My Background

- 10+ Years with Equal Exchange
- National Co-operative Business Association
- Master in Management: Co-operatives & Credit Unions, St. Mary’s University
- Co-operative Fund of New England / Co-operative Capital Fund
- Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops
Our Context

- Crisis of Global Economic System
- Rising Unemployment & Instability
- Dramatic Shifts in Wealth
- Diminished Democracy
- Corporate Influence
- Instability & Change
Alternative Visions

- Desire for Economic Alternatives
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Demands for Greater Equity
- Community Democracy
- Grassroots Engagement
- Change as an Opportunity
Co-operative History

1800s: England’s Industrial Revolution...

- Dislocation of local economies
- Dramatic shifts in structure of labor
- Concentration of wealth & power
- Poor working conditions
- Limited democracy
- Globalization
Three Visions of Economics...

...Emerging in 1800s:

- **Capitalism**
  - Profit motive — Free capital and entrepreneurial energy from community & state controls.

- **State socialism**
  - State intervention — Planned economy for benefit of citizens, but particularly of working people.

- **Co-operativism**
  - “Third way” — Participatory control of the economy through democratic ownership and governance of enterprise by those who use its products or services.
Early Co-operators

♦ Robert Owen (1771–1858)
  • “The lowest stage of humanity is experienced when the individual must labour for a small pittance of wages from others.”

♦ William King (1786–1865)
  • “Knowledge and union are power. Power, directed by knowledge is happiness. Happiness is the end of creation.”
Rochdale Equitable Pioneers

- Founded in 1844
- Group of Weavers, Unionists and other Community Activists
- Established a Member-Owned Grocery Store
- Basic Principles for Modern Movement
International Co-operative Alliance

- Founded in 1896
- Cross sector organization
- 800 million are members of co-ops worldwide
- 100 million jobs (20% more than multinationals)

www.ica.coop
Sectoral Expansion

- Worker co-ops
- Farm & fishery co-ops
- Food co-ops
- Housing co-ops
- Credit unions & co-op banks
- Health services co-ops
- Insurance co-ops
- Multistakeholder co-ops
The Co-operative Identity

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

International Co-operative Alliance, 1995 • www.ica.coop
Co-operative Principles

- Voluntary & Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Member Economic Participation
- Autonomy & Independence
- Education, Training & Information
- Co-operation Among Co-operatives
- Concern for Community
Co-operative Values

- Self-Help
- Self-Responsibility
- Democracy
- Equality
- Equity

- Solidarity
- Honesty
- Openness
- Social Responsibility
- Caring for Others