The Co-operative Model: A Durable and Sustainable Enterprise

Réseau de recherche pour mesurer la DIFFÉRENCE COOPÉRATIVE

Measuring the Co-operative Difference RESEARCH NETWORK

by
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Co-ops do not get the respect they deserve…. They should be more widely appreciated for…. • Their size (1 billion members, serving 3 billions) • Their diversity (300+ kinds) • Their social significance (social capital, cohesion, empowerment, democratic practice) • Their age!!! – yes age is not spelled “b-a-d”
The lengthy legal basis

- The varieties of institutional forms
- An unending process
- Importance of the nineteenth century
- Early elaborations of the co-operative model
- The importance of legal frameworks
- The relationship with national identities, culture and social relationships
The British Experience

Measuring the Cooperative Difference Research Network
Other European Movements

- Community co-operative banks ➔ credit unions
- Agricultural/rural co-ops
- Worker co-ops
- Service co-ops (housing, insurance, health, etc.)
Expansion beyond Europe

- Empires and co-operatives
- Settler co-ops
- Independence era co-ops
- The new waves
Culture
The old and the new

- The continuing and exaggerated split
- Generations – of co-ops and people
- The impact of communications
Why the staying power of co-ops?

1. Not readily sold
2. Distribution of power
3. The democratic process
4. Reduced capacity for financial raids by small groups
5. The community binds
6. The avoidance of fads
7. Basis in culture
Why the staying power of co-ops?

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- The capacity to mobilize resources
- The breadth of available resources
- Their legal form
- Their capacity for renewal
- Effectiveness of co-operative entrepreneurship
The longevity of co-operative movements

- Several a century or more
- Roots in long-lasting economic and social situations
- Capacity to adjust to new situations
- Effectiveness of federated structures
- Continuing importance of co-op legislation
- Value of expanding co-op possibilities
The longevity of Co-operation

As old as humankind

Basis in human nature

Value of mutuality and reciprocity

The importance of examples
Context

• Institutions vs movements vs contexts
• Connections with other movements or social change
• What co-ops offer
• What they fear
• What they reflect
Context – the nineteenth century
Context - today
THANK YOU !!!!!

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