon-Nembhard

Professor of Community Justice and Social Economic Development, City University of New York (CUNY)



Marcos Beleche

Board President, Dorchester Food Cooperative



Nia Evans

Executive Director, Boston Ujima Project



James Vamboi

Chief of Staff, Community, and Culture, Boston Ujima Project

Cierra Peters,
*Communications Director,
Boston Ujima Project*

Jenny Geffrard,
*Business Alliance Coach,
Boston Ujima Project*

Johnny Charles,
*Managing Director, Ujima Fund,
Boston Ujima Project*

Cooperative Economies for Collective Leadership



**Jessica Gordon-
Nembhard**

*Professor of Community
Justice and Social
Economic Development,
City University of New
York (CUNY)*

Black Co-ops in History

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Ph.D.

John Jay College, CUNY

jgordonnembhard@gmail.com

Cooperative Design Lab

Boston Vital Village, April 22, 2021

Thanks to the organizers and my fellow panelists

Acknowledge:

The original occupants/stewards of the land; & welcome my ancestors - and Elders

The struggles of enslaved laborers, & all those who labor without just compensation; acknowledge our claim to land and resources.

Those fallen and killed by police brutality and other forms of racism and anti-blackness...

Thanks & Acknowledgements

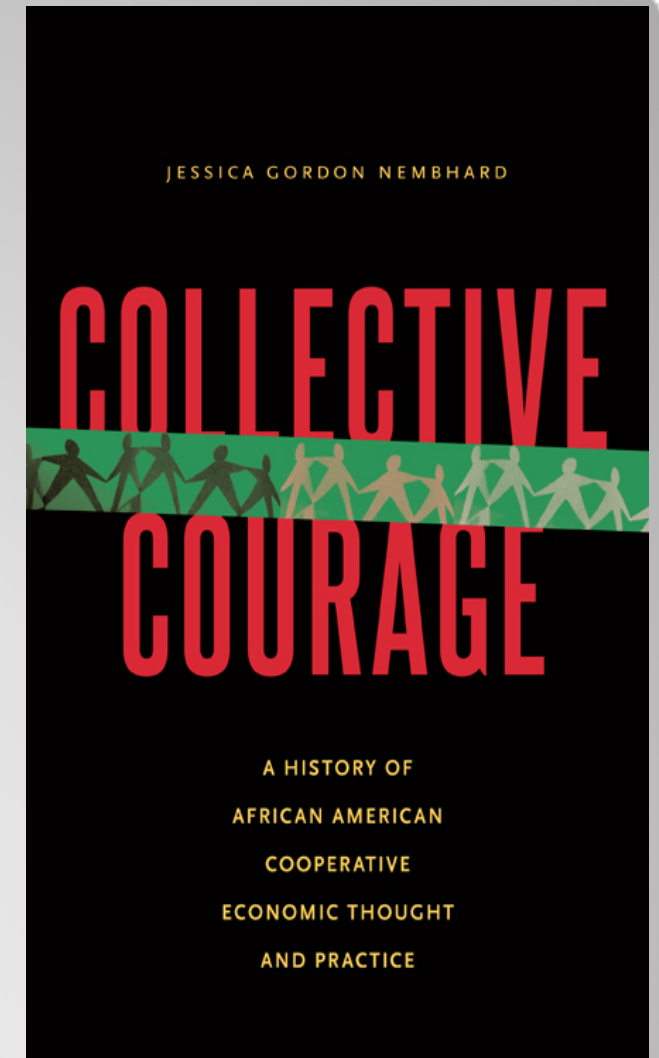
Jessica Gordon-Nembhard 2021

- **African Americans have a long and strong history of mutual aid and cooperative ownership, especially in reaction to market failures and economic racial discrimination.**
- **Often a hidden history and one complicated by economic marginalization, and thwarted by racial discrimination and white supremacist violence.**
- **Nonetheless, a continuous history of resistance and perseverance.**

AA Cooperative Practice

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard 2020

- **Survival**
- **Resistance**
- **Prosperity**
 - **Jessica Gordon-Nembhard**
- **psupress.org**
- **And this year Esther West's study of Latinx Co-ops.**
<https://uwcc.wisc.edu/research/latin-x-cooperative-research/>



Research on African American Cooperatives

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard 2020

- **Cooperatives are member-owned, member-run and member-serving businesses.**
- **Values based jointly-owned enterprises that operate according to principles of membership, democratic governance, returns based on economic participation, sustainability and care for community.**
- **Formed to satisfy a need/problem solve.**
- **For profit or not-for-profit people-centered structure with triple bottom line.**

What's a Cooperative?

