



International  
Labour  
Organization

# ILO and Cooperatives

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMME (EMP/COOP)

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## Editorial

Our regular readers will have noticed that we try to keep them and others updated foremost on our four core areas of work, which are policy dialogue, data collection, education and training, cooperative policy and law.

Activities concerning the 2012 UN International Year of Cooperatives will continue to be at the center of the policy dialogue. The 2009 Proclamation of that Year by the UN General Assembly was itself the result of a long policy dialogue in which EMP/COOP engaged actively, especially with its partners in the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC). Our Director-General Juan Somavia met with the new President of our main partner, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), Dame Pauline Green, to discuss preparations of the Year and to agree on regular meetings to review progress (see “2012 UN International Year of Cooperatives” and 2nd issue of our supplementary brief on the Year). As reported in previous issues of this newsletter, a number of governments are currently including cooperatives in their (economic) policies in recognition of changes in the economies. The reports on the “Revival of cooperatives in the Netherlands” and on “Energy cooperatives ...” can be read in this context. The same goes for the resume of Ernesto Molina’s article on “Mouvement coopératif et mondialisation”. Mr. Molina was also one of the main thinkers behind the international conference in Lévis/Canada (see “Variations internationales autour de la coopération”). We also would like to draw your attention to

## Also in this issue:

### Second of our regular briefs on the preparations of the International Year of Cooperatives 2012

Barack Obama’s greeting on the occasion of the National Cooperative Month in the United States of America, shared with us by the National Cooperative Business Association. The report on the “Round Table in Kiev” highlights the potential of cooperatives as one possible form of organizing social services, together with public authorities and other private actors. Examples can be found especially in Italy, Japan and in Poland.

Concerning data collection (see “More visibility”), the ILO Statistics Department gratefully supports our work to develop a methodology to capture the specific contribution of cooperatives to the income generation of their roughly 1 billion members across the world. We started collecting data in countries where we have already other activities ongoing. We are discussing collaboration with the EU-Commission and plan to collaborate with Euricse, the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Trento/Italy). Euricse plans to join the ICA on its Global 300 Project.

Among the three aspects under which we approach education and training, the one to include the subject of cooperatives into the general education curricula at all levels of national education systems (as suggested by the ILO Recommendation 193 on the promotion of cooperatives) stands out. The article “Le curricula coopératif” informs on the progress we are making in this area. See also “Institut de recherche et d’éducation ...”.

The report on the cooperative legislating seminar in Brazil as well as a number of reported missions relate to the fourth work area, namely policy and law. In addition, we are currently collaborating on the revision of the cooperative laws in 8 countries, shifting emphasis to the implementation of the law. In this latter context, we continue working with the Regional Office of the ICA for the Americas on the implementation of the “Ley marco para las cooperativas de America Latina” (a framework law).

You will also see that we pursue our new and additional mandate to work on the social economy by preparing a background paper which is to clarify the notion and take stock of ILO’s expertise in the field. The work is supported by an office-wide task team and has been substantially co-funded by our Regional Office for Africa. The first Social and Solidarity Economy Academy held at the International Training Center of the ILO at Turin brought together a large number of representatives of the ILO constituents and other interested parties for thought provoking 5 days discussions and working group sessions on issues which had been prepared by a group of experts through a reader entitled “Social and Solidarity Economy: Building a Common Understanding”.

**Bonne lecture!**



>> From left to right: Maria Elena Chavez-Hertig (ICA Deputy Director-General), Charles Gould (ICA Director-General), Juan Somavia (ILO Director-General), Dame Pauline Green (ICA President), Michael Henriques (ILO, CABINET), Hagen Henrÿ (ILO, EMP/COOP).

## 2012 UN International Year of Cooperatives: ILO Director-General Juan Somavia and ICA President Dame Pauline Green meet

On August 9th, Director-General Juan Somavia met with the President of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), Dame Pauline Green, to talk about the 2012 UN International Year of Cooperatives (IYC). Preceding this meeting, the ICA and ILO had met several times on a working level to coordinate their planned activities for the IYC. The occasion was also used to introduce the new ICA Director-General, Chuck Gould.

Dame Pauline Green noted that for the ICA the IYC presents an opportunity to raise the visibility of cooperatives. The ICA had a massive global network of cooperators at its disposal and the movement would be enthusiastically looking forward to 2012. The planning of events and activities within the movement had already started. Dame Pauline Green expressed her hope that at the end of the year, all parties involved in the preparations of the IYC would have succeeded in raising the level of knowledge and started rebuilding cooperative expertise that had been lost in the past decade. Advocating with governments, workers and employers and in particular assisting with implementing R.193 was critical.

Chuck Gould added that ILO as the technical expert in the UN system and with cooperatives mentioned in the ILO Constitution is an important partner of the ICA. He also noted that IYC was to take cooperatives into the future, namely that the

activities would not end in 2012 but would foresee follow-up opportunities.

It was essential to use the strategic position of the ILO to “get the message out”.

