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Editorial

South Africa must resist another captured president: this time by the markets

by Vishwas Satgar



Image Source: <https://theconversation.com/south-africa-must-resist-another-captured-president-this-time-by-the-markets-92051>

The African National Congress (ANC) has made a dangerous habit of bringing post-apartheid South Africa to the brink of instability and the common ruin of all. The [resignation](#) of former President Jacob Zuma and his [replacement](#) by Cyril Ramaphosa was such a moment. It brought home the point that the over-concentration of power in the office of the president has clearly not worked.

A rethink on president-centred politics and the threats it poses to the democracy are crucial for the post-Zuma period. South Africa needs to re-imagine democratic practice, leadership and how power works.

Some sections of South African society have reduced the Zuma problem to a corruption problem.

Dismantle Zuma's [kleptocratic network](#), the argument goes, and all is solved. Zuma's demise and a few high profile prosecutions will suffice.

But another view on the Zuma problem – and one with which I concur – suggests it is a problem of contending class projects inside the ANC. The [neoliberal class project](#) under Presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki saw South Africa integrated into global markets. It maintained stability through modest redistributive reforms. This project laid the basis for a new black middle class to [emerge](#) while systematically [weakening](#) labour and the left.

But it [surrendered](#) the state (including the



presidency) to transnational capital and the power of finance.

The Zuma project, on the other hand, [advanced looting](#) as the basis of accumulation and class formation. The [extra-constitutional](#) state that emerged deepened the macroeconomic, institutional and legitimacy crisis of the ANC-led state. The left and labour, aligned with the ANC in the tripartite alliance, were [co-opted](#) and divided. Both these projects are entrenched in the ANC.

Now what? Messiah-centred presidential politics is extremely dangerous. This is particularly true in a country of extreme inequality and with a formal concentration of power in the office of the president. If politics is not represented, thought and acted beyond this, South Africa is going to repeat historical mistakes.

Since the ANC's December 2017 conference the media, the banks and international institutions have been talking up a narrative of the "[Cyril effect](#)". Zuma's removal is attributed to this. In fact the Cyril effect is a [narrative](#) of capture of South Africa's new president by transnational and financial capital.

South Africa's democracy cannot afford another captured president beholden to [credit rating agencies](#), [currency fluctuations](#), investment flows and business [perceptions](#). South Africa's democracy has to be grounded in the needs of its citizens and the mandates given by its Constitution.

The 'Cyril effect' is hyperbole

The end of Zuma was in fact not because of the Cyril effect. In the main Zuma was removed by the [people's effect](#) which connected the dots of corruption, a mismanaged state and rapacious capitalism.

- This resistance was expressed over 15 years through various institutions and social forces. These included:
- Battles inside the South African Communist Party (SACP) against [Zumafication](#) but which led to expulsions;
- By feminists during Zuma's rape trial and subsequently through [#RememberKhwezi](#);
- [Artists](#) and cartoonists lampooning Zuma, including with [shower heads](#);
- The ongoing struggles in communities against [corrupt officials](#);
- The [Marikana massacre](#) in 2012. This produced rage among workers and major realignments away from Zuma's ANC;
- The [call](#) by trade unions like the metalworkers' Numsa for Zuma's removal;
- The [Vukani-Sidikiwe](#) campaign during the 2014 elections which opened up a national debate on how citizens should vote;
- The rise of #ZumaMustGo Campaign. This was in response to the sacking of [Nhlanhla Nene](#) as finance minister in December 2015. The NUMSA-led United Front played a crucial role in this;
- The [#FeesMustFall](#) movement. Students' demands included labour insourcing as well as quality, decommodified and decolonised higher education;
- The [2016 local government elections](#). These were a harbinger of seismic political realignments against the ANC in key cities;
- The role of [investigative and nonpartisan media](#) in probing corruption scandals. And the publication of the [Gupta-leaks](#) as well as "[A Simple Man](#)" and "[The President's Keepers](#)";
- The courageous role from 2010 onwards of then [public protector Thuli Mandonsele](#) in drawing attention to ethics and legal violations by Zuma;
- Court decisions affirming the [judiciary's](#)



- [independence](#) in relation to Zuma;
- Zuma's miscalculation in [firing finance minister Pravin Gordhan](#), the rallying of activists and the rise of [#SaveSouthAfrica](#). What followed were some of the largest post-apartheid [protest marches](#);
- The powerful voice of liberation struggle veterans like [Ahmed Kathrada](#) and others who called for Zuma to resign.

advancing systemic alternatives to the climate crisis.

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The ANC's legitimacy crisis

As a result of all this activity the crisis of legitimacy in the ANC – and the ANC state – has deepened. This has placed immense pressure on the party to act. In this context, Ramaphosa is playing out his role out of necessity and to secure the ANC's electoral fortunes.

For middle class and rich South Africans Ramaphosa's [state of the nation](#) speech represented a return to normalcy – a democracy that works for a few. That's not to say that the new president didn't make some important announcements in his state of the nation address. This included his comments about state owned enterprises, redistributive state programmes and anti-corruption mechanisms.

Nevertheless, the speech struck chords that resonated with the "return to normalcy" narrative.

But South Africans can't repeat the mistake made in 1994 when progressive civil society [demobilised](#). The people's effect has to continue to shape a post-Zuma democracy in the interests of all. The ANC has abused majority support and cannot be trusted with the future of South Africa.

People's power has to be strengthened and continuously mobilised around strengthening democratic institutions, ending corruption, fundamental economic transformation and



International News

Co-operatives and Employment: Second Global Report 2017: Contribution of co-operatives to decent work in the changing world of work



new forms of work.

The present report proposes a pragmatic method by using cooperative typology as a proxy, highlighting information on different forms of cooperative employment. The key element of the method consists in reclassifying currently used types of cooperatives according to meta-types which represent different forms of cooperative employment, namely employees, worker-members and producer-members. We propose six meta-types, namely, “user cooperative”, “producer cooperative”, “worker cooperative”, “multi-stakeholder cooperative”, “secondary cooperative” and “enterprise cooperative”, according to the members’ function in relation to their cooperative.

However, apart from some technical problems that could be solved by obtaining more qualitative information on currently used typologies, a number of conceptual issues should be discussed further, such as the distinction between producer cooperatives and worker cooperatives, statistical definitions for worker ownership and boundary issues concerning employment in subsidiaries and enterprise-members in enterprise cooperatives.

