

Book Reviews

***Empire and Co-operation - how the British Empire used co-operatives in its development strategies 1900-1970* — Rita Rhodes, 2012, published by John Donald, West Newington House, 10 Newington Road, Edinburgh; EH9 1QS, ISBN 978 1 90656 656 2.**

A Review Article by Hans Münkner

Dr Rita Rhodes, the author of this book, is a well-known figure in the co-operative community. She earned her reputation as historian and research fellow in the field of co-operative development at international level by publishing *The International Co-operative Alliance During War and Peace 1910-1960* (ICA, Geneva, 1995); *An Arsenal for Labour: The Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society and Politics 1896-1996* (Holyoake Books, Manchester, 1999) and as co-author of *Thematic Guide to ICA Congresses 1895-1995* (ICA, Geneva, 1995). She also contributed a well-researched paper on "British Liberalism and Indian Co-operation" to the volume *One Hundred Years: Co-operative Credit Societies Act in India 1904*, which I edited in 2005. She gained vast practical experience through her work as a lecturer and consultant at universities, colleges, technical aid agencies and international organisations.

The publication *Empire and Co-operation: How the British Empire Used Co-operatives in its Development Strategies 1900-1970* made a timely to coincide with the UN International Year of Co-operatives 2012 and generally in a time where much interest is being shown in various forms of mutuality and voluntary co-operation, with co-operative societies having the longest and most successful history among the different forms of mutuality and business organisations with social objectives. In her book, the author shows unexpected productive synergies of imperialism and co-operation (page xi). She describes and analyses why and how the British Empire came to use co-operatives as part of its development strategy.

In the book general success criteria of programmes for helping people to help themselves by promoting co-operative development are clearly described, quoting specialists who worked in this field during the times of the British Empire and later in the Commonwealth. This includes the role of government restricted to providing a suitable environment for sustainable co-operative growth: appropriate legislation, an appropriate tax regime, education and infrastructure support.

It is emphasised that lasting promotion of co-operative development cannot be achieved through short-term projects based on the hiring of consultants with general qualifications for two- or three- year contracts (as is so common in the UN System, p304). Promoting co-operative development is a long-term process. What is needed first of all is training of trainers, finding people convinced of the co-operative idea, who in turn train technical field staff, co-operative leaders and employees in establishing and running co-operative enterprises and mobilising members and their resources to co-operate for their own benefit.

The book is subdivided into three parts with 15 chapters running to a total of 342 pages. The reader is introduced to the complex subject-matter from three perspectives:

Part I describes and analyses how the British Empire was formed and how it developed in a changing world. We learn how different conditions and needs led to diverse forms of co-operatives, separated by forming different alliances but unified under a jointly agreed set of universal co-operative values and principles.

In Part II co-operation in general and co-operatives in particular are discussed under the heading "Institution building and professionalisation", outlining the roles played by the Plunkett Foundation, civil servants in colonial co-operative development and the International

Co-operative Alliance (ICA). A special chapter (11) is devoted to co-operative development in the Middle East between the two World Wars.

Part III explores how British colonial policy and post-war colonial co-operative development led to new approaches to government promotion of and international technical assistance to co-operative development by new UN-Agencies (ILO and FAO), the ICA, and movement-to-movement assistance as a new form of co-operative solidarity. This is illustrated by two cases: Malaya (Malaysia) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). It is shown how the British Empire was transformed into the Commonwealth and promoting co-operatives became a worldwide process.

Rita Rhodes impresses the reader with her deep knowledge of the origins, development and background of the “Classical British Indian Pattern of Co-operation” designed and put into practice in India in 1904, which later became a worldwide applied model of state-sponsored co-operative development. As a historian, Rita Rhodes describes the development and demise of the British Empire and its transformation into a Commonwealth. She portrays the different ways that co-operatives have taken root in the former dominions, colonies and protectorates, using ideas and resources as they were when decisions were made and describing personal contributions of key figures: promoters like Plunkett, Wolff, Nicholson and Registrars of Co-operative Societies like Calvert, Campbell, Strickland and SurrIDGE.

She explains in some detail, why British co-operatives were strongly consumer-oriented, based on liberal ideas and rejecting government support which they feared might encroach on their independence, while Irish co-operatives were mainly farmer-based agricultural producer organisations following European models. Answering the needs of their members, British consumer co-operatives used their wholesale societies to import goods from their own plantations in the British dependencies, transporting them on their own ships, and showing little concern for the needs of agricultural producers and their co-operatives in the colonies. Outside Britain, thrift and loan societies and credit unions were formed, following models developed in Europe, Canada and the USA. Unlike in Britain, European co-operators held the view that the state should enable but not interfere with co-operatives, that “state assistance should be moderate and temporary” (p296).