Mr. Somavia joined Dame Green and Mr. Gould in emphasizing the extraordinary opportunity that the IYC provides to show the size and scope of cooperatives that people simply do not know: “We need to get a process going which feeds the excitement of the movement.”

Dame Green and the Mr. Gould noted that the outcomes of visibility would lead to more public awareness, recognition of the model, emphasize the success of cooperatives in the current crisis and might increase the number of cooperatives and, thus, employment opportunities.

Mr. Somavia noted that ILO is ready to support and facilitate ICA action and activities of cooperatives at the national level. With regard to the structural set-up of the IYC, Mr. Somavia agreed that ICA should be a member of the Coordinating Committee and develop the strategic outlook, objectives, outcomes and define the working methods.

Mr. Somavia concluded the meeting by inviting the ICA back for regular discussions on the preparations for the IYC.

## Discussion paper on Social Economy Enterprises and Organizations

During the 99th Session of the ILC (2010), the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment called upon the Office to: 'strengthening its work on cooperatives and social economy as important areas of employment creation' (Conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on employment, para.30 (viii)).

To act upon ILO Constituents' requests, EMP/COOP in cooperation with the Regional Office for Africa is currently finalizing an ILO internal paper on Social Economy Enterprises and Organizations (SEEOs). This paper aims to:

- Clarify the concept of social economy;
- Demonstrate the social economy relevance in further promoting simultaneously all Decent Work Agenda objectives, the Global Jobs Pact (GJP) and the Social Protection Floor Initiative;
- Explain why the ILO is particularly pertinent for promoting the social economy, and what are the challenges and opportunities that would constitute an added value for the ILO and its Constituents to further promote the social economy; and to,
- Conclude on planned and envisaged social economy activities in-line with Constituents' call.

The social economy is defined by institutional forms of enterprises and organizations (i.e. cooperative, mutual benefit society, association and people-based organization, social enterprise and foundation), and is complementarily defined by inclusive features; such as the combination of both economic and social objectives, common operating principles (i.e. participatory process, solidarity and innovation, voluntary involvement and autonomy, collective dimension), and specific resources.

The ILO has built a longstanding expertise on SEEO based on specific instruments (R193, R189) and commitments (Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, GJP), and implemented through specific ILO initiatives and programmes. Features of SEEO provide them with potentialities in further promoting both all ILO DWA strategic objectives and the ILO GJP.

The economic, social and societal significance and impacts of SEEO constitute opportunities and challenges in both ILO's and Constituents' work. SEEO can contribute to fill in Decent Work deficits by building bridges from jobs to decent jobs for all workers. However, SEEO are not a panacea. Many challenges still need to be taken up in enhancing and increasing SEEOs'

efficiency taken individually, as well as their combined efficiency within a well defined social economy as a coherent and integrated whole.

### First Interregional Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy

The International Training Center of the ILO organized, jointly with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC),



the first edition of the Interregional Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy (25 to 29 October 2010, ITC-ILO Turin).

The Academy brought together worldwide expertise on Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and drew lessons from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Representatives of policy makers in various ministries (labour, women affairs, youth, social affairs...), workers' and employers' organizations, practitioners of the SSE (leaders, managers, local governments) and promoters of SSE enterprises and organizations (development agencies, donors, UN agencies) participated in the Academy.

Participants have built and shared their capacities in following areas relevant to the SSE: Getting a common understanding of the concept of SSE; exploring the link between the SSE and pillars of the ILO Decent Work Agenda; Policy and legal framework for the promotion and development of SSE; Governance and Management of SSE organisations and enterprises; Partnership building and networking of SSE institutions.

>> Further information on: <http://socialeconomy.itleo.org>



*The National Cooperative Business Association, United States of America, kindly shared with us this letter:*

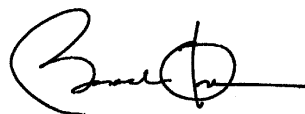
## THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

October 1, 2010

I am pleased to send greetings to those observing National Cooperative Month.

When Americans work together, striving for a common purpose, we can change the lives of others in sustainable ways. Thousands of cooperatives across our country work towards this fundamental goal, delivering goods and services that impact countless individuals and communities. As you celebrate this successful, diverse business model during National Cooperative Month, I hope you take pride in your work to support and build local economies and strengthen our Nation.

I wish you all the best.



## Revival of cooperatives in the Netherlands

*The cooperative business model is regaining interest in the Netherlands. One finds new and innovative cooperatives in inland waterway transport, municipal parking services, the care sector and housing.*

*Rent-a-Ship* is a new cooperative of inland waterway transporters. Its members rent their ship to the cooperative and are guaranteed of getting 311 days of rent per year. By bundling the offer of freight capacity, *Rent-a-Ship* puts an end to the tough competition among small individual transporters, who were suffering from a lack of freight due to the economic crisis. The crisis hit at a time when transporters just had invested in new and bigger freight ships in response to the increase of inland waterway transport in 2007 and 2008. *Rent-a-ship* limits its membership to 120-130 transporters. In case interested transporters exceed this number, a second cooperative will be created. This is to the competition rules that put a limit total maximum load capacity that is being managed by one cooperative.

