(Platform Coop) Meeting with SEWA July 9, 2019

Namya, Salonie, Trebor, Dana, Cheryl, Michelle

- Salonie - SEWA
    - Feminist economist
    - Knowledge management person
    - Some research work, project management, communications, etc
- Namya - SEWA
    - Managing director of SEWA federation
    - This is my last week
    - Moving on to grad school
    - Handing over to Salonie and Matilban
        - Matilban has been working on the health side, and been there for 30 years
    - Excited to see where they take it
- Platforms
    - Governance tool
        - Revamp of our website - federation website
        - Aside from content, it'd be good to get a governance tool
        - Come up with a very simple form to enter things month on month
        - How many women
        - How much revenue
        - Profit
        - Preliminary business analytics
        - Potentially combine between other orgs in the same sector
        - The reason we're calling it governance is that it **opens knowledge up between the coops**, the final goal is to use this business data to streamline governance of the platform itself - substantiate decision making, streamline it
        - That tool is a priority
        - We're hoping to have it in place by end of august
        - It would be great if you could come in there… work with our web developer through us to see, and we can talk about what it looks like now - give us inputs on what we should add, remove, things like that
        - Namya - we're redoing the website, this will be a part of our website - we have a new web developer (federation website)
        - Dana
            - The website you're talking about.. is for the federation? Yes
            - Portal will be on the website, behind username and password
            - We can see who'd be entering the data
            - Cooperative login to the portal
        - Design and development of this
            - We have a vendor who's developing the website for us
            - We've given them the basic form
            - Upload image option, for whatever they want to upload
            - Developer is doing the coding part of the portal
            - I'm going to go back to them and see how we can get involved
        - Michelle
            - Yes, let's get connected - especially with ned
        - Dana
            - I'm curious about this revamped website and this portal
            - Have you thought about a learning commons as part of it? Or connected to it? What is your thinking around that? Or are you just focusing on the data and analytics for now
            - Salonie - for now, yes
            - Namya
                - We discussed learning commons quite a bit, and we're absolutely happy to link to that
                - The only problem is language
                - We thought this is the first step to getting people to be comfortable with the idea of a portal
                - To start using it on a semi regular basis
                - We can progressively layer information on top of that
                - Once there is this thing and it seems useful, we can start putting in news, trainings, whatever onto it
                - That's part of the broader vision, but we're taking this very seriously
        - Trebor
            - We had talked about this resource library / learning commons that is a part of the platform.coop website
            - There we will have a section with… what we hope in Gujarati and Hindi, quite limited for now
            - Thought to have you could create your own learning commons from there
            - I remember meeting your colleagues who had created all this educational material, and she couldn't share it with the coops - this could provide a tool to do so
        - Namya
            - Yeah absolutely, yeah my understanding is that the time and resources available are only enough for 1 platform… if it can also support this kind of learning platform, happy too… but if its in the next phase, first phase could be a link to you, second phase could be jointly propose the development of the learning platform for us
        - Dana
            - Some of what we're trying to do.. we're focusing on the resource library on the platform coop website for now
            - But we are keeping in mind that we want to create reusable components that can be contextualized for our different partners and different contexts
            - So we're thinking ahead
        - Namya
            - Would the way this would work is… I know its all open source, we would get developers here to build on top of that platform?

- Ned
  - We haven't completely decided on our technical approach, what we're looking at right now is building a system that any web developer could install, and the content could be added and customized to the needs of individual coop
  - Support language
  - Content structure would be in place
  - Basic functionality
  - Set up, populate resources you can use
  - Try to make it as adaptable as possible
  - But try to make it work out of the box
- Namya
  - Is it going to be a widget that we can put on our portal?
- Ned
  - The way we're thinking of it is.. it would be its own website, learning commons would be its own website
  - Independent from the portal itself, but could be connected to the portal
  - Planning on using Wordpress as the basis, which is widely used and widely understood - open source
- Salonie
  - Information on this portal would be available in Hindi and Gujarati
  - Google translate for Gujarati is not good
- Trebor
  - One of my students is from Ahmedabad
  - He speaks Gujarati and Hindi
- Salonie
  - This sounds wonderful, but realistically given the tech the women are using, it makes sense to go very basic and then go onward
  - Business analytics first, and then as the second stage, incorporate the learning commons
- Namya
  - I agree
- Dana
  - I wonder if its possible to (eventually) incorporate learning commons into their portal? That might make more sense?
- Ned
  - It's something we can explore
  - The other thing is… we're going to be working on learning commons for the PCC website, that will give you and others from SEWA a chance to look at it, and see how it might work, and get feedback to build into the ongoing development of it
  - So when it comes times to incorporate your members, hopefully we can have feedback from you
- Labour platform (the beauty services marketing site)
  - Salonie
    - I wasn't really involved, but I had gone through the co-design notes
    - For beauty sector work, we started off the work and needed to go back and strengthen the coop and members themselves
    - And look at back-end… we weren't able to deliver quality service. So we had to go back to training, soft skills, etc etc
    - Along with that we wanted to do some research, so we're working with ILO (International Labour Organisation) now, and they're mapping gig economy workers, and we're helping with that. We're looking at women already on a beauty sector app, women who are off the app, and find out what they get out of the app and what keeps them on it
    - The primary agenda here.. we're keen on working on this digital platform
    - Our idea may not be making platform feasible in terms of market, because already there's one big platform - urban clap - which has the largest market share in Ahmedabad - so maybe our app may not be financially viable, we may have to work off the app - we don't want to try and compete