She describes how the ICA reduced its orientation towards consumer co-operatives by becoming an apex organisation of different forms of co-operatives and how the ICA became less Euro-centric by becoming active in other parts of the world and in particular in the Asian region.

The author underlines other differences prevailing in co-operative understanding in Britain and Ireland between:

- Co-operative societies as voluntary and independent associations, self-created, democratically owned and working without state subsidies versus government promoted and state-sponsored co-operatives.
- Strict adherence to the principle of political and religious neutrality versus deviations, for instance by forming a Co-operative Party in Britain, taking co-operative ideas into politics without breaching co-operative leaders’ view of their independence from the state.

Rita Rhodes deals in some detail with the relationship between the ICA and the UN Organisations (ILO, FAO) and other international and national NGOs and — in Britain — between the consumer co-operatives and the Plunkett Foundation, which represented agricultural co-operatives and had Irish roots. There is a plea for increasing movement-to-movement aid, as already practiced with some success by the Scandinavian co-operatives in East and West Africa.

Great emphasis is rightly placed on the special nature of co-operative development work. Success or failure depends on the selection of the ‘right’ people, ie people who not only

know about the working of co-operatives but are also convinced of the co-operative idea and motivated to spread it. The importance of competent and motivated promoters is stressed. During colonial times, preparing specialists for promoting co-operatives in the key position of Registrar of Co-operative Societies was a long-term selection, education and qualification process. In this way, leaders were generated, who turned this work into their life career. Such Registrars (like Calvert, Campbell, Strickland) became famous figures who wrote textbooks that became classics in co-operative law and development. This underlines the point made earlier that training of trainers has to come first, before effective training of technical field staff of co-operative departments and of office holders and employees of co-operatives can follow.

Rita Rhodes describes how different models of co-operative development were applied in the states and territories belonging to the British Empire. After the Second World War, decision-making processes at the government level influenced the course of co-operative development policy. In 1946 the experience gained with the classical British-Indian Pattern of Co-operation was summarised in a “Model Co-operative Societies Ordinance and Regulations” — referred to by Rita Rhodes as the “Magna Carta” of co-operative development (p295) — recommended to colonial governments together with an addendum outlining the way in which training of co-operative technicians should be inducted. After their independence, the new governments made their own choice, for instance by using socialist concepts as in Tanzania in the 1970s.

In the final chapter of her book, the author describes how the task of promoting of co-operative development shifted after the Second World War from the British Empire to international organisations, often under the umbrella of the United Nations (ILO, FAO) but also to other NGOs like the ICA and the Plunkett Foundation. There was close collaboration between the ILO and ICA in this field. Promotion of co-operatives became part of the policies and strategies of inter-governmental bodies and NGOs. Looking at new technical assistance initiatives regarding co-operative development, the author underlines the long-term nature of promoting co-operatives and that the best and enduring results were achieved where competent and motivated officers (like Registrars of Co-operative Societies and their staff) were able to pursue their work continuously over years or even decades.

The ICA had remained heavily Euro-centric. It needed a programme, funds and the missionary spirit to expand its operations. This was partly achieved by building up regional offices in Asia, Africa and America between the 1960s and the 1980s, paying much attention to research and education. Co-operatives were generally seen as institutions whose aim was to combat indebtedness, increase farm production of peasant farmers, give producers a fair return for their labour, reduce exploitation by middle-men and landlords, provide daily necessities to households at reasonable prices, and teach thrift and encourage saving.

The ICA declared the period between 1971 and 1981 a “co-operative development decade” with an increased flow of knowledge and experience between the regional offices. During this period, programmes like AGITCOOP and CEMAS were launched by the ICA, MATCOM by the ILO and AMSAC by FAO together with the German Foundation for International Development (DSE). COPAC was formed as a joint committee. The British Ministry for Overseas Development with its ODA was engaged in providing specialised staff for overseas work, released from British co-operatives and specially trained in the Co-operative College at Stanford Hall together with overseas co-operative personnel. The Plunkett Foundation offered correspondence courses and a research library. In some ways, the work of the earlier British colonial system was continued by the new UN agencies and NGOs.

In her conclusion, Rita Rhodes underlines that what might have been expected — that collaboration of the imperial and the co-operative, having different histories, ideologies and traditions would be unproductive — was not found to be the case. The model of co-operative legislation developed in India with its versatility and universality helped to spread co-operatives worldwide. The mixture of conservative and liberal ideas in a symbiotic relationship gave the Empire a pluralistic nature, allowing co-operative ideas of holding resources in common and the co-operative philosophy based on democracy, self-help, self-management and mutuality on the

one hand and equability, solidarity and economy on the other to flourish (p305). Co-operatives were seen as an outward expression of co-operation, being more attractive to British liberals than to conservatives, with the Empire pursuing objectives of a development agency, seeing co-operatives as a remedy against poverty and social unrest.