*Rent-a-ship* is a classic example of the countervailing power that a cooperative can create. It is one of the many initiatives that one finds nowadays, also in other sectors. Especially in the

care sector, collaborating parties consider the cooperative the most appropriate business model. For instance, one hospital, the *Vlietland Ziekenhuis*, is currently transforming into a cooperative with the aim to increase and improve its service provision and enhance investment in quality and innovation. This cooperative will bring together various parties, such as nursing homes for elderly people, a doctors' cooperative, a health insurance as well as medical specialists and other hospital staff. Similar cooperatives, involving organizations and enterprises from care, welfare and housing sectors are also being created. Besides, longstanding cooperatives in retail and insurance sectors, are rediscovering their cooperative identity and approaching their customers again as co-owners.

### How can we explain this trend?

First of all, it's the spirit of the time. After the heydays of pure individualism resulting in sightless enrichment in, for instance, the world of finance, there is a renewed attention for collective norms and values. These days, business models emphasizing sustainability, transparency, authenticity, significance and cooperation are gaining importance. The remaining step to the cooperative business model is just a small one. The resilience of cooperatives in times of crisis compared to companies that are listed on the stock exchange is a second factor in the revival of Dutch cooperatives. For instance, the cooperative *Rabobank*, without financial injections of the State, even attracted new customers seeking for a reliable bank.

The renewed attention for the cooperative business model offers opportunities for cooperative development. First, it enlarges the basis for common activities, like advocacy, research and innovation in the field of cooperatives. Besides, it provides a basis for further improving the image of cooperatives. Rather than proving that the cooperative is as good as other enterprise forms, communication about the essence of the cooperative business model, is key in this respect.

*This article is a translated summary and adaptation of the article by Jeen Akkerman, Revival van de coöperatie. In: Coöperatie, n°64, September 2010, pp. 24-25, the quarterly magazine of the National Cooperative Council for Agriculture and Horticulture of The Netherlands.*

## FOLLOW UP: More visibility!

### Coop data collection... Where do we stand?

The ILO has started gathering statistics on cooperatives again after having stopped in 1988. With the support of the ILO Statistical Department, the methodology for data collection will be fine-tuned. We are currently revising a list of countries which we will concentrate on in the subsequent phase of data collection. These pilot countries are chosen reflecting strategic objectives of the ILO as well as geographical balance.

## Energy cooperatives and climate change: Promising examples in developed and developing countries

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In COOP News 2/2010 we reported about “Energy cooperatives in the South of Germany” (p. 10). The ILO is currently undertaking a study on renewable energy cooperatives in order to identify best practices from different countries and continents.

Meeting the challenge of climate change requires a strategy that is environmentally, socially, economically and politically sustainable. As member-driven, value-based, and democratically managed enterprises, cooperatives have a key role to play in this process. There are many examples of cooperatives — from producer cooperatives to consumer and housing cooperatives and others — that are taking a leadership role in promoting energy efficiency. The international cooperative movement has acknowledged this role (e.g. at the 2009 ICA General Assembly: “Towards a Sustainable Energy Economy” resolution). Renewable energy cooperative already play and will continue to play a significant role to address these challenges of energy security and climate change.

Numbers of cooperatives involved in producing or providing renewable energy are hard to find. So far our search concludes that the sustainable energy sector is rapidly expanding for cooperatives, e.g. the creation of bio-fuel cooperatives in Brazil, Mexico, Thailand, India, and the United States as well as wind power cooperatives in Canada, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

The search has also identified a considerable amount of projects, fi-

nanced either by the UN system or other international governmental and non-governmental organisations, which have chosen the cooperative way to produce and provide renewable energy.

In Cambodia, for example, the Global Environment Facility’s Small Grants Programme financed a community-run biomass electrification system, the first of its kind in Cambodia, which enhances livelihoods and income-generating opportunities for a rural community. The project provided over 240 rural households with renewable-based electricity at a rate comparable to the subsidized national rate and half that of private providers.

But renewable energy cooperatives do not only operate successfully in developing countries: Middelgrunden, an offshore wind farm in Denmark, was built in 2000 as the world’s largest offshore wind farm with 20 turbines and a capacity of 40 megawatt. Now Middelgrunden is still the world’s largest cooperatively owned wind farm with more than 8000 members.

Our preliminary study findings indicate that the cooperative enterprise model is well-suited for individuals and communities to take control of their own energy future through the local commitment to renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. This is in-line with what Director-General of the ILO Juan Somavia said: “Cooperatives can lead us closer towards a democratic, people-centred economy which cares for the environment, while promoting economic growth, social justice and fair globalization”.