- **Consumer cooperatives help consumers pool resources to gain access to needed goods or services in bulk at affordable prices. Food co-ops, credit unions, buying clubs, housing co-ops.**
- **Producer co-ops help members process and market their goods themselves collectively and more efficiently. Agricultural, craft co-ops.**
- **Worker co-ops are totally owned by the employees of a company and governed democratically to provide better working conditions and pay.**
- **Multistakeholder (hybrid) cooperatives are owned by workers and consumers, or producers and consumers, or workers and community. Also called Solidarity Cooperatives. (day care, preschool, restaurants, CSA)**

Types of Cooperatives

- **Co-ops have better longevity than traditional corporations/small businesses:**
 - **after first year (10% failure versus 60-80%);**
 - **after 5 years in business (90% still operating versus 3-5% of traditional businesses).**
- **Evidence also shows that cooperatives successfully address the effects of crises and survive crises better; and often develop out of crises.**

Lower Failure Rates

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- **Utilized by all populations, in every era of human history, on every continent.**
- **Notions of the common good, the commonwealth, The Commons,**
- **Collectivism, mutual aid, revolving loan funds/rotating savings & credit/susu**
- **“Collective work and responsibility”**
- **Indigenous cooperative efforts - First Nations, early African civilizations, etc.**

Universality of Mutual Aid & Economic Cooperation

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard 2020

- Pool resources
- Provide quality goods and services - and access; and culturally & geographically sensitive/appropriate goods & services.
- Save costs, Increase income and wealth
- Combat racial discrimination
- Increase Black economic stability, self sufficiency & group independence and self-determination
- Save or create decent jobs in their communities
- Develop collective agency and action
- Develop leadership

African American Mutual Aid and Co-op Accomplishments

- **Founded by the Nat'l Negro Business League, Montgomery, AL 1927.**
- **An association of independent grocers organized into a buying and advertising cooperative.**
- **Created to support independent Black grocery stores with mutual support and collective marketing - in a harsh market during difficult times.**
- **By 1930 253 stores were part of the CMA network.**

Colored Merchants Association

- **Two Black education institutions in North Carolina, Bricks Rural Life School, & Tyrrel County Training School**
- **Established cooperative networks in 1930s and '40s – co-op education, farmer's cooperatives, equipment co-ops, credit unions, buyers clubs, health insurance.**
- **Organized Eastern NC association, then the North Carolina Council in 1945.**

Social Co-ops NC 1930s-40s

- **Worked with state agricultural dept to create manuals & workshops to promote and develop Black credit unions and co-ops.**
- **Growth: in 1936, 3 Black credit unions - by 1948: 98 Black credit unions, and**
- **48 additional Black co-op enterprises: 9 consumer stores, 32 machinery co-ops, 4 “curb markets,” 2 health associations and 1 housing project.**

North Carolina Council 1945-48

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard 2020

- **Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters co-ops – keep money from decent union wages circulating in the Black community**
- **Use credit unions to help labor families to save and have access to capital**
- **Use consumer stores to support Black community.**
- **Young Negroes' Co-operative League (1930s) similar strategy, but larger, national interlocking set of cooperatives and co-op supply chains.**

Brotherhood Co-ops 1940s

- **Students (Crenshaw High) established a co-op to sell salad dressing made from the produce grown in the school garden in Farmers Market & through Amazon.**
- **Voted to save at least 50% of profits for college scholarships.**
- **Awarded over \$180,000 in college scholarships to 77 graduated student managers (over ten years).**
- **Taught younger students to take over when graduated.**



Food from the 'Hood

- **Started in June 2009 across from the West Oakland Bart**
- **Locally & worker owned and operated full-service grocery store and nutritional education center in West Oakland.**
- **Addresses food insecurity and Partners with local farmers to increase their financial sustainability**
- **Community organizing – gain loyalty and community support**
- **Partnerships with Mandela Gateway Transit Village, and the People's Credit Union**

Mandela Foods Cooperative

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard 2021

- **Importance of education, study groups and training – learning from each other, informal study, formal study and specific training**
- **Significance of organizational supports and deliberate co-op organizing**
- **Significance of community involvement, and solidarity**
- **Pooling of resources, access to non-exploitive resources**
- **Democratic participation and sharing of power, include voices of the marginalized and oppressed**
- **Women's leadership**
- **Participation of youth**

Lessons Learned from Black Co-ops

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- **Deliberate cooperative development – most number of co-ops when have Black organizations dedicated to co-op promotion and education [CFNACU, YNCL, BSCP, BPP, FSC etc.]**
- **Community support – community involved in starting the co-op; use the co-op; donate to the co-op; defend the co-op [North Carolina examples (schools and sewing co-ops), APR Masonry Arts, NYC co-ops in housing complexes, etc.]**

Community and Organization Matter

Jessica Gordon-Nemohard 2020



“Cooperative ownership of land opens the door to many opportunities for group development of economic enterprises which develop the total community rather than create monopolies that monopolize the resources of a community.”

