

Hello to everyone listening around the world. My name is Iva Jankovich, I'm 21 years old and I live in Vancouver BC.

My journey in cooperation starts mostly with neighbourhood organizing, and the question of how can we connect people together to share skills, interests and ideas to build stronger communities – and work together towards meeting the needs of our communities and solving some of the greatest challenges that we see. Coming from Vancouver, a lot of my early experiences start with questions around the overdose crisis, the housing crisis, sustainable community development in this region, in BC, and an interest also in connecting immigrant communities, because I myself am an immigrant from Serbia. So, a question, kind of, of how community organizing among immigrant communities can strengthen ties, and also build economic opportunities for people.

I took a program, a few years ago, called the Groundswell Alternative Business School, where I really saw my interest in community organizing and development merging with the idea of cooperative businesses, which is really how I became interested in cooperatives more seriously. Before then, I had worked at a few worker cooperatives and was really gaining interest in and work in cooperation among workers, especially as a young person, finding it difficult to find a job after graduating university.

And so that was really my segue into working in the cooperative sector, getting this job in cooperative education with the BC Cooperative Association, and then later starting various cooperative projects such as an electric bike sharing cooperative – and now bringing back the Buddy-Up neighborhood organizing idea, starting a platform cooperative for connecting cooperators around the world.