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## Mouvement coopératif et mondialisation

### Résumé du texte d'Ernesto Molina paru originalement dans la Revue Vie Économique, Volume 1, No 4 (mai 2010)

La mondialisation n'est pas seulement cette plaisante exhortation à la mobilité (des capitaux, des marchandises, des informations et des hommes). La mondialisation est d'abord une ségrégation entre ceux qui bougent et ceux qui restent là où ils habitent. Une ségrégation d'autant plus puissante que la mobilité est devenue, en tant que telle, un privilège de classe. Nous sommes aujourd'hui dans l'urgence de construire des alternatives à la mondialisation néolibérale, alternatives qui conduisent à une économie plurielle au service d'une société équitable, solidaire et durable.

#### La reconnaissance internationale des coopératives

L'OIT reconnaît que les coopératives contribuent de façon importante à l'économie, à la mobilisation des ressources ainsi qu'à la stimulation de l'investissement en même temps qu'elles promeuvent la plus complète participation au développement économique et social de la population d'une région, et qu'elles favorisent d'une part la création de richesses et leur répartition plus équitable, et d'autre part, elles deviennent des espaces d'insertion sociale pour leurs membres. Les coopératives sont reconnues comme une forme d'entreprise capable de produire de la richesse et de promouvoir le développement économique et social de toute une population, et non seulement d'une minorité.

#### Le potentiel coopératif

Cette reconnaissance internationale des coopératives est, en définitive, la reconnaissance du potentiel coopératif à proposer des alternatives face à la montée des inégalités et de l'exclusion dans un monde marqué par l'abondance de la richesse. Une reconnaissance de la contribution des coopératives à la construction d'une société où l'économie n'est pas reine mais outil, où la coopération l'emporte sur la compétition, où le bien commun prévaut sur le profit (Kempf, 2009). Un lien particulier s'établit donc, entre l'aspect social (une association), l'aspect économique (une entreprise), l'aspect sociétal (la pro-

priété collective et le pouvoir démocratique). C'est le sens de «s'associer pour entreprendre autrement» (Demoustier, 2003). D'autre part, la prise en charge et la responsabilité personnelle et mutuelle, la démocratie, l'égalité, l'équité et la solidarité sont les valeurs clés reconnues internationalement par les coopératives. Finalement, rappelons-nous que l'adhésion volontaire et ouverte à tous, le pouvoir démocratique exercé par les membres, la participation économique des membres, l'autonomie et l'indépendance, l'éducation, la formation et l'information, la coopération entre les coopératives et l'engagement envers la communauté sont les sept principes coopératifs reconnus internationalement. Il s'agit à nouveau de participer pleinement à l'activité productive, mais de le faire différemment, de mettre l'économie au service du social en passant par le politique. Il ne s'agit pas de peindre un tableau naïf selon lequel les coopératives agissent toujours selon leur identité. Il n'est pas question de cacher ce qui pourrait être considéré comme des erreurs, des contradictions, des déviations, des ambiguïtés de la pratique des coopératives. Au contraire, il s'agit de mettre en avant la conviction de la pertinence, des particularités et de la légitimité de l'identité coopérative, de son potentiel considérable pour faire face aux crises actuelles, qu'elles soient alimentaires, climatiques, énergétiques ou financières. Leur identité porte des alternatives pour la construction d'une mondialisation équitable, solidaire et durable. Aujourd'hui la mondialisation néolibérale et sa conséquente montée des inégalités ont relancé le débat qui cherche à construire des alternatives au modèle fondé uniquement sur les lois du marché et de la régulation publique.

#### Bibliographie

Demoustier, Danielle: *S'associer pour entreprendre autrement*, Paris (La Découverte, 2003).

Kempf, Hervé: *Pour sauver la planète, sortez du capitalisme*, Paris (Seuil, 2009).

News from  COOP AFRICA

The ILO Cooperative Facility for Africa — COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> ([www.ilo.org/coopafrika](http://www.ilo.org/coopafrika)) — is a technical cooperation programme for the promotion of cooperative development in Africa (2007-2010). From the ILO Office in Dar-es-Salaam, COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> covers 9 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa with support by the Cooperative Programme of the ILO in Geneva.



## Report from the ICA Regional Assembly for Africa

The 9th ICA Regional Assembly for Africa was held in Maseru, Lesotho from 11 – 16 October 2010. It brought together 220 cooperative leaders from 12 African countries as well as ICA development partners from different international organizations. The Assembly programme comprised three parts: a two-day *Thematic Forum*; a one-day *Statutory Meeting*, and a two-day *Ministerial Conference Technical Committee* (MCTC) meeting. The Forum covered themes of current relevance to cooperatives in Africa and elsewhere, such as Combating Climate Change through Cooperatives; International Year of Cooperatives 2012 and Cooperative Enterprise Diversification.

With regard to Climate Change, presentations were made and experiences shared from Lesotho, the UK and the Swedish Cooperative Centre. It was concluded that Climate Change was a threat to cooperatives and their members and, hence, the need to respond to it through appropriate interventions, e.g. assisting cooperatives to invest in technologies for renewable energy, exchange of experience, programmes such as NAPA (National Adaptation Programme of Action) to include cooperatives, educating and encouraging cooperative members to practice eco-friendly and sustainable farming methods as well as soil and water conservation.