- **But we really want the app as an evidence to help us do advocacy and research work**

    - We want app to cover gaps that platforms leave open
    - So if they're reproducing caste hierarchy, how do we resist with the app
    - Because we've found with other coops, power is already concentrated with the manager of the coop
    - Can the app come in and break that? Allocate workers fairly, how do we decide who gets the work? Proximity? Highest rating? Coop decides? But things like that
    - We want to go back to the drawing board and look at what the coop wants themselves, and look at what existing platform does not supply - but its gonna take us awhile
    - I'm not sure we can put a timeline on what we see the platform developing, but we can be in constant touch about what we're doing going forward
  - Dana
    - What are you imagining as your process of developing/designing the platform?
    - Embedded co-design process is something we can support if you would like
    - We've been doing embedded co-design, where we're supporting partners in doing co-design in their own communities by offering suggestions
    - If that's something you wanted to do
    - But I'm curious if how you're planning to gather this info
  - Salonie
    - So we've started data collection
    - Sample size 250 workers
    - 125 who use the app, 125 who don't
    - This is done… in partnership with the ILO, which feeds into larger project with the gig economy

- Once we have that data in place, and we're also doing focus group discussions

- **Once we have that preliminary findings, it'd be good to get you on board, I find it difficult to place these findings in tech solutions**

- You can help us envision the platform solve these gaps - turning data they are gathering into tech/platform

  - This would be super helpful for us
  - Dana
    - You have an idea of timing on that?
      - We're halfway through the survey
      - Anticipate that by end of august, we should be done with survey - raw data
      - I'll have to go to the ILO to see how much I can share with you
      - But I can share our findings with you, say, end of Sept early Oct
  - Namya
    - Another suggestion we had…
    - We have a functioning domestic workers and cleaners cooperative
    - We could also.. incorporate all of those on a single platform, it might make more sense from a federation POV to have multiple coops using the same platform
    - We were wondering if… we could add those services on there
  - Trebor
    - I was just in Brazil where the coop movement built exactly that for their federation
    - Can I ask… You talked about, you see this as a proof of concept, not really a commercially robust solution
    - Where you show this can be done, and not with the idea to take over the market, but to show more symbolically the problems with the other apps?
  - Salonie
    - Yes, absolutely
    - The reason we don't envision it as a competitive app is we don't have the HR to compete
    - We find that people don't download multiple apps for the same service
    - A lot of the market has been captured by urban clap
  - Namya
    - Building the app is one thing, maintaining it is another, customer service, etc - all of that would get technical and expensive to the point where you are a digital cooperative, you're not a labour cooperative
    - So we're a little bit.. not sure how to take that to scale, what kind of resources would be acquired, to be competitive with the big ones
  - Dana
    - Okay, so we'll wait till end of Sept / early Oct and we can have a convo then about this
  - Salonie
    - Yes, I expect this to be a larger scale of codesign, but not with SEWA sisters, but with larger part of the market
    - Including other coop workers
    - We can also arrange focus groups on our own time - Spring 2020 when Trebor is in Ahmedabad - to see what they envision out of a platform
- I'd like to bring this into the picture.. Federation we work at the state level, but we have a similar body at National level
  - They're looking at digital platforms
  - Whether or not - they want a platform
  - But at some point maybe we can look at bringing them in - bring in domestic and cleaning but also coops not Ahmedabad, make it a national platform
- Next step
  - Salonie: send form, put in touch with web developer for governance tool
  - We'll wait in late Sept / early Oct for the insights and findings for the labour platform

From Trebor post-meeting:

Dear all,

Salonie just clarified what they are looking for with the platform co-op:

"We want the labor site to be functional completely. I think what I meant was that we won't look at it as a business venture, but more as a prototype in using digital space for our coops. We don't want to emphasise profitability from the platform."

~ Trebor