

Cincinnati Union Co-Op Initiative 2016 Annual Report

Cincinnati Union Co-op Initiative (CUCI) is a non-profit that develops *integrated networks* of worker-owned businesses that *sustain families*. We give working people, especially those in distressed and underserved communities, genuine control over their economic lives.

CUCI serves as the *pilot site* adapting the transformative Mondragon *worker-owned cooperative model* to the U.S. context. By bringing this resilient model to Cincinnati, CUCI will grow the local economy and develop *community wealth* from the ground up.



Our Harvest



Sustainability Team



Apple St Market



Renting Partnerships Meeting



Union Co-op Conference 2015



Apple Street Market

"It is time for us to take the initiative, to be part of the solution and to embrace a successful economic development model that creates jobs and is accountable to workers, their families and their communities for the long-term."

-Ellen Vera, CUCI Co-Founder



CUCI co-founders with Mondragon North America's Michael Peck

Our Story

In 2011, in the midst of the Great Recession, a small group of committed people came together and shared a vision: creating an economy that works for all — a Cincinnati economy that supports family sustaining jobs, providing opportunities for underserved and marginalized people to not just have a job but to build wealth through worker ownership. With big dreams, solid blueprints, and no bank account, we set to work. We were inspired by the Mondragon experience that has transformed a poverty-stricken region of Spain into a thriving community capable of weathering financial crises. The secret to their success is an integrated network of worker-owned co-ops that support each other during hard times.

2009 saw the forging of a historic agreement between the United Steelworkers and Mondragon to launch union co-ops in the U.S., which utilize worker ownership along with the collective bargaining process. Cincinnati Union Co-op Initiative (CUCI) was born in 2011, the first to bring this resilient model to life.

Our journey has been a time of learning and accomplishment, of setbacks and growth. We are energized by the co-ops established, the alliances formed, and the groups around the country replicating our efforts. Yet, the pressing need to create many more jobs with ownership requires us to increase our operating capacity. Sheer willpower can only do so much. To capitalize on opportunities in our region, to respond to the numerous requests we receive from across the country, we are focused on increasing staff so we can make our big dreams a reality.

Overall Impact

- Created 20 jobs, 3 co-ops and 1 non-profit
- Leveraged \$4 million in grants & loans for our co-ops
- Hosted 2 international conferences with representatives from Mondragon & 20 states



Flequer Vera speaking at co-op conference

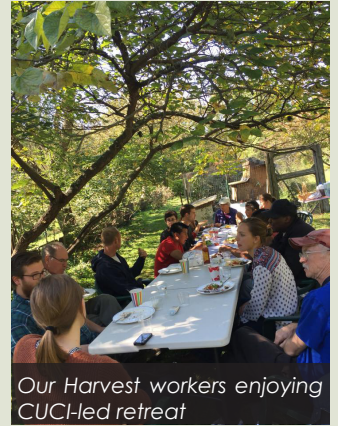
In 2016...

- Our Harvest employed 15 people and served as a practicum site for 20 Cincinnati State agriculture students
- Sustainability helped 100+ homeowners achieve utility savings
- Apple Street Market, with over 1,100 community owners, overcame a significant hurdle and is well on its way to closing the funding gap
- Renting Partnerships, a land trust, supported efforts around the country to share its innovative approach to wealth building for low-income renters
- CUCI launched its manufacturing initiative
- CUCI supported development of the Greater Dayton Union Co-op Initiative and their effort to replicate Apple Street
- Members of CUCI advanced worker ownership and solidarity by speaking at events in different parts of the country each month

Role of CUCI

CUCI incubates, educates, and brings into being integrated networks of worker-owned co-ops that help create an economy that works for all. WE:

- Incubate new worker-owned co-ops
- Support our existing network of co-ops with weekly worker training, technical support & connection to resources
- Help existing businesses convert to worker-owned co-ops (with an emerging focus on manufacturing companies that are facing a succession challenge)
- Help expand opportunities to access capital
- Help support the development of union co-op initiatives in the U.S.



Our Harvest workers enjoying CUCI-led retreat

Union Co-op Symposium

The Union Co-op Symposium was a huge success, allowing over 150 people from across the country to come together to strengthen the union co-op movement. Representatives from Mondragon provided us with valuable insight into starting and financing a network of cooperatives. A new National Union Co-op Manufacturing Committee was born out of the symposium, which is laying the groundwork for the development of a new generation of manufacturing co-ops.



Labor small group at the 2015 Union Co-op Symposium

Support for other Union Co-op Initiatives

After attending CUCI's 2013 Union Co-op Symposium, a group of union members and business owners from Los Angeles incorporated as the LA Union Co-op Initiative. Our 2015 Symposium bolstered regional efforts in various places. Closer to Cincinnati, a group of labor and community organizers in Dayton reached out to CUCI looking for solutions to their city's hunger crisis. Their leading initiative is a worker and community-owned grocery store modeled after CUCI's Apple Street Market. The Dayton initiative is also collaborating with CUCI on a manufacturing conversion program for Southwest Ohio.