The unique opportunity afforded by the International Year of Cooperatives in 2012 should be fully exploited by cooperatives to maximize their potential benefits on their role, visibility, business opportunities and as providers of global and local solutions due to their special business model. Programmes would be organized at the international, regional and national levels which would include setting up planning committees, cooperative fairs and seminars and launching of the event. Other programmes during the IYC would focus on research on cooperatives and capacity-building programmes.

The Forum recommended some sectors with potential for Cooperative Enterprise Diversification, inter alia: tourism, micro-insurance, ICT, finance, consultancy, marketing and supply, transport, cleaning and catering. Other sectors were mining, manufacturing (including agro-processing), sustainable agriculture, organic farming, construction and housing. Also included

were environmental conservation – including renewable energy and waste recycling.

The third day was taken up by the Statutory Agenda of the Assembly which covered, among other things, an address by the ICA Director-General, reports on ICA Africa for 2009-2010, the Endowment Fund and the Youth Forum. The Assembly also received information on the IYC, the ICA General Assembly in 2011 in Mexico and the MCTC meeting.

The MCTC meeting took place on the last two days and reviewed the progress made since the last Africa Cooperative Ministerial Conference (ACMC) and prepared Action Plans and agenda for the next one. Three presentations were made on topics that were featured at the last ACMC (Nairobi, October



>> The Lesotho Deputy Minister for Trade, Industry, Cooperatives and Marketing, the Hon. Mr Khotso Matla delivering his closing speech upon conclusion of the Regional Assembly.

2010). Topics included Cooperative Policy and Legislation, where we presented a paper on “Cooperative Development Policy and Legislation” prepared by Hagen Henry, Youth in Cooperatives and Information and Communications Technology. Among the actions to be taken to speed up implementation of the recommendations of the last MCTC were, inter alia: completion of the process of formulating/reviewing cooperative development policies and laws, strengthening financial cooperatives, adopting and implementing the ICA Gender Strategy by 2011, encouraging and supporting youth participation, research and development – including adaptation of the Cooperative Data System, and application of audit standards and procedures.

## Variations internationales autour de la coopération

La conférence internationale des 22 et 23 septembre 2010 organisée à Lévis au Québec avait pour thème «Quel projet de société pour demain? Coopératives, mutuelles et territoires: Enjeux, défis et alternatives?». A cette occasion, l'office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse avait invité une délégation de 16 jeunes français, coopérateurs, chercheurs spécialisés dans les coopératives ou simplement engagés pour une économie sociale et solidaire

Pour le groupe, ces rencontres ont tout d'abord été l'occasion de découvrir l'ampleur du mouvement coopératif québécois. Allant de visites de coopératives d'habitation en grande banque internationale, la délégation des jeunes français a pu appréhender concrètement des alternatives à l'économie néolibérale. Ainsi la banque Desjardins, mouvement coopératif exemplaire qui a réussi à étendre son influence tout en se dotant d'outils de solidarité internationale: elle contribue aujourd'hui au développement de l'économie coopérative dans les pays du Sud, grâce à une filiale dédiée à cette activité.

A partir de valeurs communes entre les jeunes et leurs aînés, ces échanges ont élargi les horizons coopératifs des uns et des autres. C'est en effet autour des valeurs portées par la coopération qu'un fort consensus a été réalisé, d'une part entre pays parfois très éloignés, et d'autre part, entre générations. Le fonctionnement démocratique de la société coopérative («une personne égale une voix»), le caractère intergénérationnel des investissements réalisés ou encore la mutualisation des risques sont les clés d'une coopérative durable. La conférence a ainsi démontré que les coopératives résistent mieux à la crise écono-

mique que les autres entreprises. Même si l'entreprise reste un lieu de conflits, la coopérative permet de concilier plus harmonieusement les intérêts de leurs membres et des autres parties prenantes.

Un bon exemple est celui de la coopération agricole, à laquelle on demande, depuis plusieurs décennies, d'allier gains de productivité et valeurs coopératives. Les défis sont grands, puisqu'il s'agit à la fois de nourrir une planète toujours plus peuplée, tout en satisfaisant les intérêts des coopérateurs d'une part, et de répondre aux défis écologiques, comme aux attentes des consommateurs, d'autre part. Dans ce cadre, les politiques agricoles peuvent varier fortement d'une zone mondiale à une autre: centralisée chez les uns, privilégiant les spécificités régionales chez les autres...

Cette résistance des coopératives pourrait provenir de la «biodiversité» entrepreneuriale dont elles savent faire preuve. A l'inverse de la monoculture capitaliste, les coopératives mais également les entreprises publiques, les petites entreprises artisanales ou commerciales ont comme valeur principale le travail produit par chaque membre. Il s'agit d'un environnement économique «durable» qui ouvre la porte de la résilience après une crise. La logique économique de la coopération permet d'appréhender l'avenir de façon plus lente mais plus sûre. Au-delà des divergences, renforcer la dimension de la coopération est une des clés pour bâtir un projet de société permettant aux générations à venir de développer tous leurs talents et contribuer à un monde plus solidaire, à un monde plus juste. A l'heure des bilans, à nous de sauvegarder cet élan coopératif!