By using the proposed method and considering the issues being raised, the report presents updated quantitative information on cooperative employment, as well as on the number of cooperatives and types of members. Based on data from 156 countries, the updated estimate shows that employment in or within the scope of cooperatives concerns at least 279.4 million people across the globe, in other words 9.46% of the world’s employed population. Out of this figure, 27.2 million work in cooperatives,

Employment is one of the most important contributions made by cooperatives throughout the world. Whilst taking into account initiatives and debates at the international level regarding the issues of the future of work and the changing world of work, the present report also aims at updating the 2014 study, “Cooperatives and employment: a Global Report”, by:

- providing an update on the quantitative information on cooperative employment at the global level;
- presenting propositions to develop conceptual tools aimed at producing reliable information on work and employment in cooperatives;
- examining the contribution of cooperatives to work and employment in informal employment and in the



including around 16 million cooperative employees and 11.1 million worker-members.

Employment within the scope of cooperatives, comprising mainly self-employed producer-members, concerns over 252.2 million people, the vast majority being in agriculture. The number of cooperatives throughout the world is 2.94 million and the number of members in all types of cooperatives is 1,217.5 million.

Turning then to qualitative aspects of cooperative employment, the report examines cooperatives' specific contributions to addressing problems related to work and employment in the informal economy. While underlining the importance of an integrated approach based on the involvement of various stakeholders, this report proposes that cooperatives be part of such integrated solution, in various ways:

People working in the informal economy who join savings and credit cooperatives, mutual insurance cooperatives, multi-purpose cooperatives and consumer cooperatives have access to certain formal or semi-formal services and are connected to the formal arrangements they need in their life and in their work. In particular, these cooperatives can provide them with easier access to credit, education and training, affordable goods and services to meet their basic needs and a certain level of social protection based on solidarity and mutual help.

Self-employed producers/entrepreneurs who join shared service cooperatives based on a horizontal integration strategy gain access to various services supporting members' economic activities, which help them to attain economies of scale and a higher bargaining power.

For the self-employed workers and freelancers who

have considerably increased in number over the last decades, cooperatives could be used by trade unions or member based organisations as a tool to organize them, but could also provide innovative models which could guarantee both flexibility and protection.

Worker cooperatives, which aim at providing decent jobs to their worker-members, can be a direct solution to the formalization of informal employment. However, to fully display their potential contributions, a favourable environment and an appropriate legal framework are necessary.

In addition, the present report pays special attention to the potential contribution of cooperatives to technological development and accompanying social change. In the changing world of work, cooperatives need to respond to new opportunities and challenges. The concepts of "platform cooperativism" and "commons" could usher in innovative ways of working in, and with, cooperatives in the 21st century. However, while fully recognizing the contribution made by these new concepts, this report proposes their combination with the tools and methods of the cooperative movement, which would strengthen and give concrete expression to the contribution they are able to make to address problems related to work and employment in the changing world of work.

The full report can be accessed here:

<http://cicopa.coop/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CICOPA-Global-report-2015-2016.pdf>

Summary of the report taken from:

<http://www.cicopa.coop/publications/second-global-report-on-cooperatives-and-employment/>



Voices from the Field: Can Co-ops Displace the Gig Economy?



Image Source: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2017/12/21/voices-from-the-field-can-co-ops-displace-the-gig-economy/>

In his article 'Voices from the Field: Can Co-ops Displace the Gig Economy?', MJ Kaplan highlights the potential that platform co-operatives provide especially in relation to the transformation that is taking place concerning jobs, work itself and the workspace which has included the dramatic rise in contract workers. Currently contract work makes up 36 percent of the American workforce and is set to rise to outnumber wage workers by 2027 if the current trend is to continue. While contract work may allow for a degree of flexibility in scheduling, contract workers find themselves in a state of higher insecurity due to lower wages, the absence of benefits and the lack of job security. Platform cooperatives, on the other hand, where the users and employees co-own and manage the company in cooperation, are built on a 'human centered ethos'. These emerging enterprises challenge the platform monopolies that have overtaken the market such as Uber, Google, Amazon etc. Unlike these companies, platforms do not aim to exploit data to maximize profit but instead

allow for democratic control over the use of private data by opening up these decisions to the members of the cooperative platform.

By providing an example using the case of Uber the article highlights how the wealth created in a driver-owned Uber would be democratised as the profit generated would go to the drivers.

The problem is the lack of understanding about cooperatives and their potential. Despite this lack of understanding many co-ops already play a large role in their respective industries, such as in the electric and the credit union sector. Ace Hardware which is the largest hardware retail cooperative in the world, has shown that cooperatives exemplify greater resilience than their traditional counterparts because of strong relationship with users.

Companies such as Uber have become famous for their bad treatment of contract labourers and employees as well as for negatively impacting local communities. Platform co-ops challenge this stance, instead valuing positive workplace practices and reinvesting in their members while generating profit. Yet with their large holdings of venture capital and their monopolistic status companies like Uber have powers which are hard to challenge.

Nonetheless grassroots efforts all over the planet are taking up this challenge. One example is Up & Go, a cooperative platform for homecare workers and cleaners which are among those with the most precarious working conditions which allows the workers to keep 95% of the profit which they have generated.

Unions have an important role to play. In California the United Health Workers West helped the launching of the NursesCan Cooperative. The Savvy Cooperative connects different healthcare stakeholders such as



researcher, patients and innovators which allows patients to be co-owners. It thereby allows for the incorporation of the patients' voice and enables a stronger and more active network of patients.

Access to capital is one of the major challenges for platform cooperatives. Investors and other key players need to be educated on coops and their potential. The system need to be reconfigured to allow for an 'ecosystem' in which platform coops can flourish.

One of their major potential is that they can weigh out the injustices the system fails to address. The cooperative grassroots movement Zebra came to the realization that a "mere three percent of venture funding goes to women and less than one percent to people of color". Their aim is to create a society which is both more just and responsible by creating an alternative business model that emphasises democracy in the sharing of power and resources.

The article ends with a quote by Trebor Scholz "[Platform Cooperatives] can be a reminder that work can be dignified rather than diminishing for the human experience. Cooperatives are not a panacea for all the wrongs of platform capitalism. But they could help to weave some ethical threads into the fabric of 21st-century work."