Develop the Total Community – Fannie Lou Hamer

***“... we can by
consumers and
producers co-operation,
... establish a
progressively self-
supporting economy
that will weld the
majority of our people
into an impregnable,
economic phalanx.”***



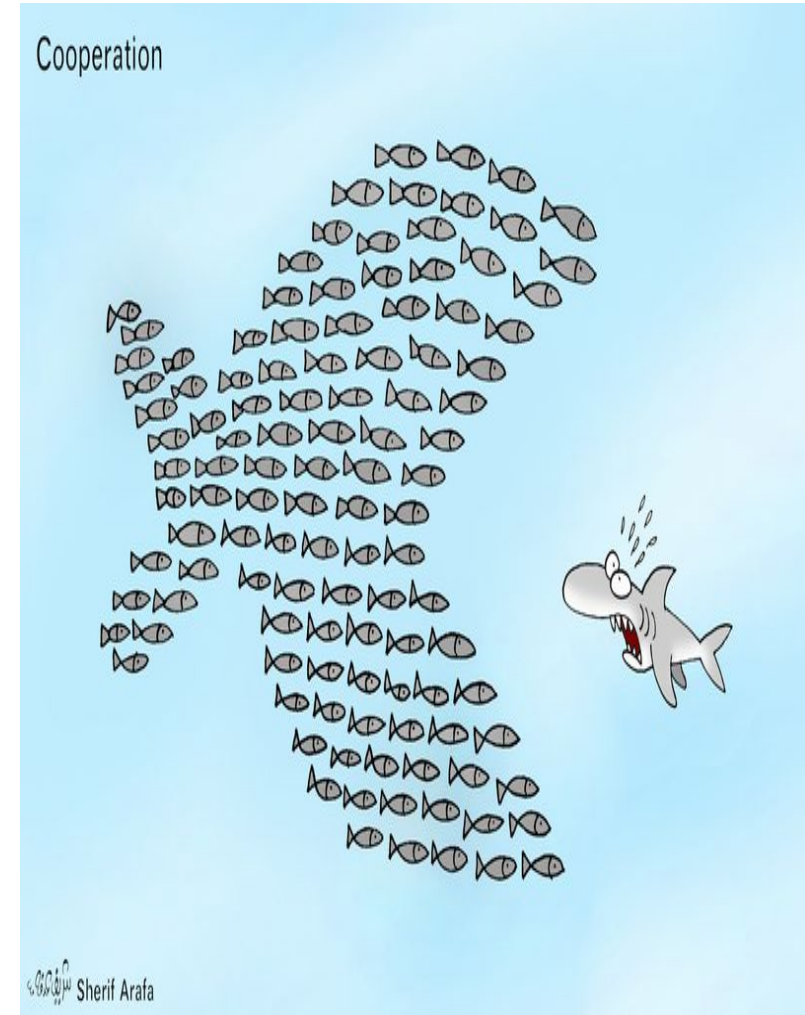
A Self-Supporting Economy – W.E.B. Du Bois

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard 2021

Together We Can Succeed!

Thank You!

- jgordonnembhard@gmail.com



Jessica Gordon-Nembhard 2020

Cooperative Economies for Collective Leadership



Marcos Beleche

*Board President,
Dorchester Food
Cooperative*

Dorchester Food Coop



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwGjsjL9X4c>

Cooperative Economies for Collective Leadership



Nia Evans

*Executive Director,
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James Vamboi

*Chief of Staff,
Community, and Culture,
Boston Ujima Project*

Jenny Geffrard,
*Business Alliance Coach,
Boston Ujima Project*

Cierra Peters,
*Communications Director,
Boston Ujima Project*

Johnny Charles,
*Managing Director, Ujima Fund,
Boston Ujima Project*

Boston Ujima Project Ecosystem



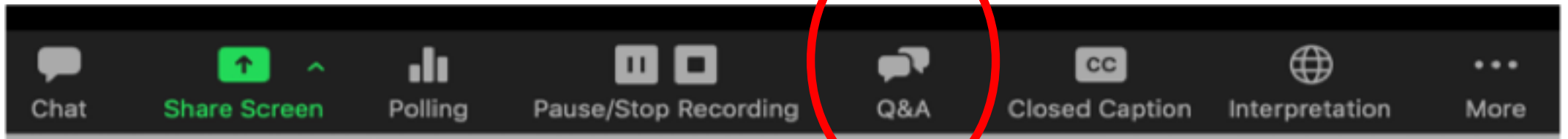
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Q & A

Question and Answer

Q&A

- Submit your questions by clicking on the Q&A icon at the bottom of your screen



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Thank You!

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Follow us on Twitter at:

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