- In the news... - Nouvelles... -  
- En las noticias... -

### Cooperatives and the crisis: “Our customers are also our owners”

(World of Work No. 69, August 2010, pp. 23-26)

The article reports on the resilience of cooperative banks and insurances in the recent financial and economic crisis and explores the reasons for this. Cooperative banks and insurers have, historically, tended to avoid the headlines. They can operate without concern about their share prices and therefore without the day-to-day attention from business media and analysts which businesses with share capital tend to attract. Most people are not aware that their market share is significant: 24 per cent of the global insurance market is in the hands of cooperative insurers. In the Netherlands half the population is with Rabobank, whilst in Germany cooperative banks have roughly thirty million customers. The Economist reported earlier this year that cooperative banks had been steadily increasing their market share in Europe in the recent years.

The article elicits that the resilience is partly due to the fact that cooperatives are not under the same pressures to increase investor returns. The chairman Jean-Louis Bancel of the International Co-operative Banking Association is cited pointing to the long-term perspective which cooperative financial institutions can practise: “Cooperative banks don't have an obligation to maximize short-term profit to distribute it to their shareholders but can have a long-term strategy.” But for many cooperatives, the resilience is mainly linked to the emphasis on ethical banking and insurance practice: Folkham, a cooperative which has offered Swedish people insurance for 102 years, has a strong commitment to the investment of its insurance funds ethically and even took a leading role in advising the United Nations on the Principles for Responsible Investment adopted four years ago.

>> Read the article on: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_143510.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_143510.pdf).



- Cooperative education and training - Education et formation coopératives -  
- Educación y formación cooperativa -

## Institut de recherche et d'éducation pour les coopératives et les mutuelles de l'Université de Sherbrooke (IRECUS)

Igor Vocatch-Boldyrev du Service des coopératives du Bureau international du travail (BIT) a rencontré les étudiantes et les étudiants de l'IRECUS pour expliquer le rôle de l'OIT dans l'univers coopératif mondial et l'importance de la Recommandation 193. Les étudiants ont aussi discuté sur les perspectives

coopératives d'avenir à court terme (année 2012 comme Année Internationale des Coopératives) et à long terme.

>> Plus d'information sur IRECUS: <http://www.usherbrooke.ca/irecus/>



>> En arrière: Marc Henrie, Trésor Mbuyamba, René Bougie, Igor Vocatch-Boldyrev, Claude Belleau, Jordan Roy et Ablam Ige Zvoe. En avant: Josée Charbonneau, Gilles Sirois, Véronique Gagnon, Simon Béland, Serge Vaillancourt et Andréanne Demers

## Le curricula coopératif: Projet avec l'UNESCO et IRECUS

Le Service des coopératives, EMP/COOP a commencé le travail avec l'UNESCO et l'Institut de recherche et d'éducation pour les coopératives et les mutuelles de l'Université de Sherbrooke (IRECUS) sur les curricula coopératifs destinés aux établissements scolaires. Le Centre international de formation de Turin sera également associé à cette initiative.

Cette stratégie se base sur la Recommandation 193 concernant la promotion des coopératives qui stipule dans son Paragraphe 8 (1) lit. f que les politiques nationales des Etats membres devraient promouvoir l'enseignement des principes et pratiques coopératifs, à tous les niveaux.

Le besoin de s'adresser aux jeunes et de les intéresser à la coopération n'est pas nouveau pour les coopératives car cela ne date pas d'hier que le mouvement coopératif se préoccupe de la formation et de l'éducation des jeunes. Les projets d'édu-

cation coopérative en milieu scolaire, sous diverses formes ont toujours existé depuis de nombreuses années.

L'importance de l'éducation est capitale pour les coopératives. Elle constitue même le 5e principe de la déclaration sur l'identité coopérative auquel adhère toute coopérative.

L'expérience canadienne nous sera très utile. Dès la fin des années 1990, le Conseil de la coopération du Québec a élaboré une stratégie d'action en éducation coopérative inspirée des travaux du passé et de la nouvelle définition de l'éducation coopérative. Cette expérience combinée avec les compétences de l'UNESCO dans le cadre de son programme d'éducation inclusive sont la clé de réussite de ce nouveau projet. L'aboutissement ultime est évidemment l'émergence d'adultes responsables et engagés qui prennent en main leur économie et participent pleinement à la diversité de la vie démocratique de leur société.