Link to the original Article:

<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2017/12/21/voices-from-the-field-can-co-ops-displace-the-gig-economy/>



National News

Look Closely: there is an Alternative Banking Operation near You

This article by Ujuh has been cross posted from <http://satopshops.co.za/2018/03/04/look-closely-there-is-an-alternative-banking-operation-near-you/>

Many South Africans are clearly yearning for alternative banking institutions as partly represented in the calls for a black owned and controlled bank.

With that narrative in mind we (Ujuh) conducted a survey of the cooperative banking sector and found that the sector can satisfy the alternative banking ambitions if given the required support by both consumers and government.

Our continuing survey reveals a steadily growing list of community based financial cooperative that are spread across all seven provinces. For some reason there are no licensed cooperative banking operation in the Free State and Mpumalanga. Here follows a provincially organised list of licensed financial cooperatives plus brief details of what they are about: These are brief summaries but you can get further details by following the links embedded to each name.

Gauteng

POPLAR Frontline Foundation

[POPLAR Frontline Foundation](#) cooperative financial institution (CFI) was licensed to take deposits and grant loans to its members in 2017.

The Johannesburg based operation with a national focus reported 200 members and R302,056 in assets. It defines its common bond as “Members of Poplar Frontline Foundation”.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/a-cooperative-financial-institution-for-poplar-frontline->

[foundation/](#)

South African Women Business Council of Cooperatives

The South African Women Business Council of Cooperatives ([SAWBCC](#)) runs a cooperative financial institution (CFI) that promises to become a significant banking operation.

Licensed in 2016, the Gauteng based CFI has a national focus and has already gathered 220 members and about R6 million in assets.

SAWBCC is [described](#) as “a gender-responsive and autonomous cooperative that was founded by a group of businesswomen from the Pretoria and Johannesburg areas to promote common economic, social and cultural wellbeing and to stimulate access for women to opportunities in the mainstream economy.”

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/a-banking-operation-for-the-south-african-women-business-council-of-cooperatives/>

Eyakwethu Financial Services Cooperative

[Eyakwethu Financial Services Cooperative](#) is a Pretoria based but Gauteng focused operation that got its loan granting and deposit taking license in 2016 on the back of a consumer cooperative.

It has gathered 397 members and assets of R202 000. Eyakwethu describes its common bond as “All members of Consumer Cooperative Limited.”

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/pretoria-based-eyakwethu-cfi-has-a-consumer-cooperative-angle/>

Generational Inheritance Group Financial Co-operative

[The Generational Inheritance Group Financial Co-operative](#) has registered good growth since it got its license in 2015. It boasts 445 members and R4,6 million in assets.

The Johannesburg based operation recruits across



the country and defines its common bond as Members of the GIG Educational Association. “The GIG Co Operative Financial Institution is a service to members of the [Generational Inheritance Group Institute](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/the-nehawu-cooperative-financial-institution-has-gathered-r25-million-in-assets/).

“The GIG Institute is an educational association that focuses on financial literacy and life skills training...”
<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/generational-inheritance-group-financial-co-operative-aims-for-financial-freedom-2/>

Thari Entsho CFI

[Thari Entsho CFI](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/thari-entsho-cooperative-financial-institution-fishes-in-the-soweto-area/) is a Soweto based cooperative financial institution (CFI) with more than 200 members and R223 000 in assets. The CFI defines its common bond as “Anyone working or living in Soweto”.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/thari-entsho-cooperative-financial-institution-fishes-in-the-soweto-area/>

Nagrik financial services cooperative

[Nagrik is a financial services](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/nagrik-a-financial-services-cooperative-operating-from-laudium/) cooperative that operates from Laudium in Gauteng with about 300 members and R3 million in assets. It describes its common bond as “Any person living or working in Laudium Centurion, Pretoria Gauteng”. Its objectives are captured as “promoting the social and economic welfare of its members, and to encourage savings by providing a competitive rate of interest or dividends.”

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/nagrik-a-financial-services-cooperative-operating-from-laudium/>

NEHAWU SACCO

[NEHAWU SACCO](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/nehawu-sacco/) is a savings and credit cooperative anchored by one of South Africa’s largest trade unions, the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union. It has about 11 000 members with headquarters in Gauteng.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/the-nehawu-cooperative-financial-institution-has-gathered-r25-million-in-assets/>

Webbers Employees Savings & Credit Co-Operative Limited

[Webbers Employees Savings & Credit Co-Operative Limited](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/webbers-employees-savings-and-credit-co-operative-is-a-workplace-based-cfi/) is a cooperative financial institution (CFI) based in Midrand, Gauteng which earned the deposit taking and loan granting CFI status in 2013. Its common bond is defined as permanent employees of Saville Row (Pty) Ltd t/a Webbers Clothing and Footwear. It has 855 members and R9.2 million in assets.

Saville Row (Pty) Ltd t/a Webbers Clothing and Footwear is defined as an operation established in 1932 selling affordable quality clothing and footwear to men and boys in the lower LSM markets.”

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/webbers-employees-savings-and-credit-co-operative-is-a-workplace-based-cfi/>

Kleinfontein Spaar en Krediet Kooperatief

[Kleinfontein Spaar en Krediet Kooperatief](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/kleinfontein-spaar-en-krediet-kooperatief-a-cullinan-based-cooperative-financial-institution/) is a Cullinan, Gauteng, based cooperative financial institution (CFI) which has gathered about 500 members and R36.2 million in assets. It was awarded the the CFI license in 2015 and comes with a touch of an Afrikaner separatist movement.

It defines its common bond as “Persons, including their spouses and children, who are members of ‘Kleinfontein Boerebelange Kooperatief Beperk.”

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/kleinfontein-spaar-en-krediet-kooperatief-a-cullinan-based-cooperative-financial-institution/>

Oranjekas Spaar en Krediet Kooperatief

[Oranjekas Spaar en Krediet Kooperatief](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/oranjekas-spaar-en-krediet-kooperatief/) is a Pretoria based cooperative financial institution (CFI) with about 1000 members and R48 million in assets.

It defines its common bond as “members of the



Volks Ekonomie Klub” and was awarded the CFI license in 2015.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/oranjekaspaar-en-krediet-kooperatief-is-a-pretoria-based-cooperative-financial-institution/>

Young Women in Business Network CFI

The Young Women in Business Network (YWBN) is one of the latest and dynamic additions into the South African cooperative banking sector. The Gauteng based operation entered the landscape in 2015 through a cooperative financial institution licence (CFI).

