



PRESS RELEASE

Free eBook shows how co-ops empower people through finance

1st August 2012: Find out how Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World with the continuation of a series of free eBooks that show how co-operatives provide an ethical alternative for business across the world (www.thenews.coop/ebooks).

This second eBook examines how co-operatives build a better world through finance; and touches on stories of banking being accessible to people in Africa; how a group of youngsters help to promote credit unions to their peers and how an initiative to help alleviate rural poverty in the 19th century is still going strong.

In the eBook read about:

- How New Zealand's Co-operative Bank has grown to over 120,000 members from the dark days of the 1920s depression.
- A Central American co-operative helps to create economic opportunities for over 3,000 veterans from armed conflicts in the region.
- A credit co-operative in Africa that aids some of the most remote people in Kenya people access banking on their mobile phones.
- How one of Singapore's leading insurers has started a revolution in co-operation to help create a more ethical world.
- Young people from across North America who are empowered through the internet to blog, record video messages and use social media to shout about credit unions.
- How a banking movement in Germany has helped rural areas overcoming tough times since the mid-19th century.

To celebrate the build up to Co-operatives United in the UK, the culmination event for the International Year of Co-operatives (October 29–November 2), the eBooks preview some of the topics to be discussed during the conferences, keynote addresses, seminars, workshops, fringe activities and other events during the week-long festival.

Kristen Christian, the Founder of the USA Bank Transfer Day initiative, who will be a keynote speaker at Co-operatives United, writes a foreword to the book. She explains how she has been empowered by co-operatives along with millions of others: “Across the globe and in many different languages, credit unions have a mission to value people over profit. That mission is put into action by utilising profit to directly benefit communities in a way that no for-profit structure is able to.

“Over the past several decades, consumers had become complacent. We accepted poor service at an exorbitant cost, paid by both our communities and ourselves. The solution was amazing, in its simplicity, that we have no obligation to support a financial institution whose values don’t echo our own.

“Discovering the option of financial co-operatives was liberating for me, to say the very least. It’s been inspiring to watch firsthand as this consumer reawakening unfolded, and humbling to have played a role in igniting this shift toward financial co-operatives.”

Kristen Christian will be speaking at Co-operatives United along with Dani Paffard and Marloes Nichols, the two organisers behind the UK’s Move your Money campaign. Finance from co-operatives will form a number of key sessions at Co-operatives United, Manchester, UK, and will also be streamed online (www.thenews.coop/virtualevent). An interactive platform will connect delegates at the event and thousands of viewers across the globe.

- To download the eBook, visit: www.thenews.coop/ebooks ; and to find out more about Co-operatives United, visit: www.manchester2012.coop

EDITOR’S NOTES

The series of ‘Building A Better World’ eBooks are written by Co-operative News, the Global News Hub for co-operatives (www.thenews.coop). The eBooks are supported by the International Co-operative Alliance, Co-operative Group and Co-operatives UK through Co-operatives United.

Co-operatives United is an inspiring global festival of events and exhibitions set in Manchester, UK, to mark the close of the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives in October. With 1 world premiere, 3 exhibitions, 10 conferences, 45 countries, 150 workshops, 200 exhibitors and 10,000 people, Co-operatives United will inform and inspire everyone building an ethical economy and a better world.

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