- Cooperative policy and law - Politique et droit coopératifs -  
- Política y derecho cooperativa -

## IX Forum on Legal Aspects of Cooperatives, Brazil

The “IX Forum on Legal Aspects of Cooperatives” was organized by the São Paulo Section of the Organização das Cooperativas Brasileiras (OCB) on 27 August 2010. Brazil is one of the few countries where practicing lawyers and magistrates have shown for a number of years a systematic interest in cooperatives. The São Paulo Section of the Brazilian Cooperative Organization (OCB) has established a working group which discusses twice a year crosscutting legal issues, once from an internal and once from an international perspective. Additional discussions related to the status of the preparations for the International Year of Cooperatives and the way forward on the issue of the implementation of the “Ley marco para las cooperativas de América Latina”, inter alia on the issue of so-called pseudo-cooperatives. Some 40 lawyers attended the Forum. Presenters were lawyers, magistrates and representatives from

academia. The subjects ranged from legal aspects of savings and credit cooperatives to cooperatives and sustainable development and commercial law. Hagen Henry, manager of the ILO Cooperative Branch, contributed on the theme of “El derecho cooperativo – propuestas para el siglo 21”.

The participants expressed their keen interest to work together up to, during and beyond the International Year of Cooperatives. On the issue of so-called pseudo-cooperatives, there was the agreement that the problem is multifaceted and only a joint approach by ILO constituents and the cooperative organisations would bear the potential for success. The problem is spreading; a regional approach might facilitate the work, not the least as part of the implementation of the “Ley marco para las cooperativas de América Latina”.

## Round Table in Kiev

The Round Table “Provision of social services in Ukraine: Challenges and Good Practices”, held in Kiev on September 15 – 16, is the result of work and common efforts by the ILO Cooperative Branch and the Social Policy Department of the Council of Europe (CoE), an initiative which started in March 2009. Its predecessor was a previous ILO initiative in Ukraine which recommended commencing a programme in order to develop social cooperatives and social enterprises as part of the establishment of a social services market.

The ILO Cooperative Branch, EMP/COOP, has developed expertise over the years in supporting Social Economy Enterprises and Organizations. Either through normative instruments, such as 2002 ILO Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives, or through technical activities (advice on national policy and law, access to finance, organizational development, networking, etc.). The work did not only concentrate on cooperatives as such but encompassed also linkages with the working area of informal economy as well as rural and urban communities.

The Round Table was organized jointly by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Ukraine, the Council of Europe

and the International Labour Office. The event took place in the premises of the Ministry and was held in Ukrainian and English. More than 46 participants represented the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, other central state and local institutions involved in the provision of social services, academic and university community, trade unions and employer organization, international projects and programmes working in Ukraine as well as different national NGOs also participated.

The resource persons for the Round Table included ILO and CoE officials, local experts and selected international consultants from the Ministry of Labour and Social Services in Italy (on “The Voucher system”), from the Strasbourg University in France (on “The role of social business”) and from the University of Kent in the United Kingdom (on “The concept of user involvement”). The representative of the Council of Europe presented the report “The Council of Europe principles” and EMP/COOP delivered a presentation on “Social and Solidarity Economy Enterprise: the example of Cooperatives”.

The Round Table is deemed to be an important step in the long process of reforming social services and paving the way to further actions and initiatives.

## Our activities

We contributed actively to following events:

### Regional

**Beijing/China:** ICA Regional Assembly Asia Pacific (September 2010).

**Brussels/Belgium:** Conference on the occasion of the submission of the Study by EZA, Euricse and Cooperatives Europe, with the collaboration of EMP/COOP, on the implementation of the EU Council Regulation (EC) No 1435/2003 on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society (SCE) in the EU Member states and in the EEA countries (October 2010).

**Maseru/Lesotho:** ICA Africa 9th Regional Assembly Ministerial Conference Technical Committee Meeting (October 2010).

### National

**Bruxelles/Belgique:** Séminaire «La société coopérative à responsabilité limitée: la forme d'entreprise du 21<sup>ème</sup> siècle» (June 2010).

**Cali/Colombia:** XVII Encuentro de Cooperativas de Trabajo Asociado: "Nuevo escenario. Nuevas oportunidades. Otra imagen" (June 2010).

**Dushanbe/Tajikistan:** International Agribusiness INvestment Forum in Tajikistan.

**Lévis/Canada:** Conférence internationale du Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité sur «Quel projet de société pour demain? Coopératives, mutuelles et territoires: Enjeux, défis et alternatives» (September 2010).

**Milano/Italy:** Bocconi University, LegaCoop and Ivano Barberini Foundation Colloquium on "A Special Kind of Business: the Cooperative Movement 1950-2010 ... and Beyond" (October 2010).

**Turin/Italy:** Writers' Workshop for Social and Solidarity Economic Academy. First Interregional Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy.

**Warsaw/Poland:** Conference by National Cooperative Council of Poland on "90 Years of Polish Cooperative Law" (October 2010).

## - Historical notes - Notes historiques - - Notas históricas -

## Les manuels d'ACOPAM

ACOPAM (Appui Coopératif et Associatif aux Initiatives de Développement à la base) a laissé derrière lui un riche héritage de documentation écrite. Les principaux acquis d'ACOPAM en matière de production de manuels et de documents de formation se situent entre 1992 et 1997. Les principaux manuels de formation sont les suivants: non seulement une collection de quatre manuels à la fois sur la gestion des banques céréalières, sur l'alphabétisation fonctionnelle pour la gestion des périmètres villageois irrigués et sur la gestion des terroirs; mais aussi des manuels sur Genre et Développement, sur Genre et Organisations de Producteurs, sur les mutuelles de santé en Afrique et sur les entreprises et les exportations africaines pour les organisations de producteurs.