The YWBN runs with an agenda of women economic empowerment, especially young women from the age 16 from professionals to entrepreneurs and industrialists.

YWBN notes that “Although men are welcome in the network, the intention is to ensure at least 60% of the network members are female.

North-West

Ditsobotla Co-Operative Bank

[Ditsobotla Co-Operative Bank](#) is a Lichtenburg, North West, based operation with roots going back to 1993 and a mission “to promote the economic welfare of its members.”

Ditsobotla was established in 2000 following a merger of three worker-based financial cooperatives. These were Itireleng SACCO (formed by Lafarge Cement employees in 1993), Ikageng SACCO (formed by the Ditsobotla Local Municipality) and Aganang SACCO (formed by Holsim employees) in 1998. It was registered as a primary savings and credit cooperative bank in 2011.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/ditsobotla-co-operative-bank-is-about-promoting-the-economic-welfare-of-members/>

Boikago CFI

[Boikago](#), a licensed cooperative financial institution

(CFI) based in Mafikeng in the North West Province of South Africa, bears an interesting name. Boikago is a Tswana word which translates to building oneself or self-empowerment.

Boikago defines its common bond as all people living and working in Mafikeng, Mmabatho and nearest villages. It has gathered 987 members and R5.9 million in assets.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/boikago-a-cooperative-banking-operation-anchored-on-self-empowerment/>

Limpopo

Sekhukhune CFI

[Sekhukhune Cooperative Financial Institution](#) (CFI) has gathered 327 members and reports assets of about R140 000.

Awarded the CFI licence in 2016, the operation describes its common bond as “People residing in the Sekhukhune district in Limpopo.”

Greater Tzaneen CFI

[The Greater Tzaneen financial services cooperative](#) (CFI) was licensed in 2015 and has so far gathered 273 members. It defines its common bond as people living and working in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in Limpopo.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/greater-tzaneen-financial-services-cooperative-has-gathered-273-members/>

Mutapa Financial Services Cooperative

[Mutapa Financial Services Cooperative](#) boasts about 400 members and R1.2 million in assets. Operating from Vuwani in Limpopo it was licensed under the Cooperative Financial Institution (CFI) regime in 2013.

It defines its common bond as all people residing in the magistrate district of Vuwani and surrounding areas of Mulamula, Khomanani and Levubu farms including the farm area of Ongedachi Et 52.



<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/mutapa-financial-services-cooperative-focuses-on-the-yuwani-area/>

Kuvhanganyani Financial Services Cooperative

[Kuvhanganyani](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/mutapa-financial-services-cooperative-focuses-on-the-yuwani-area/) is a financial services cooperative that operates from Sibasa in Limpopo.

Kuvhanganyani has about 424 members and R2 million in assets. It defines its common bond as all residents residing within Thulamela Local Municipality and nearby areas of Mutale.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/kuvhanganyani-financial-zs-ervices-cooperative-focuses-on-the-thulamela-area/>

Bakenberg financial services cooperative

[Bakenberg financial services cooperative](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/bakenberg-financial-services-cooperative-boasts-more-than-1300-members/) has been running as a licenced CFI from 2013. It has since grown to boast more than 1300 members with total assets of more than R3 million, a loan book of about R350 000 from a deposit base of R1.2 million. The membership base is drawn from residents of Mogalakwena Local Municipality and within 100km radius of Bakenberg in Limpopo.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/bakenberg-financial-services-cooperative-boasts-more-than-1300-members/>

Eastern Cape

Imvelo Agricultural CFI

[Imvelo Agricultural Cooperative Financial Institution](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/imvelo-agricultural-cfi-is-positioned-for-eastern-cape-farming-cooperatives/) (CFI) is positioned to offer basic banking for farming cooperatives in the Eastern Cape.

It defines its common bond as “Agricultural Cooperatives in the Eastern Cape, including individual members within those co-operatives. From that base it has gathered 360 members and reports assets of about R420 000 since establishment in 2016.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/imvelo-agricultural-cfi-is-positioned-for-eastern-cape-farming-cooperatives/>

[farming-cooperatives/](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/imvelo-agricultural-cfi-is-positioned-for-eastern-cape-farming-cooperatives/)

Western Cape

SA Primary Medical CFI

[SA Primary Medical Cooperative Financial Institution \(MediCoop CFI\)](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/sa-primary-medical-cooperative-financial-institution-has-gathered-271-members-and-about-r2-5-million-in-assets/) is a Cape Town based operation that was licensed to take deposits and grant loans to members in 2016.

With a national focus, the operation defines its common bond as health care professionals, health care workers, medical industry stakeholders and related parties. It has so far gathered 271 members and about R2.5 million in assets.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/sa-primary-medical-cooperative-financial-institution-has-gathered-271-members-and-about-r2-5-million-in-assets/>

South African Municipal Workers Union CFI

[The South African Municipal Workers Union \(SAMWU\) SACCO](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/samwu-cooperative-financial-institution-has-gathered-1679-members-and-about-r8-million-in-assets/) is a trade union anchored cooperative financial institution (CFI) that has gathered 1679 members and about R8 million in assets.

With a Cape Town base, it has a national focus and defines its common bond as “Anyone who is a member or working for the SAMWU” which is one of the largest unions in South Africa with a membership base of about 160 000.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/samwu-cooperative-financial-institution-has-gathered-1679-members-and-r8-million/>

Worcester Community Savings and Credit Cooperative

[The Worcester Community Savings and Credit Cooperative](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/worcester-community-savings-and-credit-cooperative/) was licensed in 2015 and has grown to boast 360 members and more than R400 000 in assets.

It defines its common bond as “people who are from Worcester” in the Western Cape. Worcester SACCO vice chairperson, Marco Adams, has been



quoted saying the operation was “established with the aim of creating a savings culture while providing access to affordable credit facilities for micro and small loans”.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/worcester-community-savings-and-credit-cooperative-has-sparked-excitement/>

KwaZulu-Natal

King Grange CFI

[King Grange](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/king-grange-a-taxi-operators-focused-cooperative-financial-institution/) is a taxi operators focused cooperative financial institution (CFI) which operates from Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal. With 237 members it has gathered assets valued around the R800 000. It defines its common bond as “Taxi operators of Grange and Westgate taxi association and Imbali taxi association and their family members.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/king-grange-a-taxi-operators-focused-cooperative-financial-institution/>

KwaMachi CFI

[KwaMachi CFI](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/kwamachi-fsc-is-under-the-process-of-stabilisation/) is a cooperative financial institution (CFI) that lists its common bond as “All people residing under the KwaMachi tribal authority in Harding, KwaZulu-Natal. The Cooperative Banks Development Agency (CBDA), a body that regulates CFIs, lists KwaMachi as an entity that is under the process of stabilisation.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/kwamachi-fsc-is-under-the-process-of-stabilisation/>

Ziphakamise Cooperative Bank

[Ziphakamise Cooperative Bank](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/ziphakamise-cooperative-bank-is-about-self-empowerment/) has been in operation since 1999 and earned its cooperative banking license in December 2017. This is after the operation ran with a Cooperative Financial Institution (CFI) license for about five years, gathered more than 600 members and R6 million in assets, on a loan book of R3.6 million and a deposit base of R4 million.