Mapping the Union Co-op Movement

Our Harvest

Farm & Food Hub

gives people access to healthy, local food in a way that honors land and labor



Sustainergy

Savings Comfort Local Jobs

Home Insulation

helps homeowners reduce energy costs and increase comfort



Building Housing, Building Equity

provides access to permanently affordable housing in which people build financial assets by investing social assets



Worker & Community Owned Grocery

a full service grocery store whose success will be driven by the ideas and input of all its customers



Manufacturing Conversions Initiative

promotes conversion of small manufacturing businesses to worker-ownership in order to save and create family-sustaining manufacturing jobs



Union Co-op Training Institute Teaching the Process



Future Innovations and Expansions



What's Coming Up

Strengthening our Operational Capacity

From 2012-2015, 100% of our dollars went to programmatic expenses. To be effective and sustainable for the long-term, we are launching a Donor Campaign to Build Long Term Operational Capacity. Goal: \$110K/year for 3 years to fund an Operations/Development Director and a Communications/Admin Assistant.

Union Co-op Training Institute (UCTI)

In 2017, we will launch the Union Co-op Training Institute with on-the-ground support from Isabel Uribe, one of Mondragon's most experienced cooperative development specialists. This will better position us to meet the increasing demand for more co-ops in Cincinnati. Currently 14 groups are interested in creating co-ops.



Isabel Uribe & Kristen Barker



Manufacturing Initiative

A study of our region reveals that the majority of manufacturing jobs are in small- to mid-sized employers, many led by baby-boomer owners who may choose to retire in the coming years. CUCI is working closely with stakeholders including local government, the labor movement, and community advocates. Together we promote conversion of small manufacturers to worker-ownership in order to preserve jobs and businesses. CUCI's expertise in co-op development and our industrial union partners' deep knowledge of the industry are great resources in this work. Our goals are to save and create family-sustaining manufacturing jobs; create opportunities for workers who have been excluded from this sector; and support employers who prioritize people over profit.

THE PEOPLE

Staff



Maria Dienger, Lela Klein, Kristen Barker, Chloe Kaplan

Kristen Barker, Executive Director & Co-Founder
Lela Klein, Manufacturing Union Co-op Organizer
Maria Dienger, Communications Coordinator
Chloe Kaplan, Executive Assistant

Board

Katy Heins, Chair
 Senior Field Organizer,
 Center for Community Change

Kristen Barker, President
 Executive Director, CUCI

Flequer Vera, Vice Chair
 CEO, Sustainergy Cooperative

Ellen Vera, Secretary
 Manufacturing Division Organizing Coordinator,
 IUE-CWA

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Don Barker, Fundraising Chair

Phil Amadon, Founding Member
 Labor Council Delegate

Pete McLinden
 Executive Secretary-Treasurer,
 Cincinnati AFL-CIO

Gary Hines
 President, NAACP of Hamilton/Fairfield/
 West Chester and Liberty Townships

Sam Dunlap
 Waterfields LLC

Dave McLean
 Sub-District 5 Director, USW

Pete Talley
 Secretary Treasurer,
 Ohio AFL-CIO

Larry Oberding
 Executive Secretary, Greater Cincinnati
 Building & Construction Trades Council

Donors

Sustaining Partners

1Worker1Vote.org/Mondragon
 International North America
 Phil Amadon
 Kristen Barker
 Don and Gail Barker
 Peter Block and Cathy Kramer
 Pat Clifford and Katy Heins
 Congregation of Divine Providence
 Linda and Paul Davis
 Eileen Frechette and Ed Gutfreund
 Bill Gallagher
 Greater Cincinnati Building and
 Construction Trades Council
 David Hulefeld
 Jerry Monahan
 Diana Porter and Leonard Webb
 Eunice Timoney Ravenna
 United Steelworkers Sub-District 5

Bloom

Association of Fundraising Professionals
 The Dayton Foundation
 Greater Cincinnati Foundation
 Interact for Health
 IUE-CWA

Leaf

Bill and Michiko Kissinger

Sprout

Cincinnati AFL-CIO
 Communication Workers of America
 JOVIS: Addressing Barriers
 to Community Living

Seed

Phyllis Donovan and Mark Kleinholz
 Ann Kenkel
 John Kornbluh
 Ariana Levinson
 Ohio AFL-CIO



Awardees

This year we recognize individuals working with us to build the foundation of an economy that works for all. This year's honorees are:

Phil Amadon & Casey Whitten Amadon

Michael Coffey
 Greater Cincinnati Foundation

Mary Jo Minerich & Renee Martin

James Clark
 International President
 IUE-CWA

Important Partner

1Worker1Vote.org



1worker1vote.org and Mondragon International North America are building a national network of unionized worker-owned cooperative businesses to overcome inequality of opportunity, mobility, and income.



People connecting at the 2015 Union Co-op Symposium