En 1994, ACOPAM a établi un système de contrôle de qualité. C'est en 1997 qu'ACOPAM a atteint son apogée en terme de développement méthodologique. Par contre très peu de documents ont été traduits en anglais. Les manuels sur les banques céréalières ont été traduits en anglais suite à une demande émanant du Bureau de l'OIT en Inde. Le principal manuel sur la gestion des terroirs a été également traduit en anglais. Le manuel sur les entreprises et les exportations a été traduit en anglais et en espagnol. Il semblerait que le fait que la plupart des manuels n'existent qu'en français a été un obstacle à une diffusion plus large.

Pourtant certains manuels sont toujours d'actualité, comme par exemple ceux sur les banques céréalières. Ces

manuels sont en relation directe avec le thème très porteur d'autosuffisance et de sécurité alimentaire visé par ACOPAM depuis le début des opérations en 1978. Les banques céréalières et leurs unions ont contribué à accroître les capacités de stockage des céréales au Burkina, au Niger et au Sénégal, ce qui a amélioré la sécurité alimentaire dans beaucoup de villages dotés de telles banques. L'appui donné par ACOPAM aux stratégies nationales à cet égard a eu un impact positif sur la sécurité alimentaire de ces pays. Il en est de même pour les périmètres villageois irrigués. L'amélioration de la gestion a contribué à la sécurité alimentaire des membres des coopératives et de leurs familles. La réplication des expériences d'ACOPAM en matière de banques céréalières est envisagée au Sud de Madagascar.

Le Sud de Madagascar a en commun de nombreuses caractéristiques naturelles et socio-économiques avec les pays du Sahel dans lesquels ACOPAM est intervenu. C'est une région aride, exposée aux sécheresses, aux pénuries alimentaires et parfois aux famines. Le Bureau de l'OIT d'Antananarivo est en contact avec les agences intéressées (UNICEF, FAO, PAM, FIDA) en vue de la mise en place d'un programme conjoint multisectoriel pour le Grand Sud. Le projet de banques céréalières devrait servir de base de départ et faire partie par la suite de l'ensemble de ce dispositif. Le programme se révèle être parmi la première priorités eu égard à l'accélération du phénomène de pauvreté dans cette région. Les manuels d'ACOPAM sur les banques céréalières et les périmètres irrigués seront mis à jour et adaptés au contexte socio-économique du Sud de Madagascar dès que le programme deviendra opérationnel.



- To be read... - A lire absolument... - Lectura importante... -

## “Handbook on Cooperatives for use by Workers’ Organizations” (ILO, Geneva 2007) in Greek! by Guy Tchami

>> For the **English version** please consult: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_094046.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_094046.pdf). For the **Greek version** please consult: [www.diktio-kapa.dos.gr](http://www.diktio-kapa.dos.gr)

### New publications by COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup>:

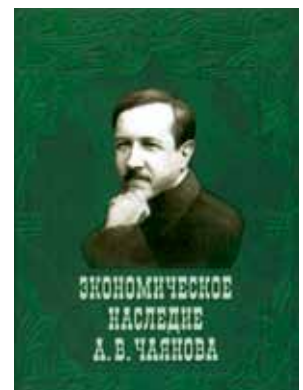
- Cooperatives: a path to economic and social empowerment in [Ethiopia](#)
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- Cooperatives in [Zanzibar](#): Decline and renaissance
- Cooperative policy and law in [east and southern Africa](#): A review

>> They are available in PDF on the COOPAfrica website: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/ent/coop/africa/info/publ.htm>



### Tchayanov, Alexander: экономическое наследие а.в. чаянова («Héritage économique de A.V. Tchayanov»)

Ce recueil contient les œuvres principales d'Alexander Tchayanov (1888-1937), illustre économiste russe, fondateur de la coopération agricole. Les problèmes sociaux économiques traités dans le contexte de la réforme agraire de l'époque n'ont pas perdu de leur actualité dans le monde contemporain. La pensée coopérative de l'auteur fait partie de l'histoire de la science économique et de l'héritage du coopérativisme. Dans l'espace post soviétique les travaux scientifiques du professeur Tchayanov sont souvent à la base de recherches et de solutions pratiques dans l'organisation de la coopération agricole.



This issue was prepared with contributions from Yola Carraz, Yves Chamorel, Mathieu de Poorter, Hagen Henry, Swantje Kwast, Sam Mshiu, Mialy Randriamangason, Constanze Schimmel, Carlien van Empel, Igor Vocatch.

**Cooperative Programme (EMP/COOP)**  
**International Labour Office (ILO)**

Route des Morillons 4  
CH-1211 Geneva, 22  
Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 799 7455 - Fax: +41 (0) 22 799 8572

E-mail: [coop@ilo.org](mailto:coop@ilo.org) - Website: [www.ilo.org/coop](http://www.ilo.org/coop)