Ziphakamise members are drawn from all persons living and/or working and all organisations functioning within the boundary of the city of Mduluzi and/or working for Bell Equipment in Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/ziphakamise-cooperative-bank-is-about-self-empowerment/>

KwaZulu Ladies Empowerment Club

[KwaZulu Ladies Empowerment Club](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/kwazulu-ladies-empowerment-club-are-prospering-in-banking/) was originally formed as a stokvel by a group of women. Starting out in 2007 the entity grew to earn a cooperative financial institution (CFI) license in 2014. It currently boast more than 1700 members, total assets of R4.2 million and a loan book of about R3 million.

With a personal joining fee of R500.00, its members are drawn from the Durban Metro. The entity describes its products offering as business loans, personal loans, building loans, education loans, church building loans and consolidation of debts and savings products, wedding preparations loan, retirement and housing.

Mzansi Arts and Craft CFI

[Mzansi Arts and Craft Cooperative Financial Institution](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/kwazulu-ladies-empowerment-club-are-prospering-in-banking/) (CFI) secured its loan granting and deposit taking licence from the Cooperative Development Banking Agency in May 2016.

Mzansi Arts and Craft CFI is made out of arts and craft cooperatives in Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal. It launched with 632 members, R66 000 in deposits and R172 000 in assets. The operation was billed to commence with lending during the 2017/18 financial year.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/kwazulu-ladies-empowerment-club-are-prospering-in-banking/>

Northern Cape

OSK Koöperatiewe Bank Beperk

[OSK Koöperatiewe Bank Beperk](https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/osk-kooperatiewe-bank-beperk/) is a 15 years



old financial cooperative that comes with strong Afrikaner/white separatist tendencies. Operating from Orania, a privately owned rural town in the Northern Cape with only white residents, OSK Koöperatiewe Bank Beperk has more than 1000 members and has collected deposits valued at about R100 million.

The operation runs under the Cooperative Banks Act dispensation which is licensed and regulated by the [South African Reserve Bank](#). It was incorporated in 2002 and secured its cooperative banking license in 2011.

<https://www.ujuh.co.za/financialcoop/osk-cooperative-bank-comes-with-a-touch-of-afrikaner-white-separatist-tendencies/>

For more information email: news@ujuh.co.za

A People's Dialogue with Parliament on the Water Crisis: Towards Food and Water Sovereignty for South Africa

By Rebecca Tenbusch

On the 2nd till the 3rd of March, COPAC in collaboration with community organisations and SAFSC partners, held the People's Dialogue with Parliament on the Water Crisis: Towards Food and Water Sovereignty for South Africa.

In attendance were leading water crisis, climate justice, and food sovereignty organisations in Cape Town and beyond as well as one government representative from the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation. Despite efforts it was not possible to get more government officials to attend. From the 10 portfolio committees repeatedly contacted 1 could not be reached via phone or email over a period of 3 weeks, 3 declined and after 2 email reminders and phone call reminders

5 failed to accept or decline the invitation at all. The lack of response and engagement by parliament officials, speaks for itself.

However, despite parliament's lack of engagement, the interest and participation of those from civil society and others that attended the conference on Friday made this a highly dynamic space. Not only were the impacts from the water crisis on people's lives, from urban and rural farmers to community members discussed, but also the underlying nature of the current water crisis, the solutions that have been promoted by government and solutions that the different communities and civil society actors were implementing and saw as necessary for a way forward. Lulu Johnson from the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation promised to stand as the "champion" of those present and share the water sovereignty guide and the people's food sovereignty act with the other relevant portfolio committees and to relay what was discussed.



Issues discussed include creating awareness on the impact of people's actions as well as making tools and information more accessible to a wider range of people outside of the academic and activists circles. Furthermore, the creation of a space and network addressing current issues was discussed which would allow the exchange of knowledge and the ability to organise. The issue of getting government to engage with communities outside of the spaces that are actively created by civil society organiza-



tions was also discussed. Young attendees pointed out the need to engage the youth which want to responsibility and action but don't always know how.



On Saturday COPAC presented the water sovereignty guide and the People's Food Sovereignty Act at community workshops the at the Beacon Garden in Mitchells Plain, the Children's Resource Centre in Rylands, and at the public library in Elsies River.

Community members were encouraged to share their experience, perspectives and solutions to the water crisis and its impact in their communities. A shared issue was the lack of government engagement of the people and the lack of a comprehensive plan. While government has been failing in addressing this crisis, the communities have taken matters into their own hands. The water guide is a tool for communities and activists to build people's power for water sovereignty (see link below). It helps in gaining an understanding of water sovereignty and how our water sources are currently used which includes the water crisis and the underlying power dynamics controlling water, it empowers people to organise, save water and respond to water policies as well as to strive towards systemic change. It was agreed that a vital next step is for the com-

munities to demand that government share their water plans with the respective communities. The tools will be further shared in the respective communities by local activists of the SAFSC network. COPAC and SAFSC will continue to support these communities with empowerment tools and help in facilitating a network between different agents

Following the hunger tribunal at Constitution Hill held in 2015 together with the Human Rights Commission, the national drought speak out, the national bread march in Johannesburg and the People's Parliament in 2016 which raised awareness about high food prices as a result of the drought and the need for alternatives, the Dialogue was the next step towards creating a people's space to discuss the issues of water sovereignty, food sovereignty, the climate crisis and climate justice amongst each other and together with parliament. This grassroots process will come together with the adoption of the Peoples Water Charter for South Africa at a People's Assembly in 2019.

Link Water Sovereignty Activist Guide:

<http://www.safsc.org.za/building-peoples-power-for-water-sovereignty-activist-guide/>

Link Peoples Food Sovereignty Act:

<http://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Peoples-Food-Sovereignty-Act-2016.pdf>

Decolonise food production: a response to SONA 2018 from Biowatch South Africa

Now that the elation surrounding SONA has subsided we can look more soberly at what is being proposed. While the President spoke glowingly about the potential of commercial agriculture, what he didn't say is that it is a colonial model that has



failed spectacularly to feed the nation and create jobs. It is also one of the most environmentally destructive forms of land use, contributing significantly to climate change and utilising the lion's share of our scarce water resources. Its use of toxic pesticides and fertilisers has led to large-scale contamination of our soil and water. Furthermore, government support of genetically modified crops has put maize, our staple food, in jeopardy. A different approach to agriculture is sorely needed to deliver household food security and livelihoods and to produce sufficient nutrition in a rapidly changing climate. An answer lies in agroecology, practiced successfully by millions of small-scale farmers across the African continent, who rely on a diversity of crop varieties and animal breeds for food and fibre. This is not a backward step. Agroecology is increasingly recognised as a viable and innovative practice that can be scaled up with adequate policy support. We need urgently to reverse the damages of our colonial agricultural past, to retrain agricultural extension officers to support the majority of South Africa's farmers, and to reclaim and restore arable land as a productive rather than as an extractive activity. We need to revalue our traditional seed and indigenous knowledge systems. Now is the time for our government to move in a new direction and to reposition resources so that small-scale farmers can reach their full potential. This would meet many of our national development objectives. It would give hope to our youth, give more people a stake in our future, create economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for the many, and feed the nation. We urge action and public debate on these questions.



The Food Sovereignty Campaign **Art, Seed and Activism: Weaving New Stories...** **An ACB Blog Post**

By Claire Roussell

Preparing for the National Seed Dialogue and Celebration, hosted by the African Centre for Biodiversity, smallholder farmers, activists and government officials are crowded into the atrium of the Women's Jail at Constitution Hill and a drum is beating. A performer, Simo Mpapa Majola, dressed in blankets, is praying and singing and imploring the audience. He is telling the story of the women who work on a farm, who have been marginalised over and over, and yet are relentless in their search for "She-sus", the She-God, and unswerving in their connection to the soil.

Around the edges of the atrium are tables adorned with bowls and jars, hand-crafted wooden trays and woven baskets of seeds, resplendent in their diversity of colours, shapes and textures. Farmers and activists have brought the seeds from across the country to show the art of the soil – its wild excess that is still available to us – despite its depletion due to the demands of global capitalist supply chains that have destroyed agricultural biodiversity. The displays of seeds are arranged on beautiful shweshwe table cloths, interspersed with traditional tools for the preparation and serving of food: a woven beer filter, carved tools for preparing pap and bowls for sharing umqombothi.

The tables in the main area are decorated with proteas and fynbos and strewn with seeds. It feels like a seed wedding. In fact, it occurs to me that the seeds have contrived all of this to bring us together, so that we do the work that they need us to do for their continued survival and sovereignty. And, suddenly, I imagine the seeds as the agents in this event, co-ordinating and motivating hundreds of

people, from security guards, to farmers, cleaners and academics to get up in the morning and play their integral role in the unfolding of the event. Philosopher and biologist Donna Haraway describes a story that is artfully told in the right context as a "shell that can hold a little water or a few seeds. That which somehow can be collected and taken"

In planning for the National Seed Dialogue, we held strongly to the idea that the arts play an important role in activism, as a way of sharing vital messages through the heart and body, and not only the head. Writer on politics, environment and art, Rebecca Solnit, says that "the change that counts in revolution takes place first in the imagination...and cultural and symbolic acts have real political power". This is not a new idea, but the current climate of urgency demands that we employ the most effective tools





Figure 1 Simo Mpapa Majola (performance artist) and Mojalifa Mofokeng (musician)

we have to cut away our complacency, as well as to provide emotional sustenance for the long journey into an increasingly unstable world.

The relationship between art and activism offers a platform for both artists and activists to reach new audiences and foster powerful solidarities, and for people to come to their own interpretations and feelings about things, rather than aiming for precision and literalness. These characteristics of the academic study serve certain purposes very well, but do not always reach the heart. Art allows



Figure 2 Mung beans in a handwoven basket acquired from crafters at Faraday Market, Johannesburg

for a multiplicity of meanings, rather than reaching for the one truth. One performer, Kela Maswabi, felt that, at the event, art bypassed the heavy dense statistics and research and went straight to that which the human instinctively knows – “that we are part of nature and not separate from it”. While the statistics, technical language and in-depth research are vital, the need for the information that they offer to be felt, tasted, danced, and understood “in the tissues of our flesh seems to me really urgent”.

In the process of briefing artists, each of them was excited to learn a lot of new information about the issues. They felt very strongly about them, and were immediately inspired to incorporate them into their work and to share this urgency with their own audiences and communities. Early on in the process, one performer referred to the artists as “the entertainment”, and I realised that I had not at any point thought of them in this way. To my mind, they were as integral to the content and meaning of the programme as any academic paper.

Kela Maswabi described the art as the “why” and the dialogues and information as the “how”. The performances were also a way to incorporate ritual and the spiritual into the programme in ways that were not evangelical, but rather reminders of our connection to the earth, past generations and something larger than ourselves. The Friday night band performance by BCUC (Bantu Continua Uhuru Consciousness) – who use percussion instruments, tambourines, whistles, flutes and vocals, tapping into their ancestral spirits to make music that is highly political and reflects their own identity, pride and resilience – was a breath of fresh air, an opportunity to let our hair down and play. After all, why are we doing this work, if not to create a world that is more liveable, beautiful and fun, not just full of fight and struggle?



Figure 3 BCUC (Bantu Continua Uhuru Consciousness) perform at the end of a day of intense dialogue.

“We construct our world through the stories we tell about it, and the practice of magic is the art of cultural storyshifting, the conscious dreaming of a new dream,” says activist and writer, Starhawk. Perhaps, to enable the scale of social change that is necessary if we are to tackle the vast and integrated forms of oppression – in this instance apparent in the draconian policy around seed and agriculture – what is needed is a new story, and artists of all forms deal in the dark arts of storytelling. Academics certainly tell stories, too, but their modes tend to work best within their own networks and discourses, among people who know the jargon, are familiar with the arguments and can decode the statistics and academese.

According to philosopher and artist, Erin Manning, there is growing acceptance of the idea that “art itself activates and constitutes new forms of knowledge in its own right”. Artists can be like miners, who dig deep in the ground for precious minerals. What they draw out of the ground may not look like much to start with, but the material can be processed and honed into something both evocative and useful, that still holds the essence of what it is like to have spent the last million years deep underground.

By incorporating art into the conference format, we could showcase a different model of critical dialogue, aware that embedded in our tactics of struggle are the seeds of the culture that we will live into reality. Thus, it is imperative that we bring care and wisdom, love and creativity to the tactics employed, so that they reflect the values we wish to see in the world, and in order, that we might “weave something other than a shroud for the day after the apocalypse”. With the National Seed Dialogue and Celebration as a starting point, ACB will strive for a conference model that is vibrant and sensuous, as opposed to dry and cerebral; one where the residue from the event speaks to your ancestors and seeps into your dreams and into your kitchen, filling your children’s bellies.

For full report on the national seed dialogue and celebration, see the article below.

Haraway, D. 2016. Anthropocene Consortium Series. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWQ2JYFwJWU>. Solnit, R. 2017. Hope in the Dark. Chicago: Haymarket Books. Haraway, D. 2015. Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene. In H. Davis and E. Turpin (eds) Art in the Anthropocene. London: Open Humanities Press. Starhawk. 2002. Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising. New Society Publishers. Manning, E. 2016. The Minor Gesture. Durham and London: Duke University Press. Haraway, D. 1984. A Cyborg Manifesto. In D. Bell and B.M. Kennedy. The Cyber Cultures Reader London: Routledge.



Celebrating Smallholder farmers and seed diversity in South Africa: Report from the national seed dialogue and celebration

On 8 and 9 December 2017 the African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) hosted a national seed dialogue and celebration at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg. Farmer representatives from eight provinces, along with civil society organisations, academics, and officials from the Agricultural Research Council and Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) participated in cultural events and dialogues on current and emerging issues on smallholder farmers and seed diversity in South Africa.

A discussion on the political context highlighted the instability of the globalised corporate food system, and the possibilities and challenges for alternatives based on different systems of production and distribution to take root in material reality. A dialogue on current revisions to South Africa's Plant Breeders' Rights Act and Plant Improvement Act raised concerns about the exclusive commercial focus of the Acts and the marginalising impact they have on farmer seed systems and on agricultural biodiversity. In 2017 civil society and farmer associations raised their voices in public hearings and submissions. DAFF acknowledged the importance of popular participation and of agricultural biodiversity yet appears to be locked in an approach shaped by the interests of multinational corporations. Civil society has more work to do in 2018 to advocate for more equitable and transformative seed laws.

Seed is not simply about agricultural productivity. Even in a country like South Africa where smallholder farmers are completely marginalised from the mainstream, seed continues to play an important role in culture, with longstanding and dynamic

indigenous knowledge embedded in seed saving, sharing and use. Elders led a dialogue on seed, knowledge and culture, discussing local seed varieties and their multiple uses.

On Day 2, dialogues covered relatively new areas of work with smallholder farmers in the South African context. These included seed banks and seed saving, farmer participation in plant breeding and crop improvement, seed management and farmer-based quality controls.

The event celebrated the important role of smallholder farmers in conserving and adapting agricultural biodiversity, and in keeping alive the possibilities for alternatives to our corporate-dominated food system. There are major challenges, but also windows of opportunity.

The full report can be accessed here:

http://acbio.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Seed_Dialogue_Report.pdf

This Dialogue Summary has been taken from:

<https://acbio.org.za/en/seed-laws/publication/2018/celebrating-smallholder-farmers-and-seed-diversity-south-africa-report>

The People's Food Sovereignty Act – Revised

Solutions to the hunger crisis in South Africa have failed us, particularly those emanating from the market or the government. It is for this reason that the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC) seeks to unify struggles on the ground with progressive social forces to ensure that food sovereignty is placed on the national agenda and is an alternative way forward for our food system. We are not calling for technical solutions for households to access food, but rather we are calling for the deep transformation of our food system by breaking the

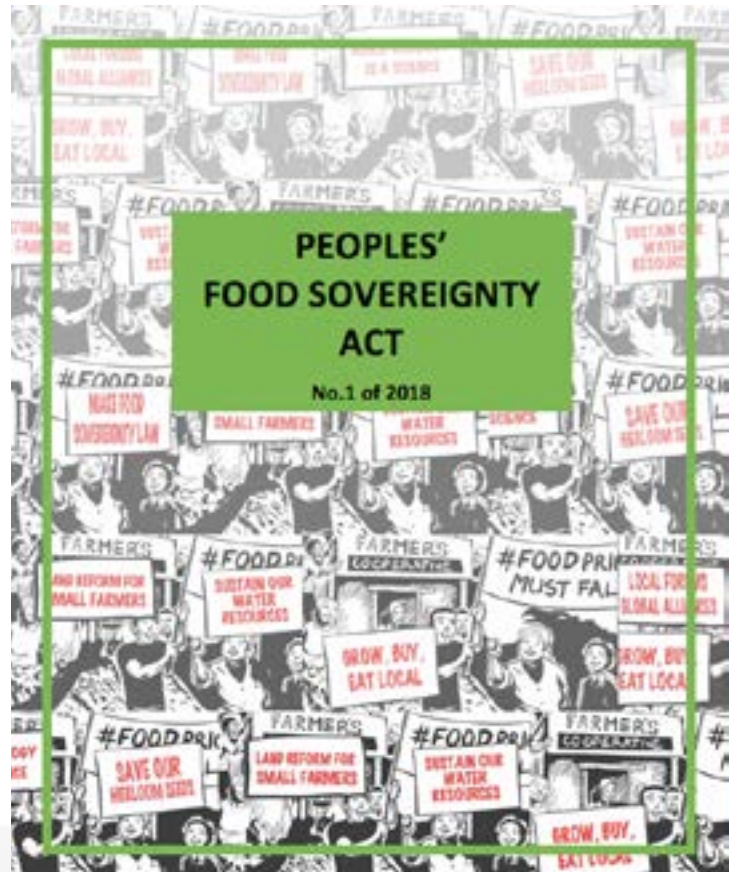


control of food corporations and repositioning the state to realise the Constitutional right to food, and ensure the creation of conditions and space for the emergence of food sovereignty alternatives from below.

This Act, which was launched at a People's parliament on 12 November 2016, is one way in which we seek to do this. It is a citizen driven act to ensure that people's power drives and implements the Act. It expresses our emancipatory desire for transformation of the food system.

We have now revised the Act based on the many useful comments by different people and communities.

The revised version of this Act and the research that informed it can be accessed on the SAFSC website at this link: <http://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/FS-Act-no.1-of-2018.pdf>





The Worker Cooperative Campaign

Call to Cooperatives: Join the Solidarity Economy Movements Website



The Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre has launched a Solidarity Economy Movements website to serve as a marketing platform for co-operatives in South Africa. The website is a useful tool for all cooperatives as they can register and create a profile of their cooperative, describe their activities and market their products and services online at no charge.

The aim of this website is to promote the Solidarity Economy by providing citizens who want to support cooperatives with a portal that allows them to search for cooperatives near them.

Based on the idea of the Solidarity Economy the aim is to transform production, consumption, savings and ways of living to sustain life and advance transformative values in their practices.

We invite all cooperatives to register on the website by following these simple steps:

1. Type the following address into your internet browser: www.sem.org.za
2. Click on the block in the top right corner '+ add your coop'

3. You will then be asked to register so type in your email address and choose a password
4. Fill out all your coop details and press 'submit'

Share this link with co-operatives you know so that we can strengthen this platform for building the solidarity economy in South Africa.

Profiling Co-operatives on the Solidarity Economy Movements Website

As mentioned in the article above, the Solidarity Economy Movements website has been launched. We are trying to now dynamise the website, and get as many progressive cooperatives to sign up so that it can become a truly dynamic space.

We currently have the co-operatives signed up from the following sectors:

- 13 in Manufacturing
- 11 in Agriculture
- 10 in Recycling
- 6 in Services
- 1 in Banking

Here are a few of our newest members:





Bulungula Essential Oils Co-operative produces lemongrass products in Nqileni, Eastern Cape. Products include dry and fresh lemongrass leaves, stalks for medicine and cooking as well as lemongrass products: rooibos tea, soap and lip balm, hand and body lotion, bath salts and sugar scrubs.

The Ethical Co-op offers ethically sourced fresh organic fruit, vegetables and dairy in Cape Town, and, countrywide, a wide range of products that meet their high standards, such as herbs, spices, body products, seeds and paints.



Naledi and Rustler's Valley Farming Programme Co-operative grows their own crops, building their own livelihoods and raising their cattle on the rest of the land. Naledi Village is in pursuit of a holistic approach to the development of a sustainable community. The aim is to produce high quality, organic products and to develop systems to support family kitchen gardens and communal farming efforts in partnership with residents in the area





Activist Resources to Advance the Solidarity Economy from Below

A Matter of Principle: Cooperatives in Development: Brochure



The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) which is an international organisation aiming to advance the co-operative model currently represents 1,2 billion people from over 2.6 million co-operatives worldwide. In its Brochure 'A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE: CO-OPERATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT' the ICA provides a great overview and understanding of Co-op's and their ability in creating an inclusive project of development.

This brochure describes **what a cooperative is**: “a tried and tested business model which enables people around the world to take control of their livelihoods”, why cooperative development is important: “supporting the start-up and growth of co-operatives is an established way to enable people to take charge of their own development; and also highlights the seven principles in development, these are listed below with examples of how co-operatives around the world are putting these principles to practice:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are open to all persons, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination, which makes them a safe space for more vulnerable groups, such as women, minorities and refugees, to create their own opportunities. For example: *The Federación Uruguaya de Cooperativas de Vivienda por Ayuda Mutua (FUCVAM)*, allows low income locals to have access to dignified and durable housing, a model that has already expanded to 15 countries in Latin America, and includes other amenities such as community farms or day care

2. Democratic Member Control

In co-operatives, workers are given a voice regarding their own trajectory, they are empowered and united and can achieve more than they would on their own in the global supply chain. For example: The Co-operative Alliance of Kenya (CAK) ensures that there are elections every year, presenting an enabling environment for effective participation where each member has a right to speak in meetings and stand for any elective position in the co-operative.

3. Member economic participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative and receive benefits in proportion to their transactions. They allocate surpluses for developing their co-operative, setting up reserves, and supporting other activities approved by the membership. For example: In Kerala, the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society started way back in 1925 for the benefit of 14 marginalised labourers who lost their livelihood due to their active participation in Indian Freedom Movement. Today, they are the leading co-operative society in the country uplifting standard of living of over 5.000 workers directly con-



tributing to the development of the society

4. Autonomy and independence

Co-operatives are resilient and self-help business models with a purpose which puts people before profit. For example: Caminos (Roads) is a Uruguayan Co-operative formed by a group of mainly female health professionals in 2002 when the mutual for which they worked closed. Currently, Caminos provides quality employment to more than 100 people committed to self-management.

5. Education, training and information

Co-operatives decrease the chances of desertification in remote areas by building local expertise through capacity-building. For example: Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU) is the oldest training institution in Tanzania, and it's committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and constructive involvement in community development. Current university enrolment stands at more than 4.000 students in the fields of co-operative accounting, management, and rural development.

6. Co-operation among co-operatives

Co-operatives are an international movement with a strong network that enables workers in different parts of the world to share knowledge, work together, and improve conditions at the local level. For example: in 2010, Palestinian farmers in Jordan Valley decided to make their co-operatives work together to overcome the region's restrictions on movement and access to resources, markets, and services. The Seedling Nursery in Jordan Valley now is run by three different co-operatives: The Northern Jordan Valley Agriculture Co-operative, Ein Al Beda Agriculture Co-operative and Al Khadra Agriculture Co-operative, whose 245 farmers benefit from the nursery's quality, prices, and seed compati-

bility.

7. Concern for the community

Co-operatives keep wealth at the local level and contribute to peace and political stability, offering dignified ways out of poverty and empowering the community. In Mexico, since 2008, "Caja Popular Mexicana", a savings and credit co-operative, has been running a big program of social responsibility for their 2 million members. Their scholarship program has benefited over 56.000 students.

Download the brochure at this link:

<https://ica.coop/sites/default/files/publication-files/171103coops4devbrochure-1264612746.pdf>



contact us

We invite organisations and activists to make contributions to the Newsletter by writing stories, contributing photographs or cultural contributions, such as poetry, art, songs etc.

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All back issues of the Solidarity Economy News are available on our website.