Registrars of Co-operative Societies who were convinced of the co-operative idea propagated co-operatives in literature and developed effective methods of practical application, giving co-operatives a clear identity with a formula set down in Rochdale and later reaffirmed by the ICA, becoming less exclusively British in motivation and less consumer-oriented in reviews of its principles in the 1930s and the 1960s, offering co-operative promoters clear points of reference.

Co-operatives were perceived as building blocks in post-colonial territories, based on self-management, democratic control and accountability, making contributions to building civil society in advance of independence. Co-operatives' relationship with the state and political parties ranges from distant to very close, at one extreme the state offering reasonable legislation and taxation and little more; at the other extreme the state expecting benefits from technical assistance, and creating favourable and supportive infrastructure. In the extreme case this concern with creating an educated workforce as well as modern education and health systems under an interventionist state even saw co-operatives co-opted under communist, socialist or Nazi regimes.

In concluding Rita Rhodes quotes the statement of early co-operator Dr William King (1786-1865) that "co-operatives must be voluntary and should not depend on any power but their own", clearly differentiating them from the system of imperialism (p307). In spite of this apparent conflict, the idea of bringing together "the imperial" and "the co-operative" in one volume proves to be very fruitful and offers the reader deep and unexpected insights into the role of co-operatives in the British Empire, the Commonwealth and then worldwide. This makes the book interesting for historians as well as for those engaged in co-operative development.

The Reviewer

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The Poor Had No Lawyers: Who Owns Scotland and How They Got It – Andy Wightman, 2011, published by Berlinn, Edinburgh. ISBN 978-1-8415-8960-2, £9.99.

Reviewed by Martin Large

Andy Wightman's comprehensive, authoritative, well referenced and engagingly argued book provides timely background knowledge to inform the groundswell of popular demand for affordable, green homes in sustainable neighbourhoods, and access to food growing land by the local food movement.

Partly inspired by the Scottish communitarian land reform movement, in England community land trusteeship is growing rapidly, with over 80 community land trusts (CLTs) now established mainly for providing affordable housing, workspace and community facilities. Mostly registered as co-operative community benefit societies that are charities at law, CLTs aim to capture the value of land for enduring community benefits and for individual enterprise. Triggered by both market and state failure to provide affordable access to land and housing, CLTs are civil society,

community based, open membership organisations that are democratically accountable to members.

Andy Wightman's aim is to go beyond such local, micro-solutions excellent though they are, and cut to the chase of landed power. To him, land reform is the process of redistribution of power over and by means of redistribution, land tenure reform, market reform and taxation policy. It is a key part of social and economic policy. He asks, "Who owns Scotland? What happened to all the common land?" He invites readers on a fascinating journey into Scottish history to find out how landowners acquired common land, how lawyers and politicians privatised land through legal fixes and how modern land grabbing, for example for the acquisition of land-based rights to oil, is facilitated. He argues that there were five main Scottish land grabs — feudalisation: the appropriation of the 25% of Scotland that was church property in the Reformation, seventeenth-century legal reforms, the division of the commonties¹ and the nepotistic alienation of the common good landed wealth of the burghs. Here are not only critical analysis now relevant more than ever in the wake of the housing bubble, but also practical, well-argued proposals for creating a better social future.

Both a fresh look at history and good stories help the reader. He asks, for example if Robert de Bruce was a braveheart nationalist before his time, or a warlord member of a fractious elite class, descended from Norman conquerors who was fighting for feudal power, land and money. The book cover offers an allegory for the book's argument. It shows the ruined Ardoch farmhouse in Glen Gairn, Aberdeenshire, once a clachan of 14 houses with a shop and school. It was the home of his wife's ancestor, Father Lachland McIntosh, the parish priest for 64 years until his death in 1845 aged 93. This village was abandoned because the residents were never more than a year away from eviction, as Aberdeenshire was excluded from the 1886 Crofting Act which gave security of tenure. "The reason", Wightman writes, "that the last remaining house lies empty today on a largely private estate is eloquent testimony to our continuing failure to challenge landed power."

Some chapters may make readers angry, partly because the author uncovers to our discomfort the elegant landed power, power characterised as concealed, inconspicuous, taken-for-granted, unrecognisable. So the 'our island story' version of history, of kings, pageantry, celebrity royal intrigue and international war ignores such key questions as how our land was privatised. Take the EU single farm payments to farmers. These are given supposedly for supporting working farmers, but in fact recipients do not need to do any farming to receive the payments as the funds are not tied to land and can be bought as 'entitlements' supporting 'slipper' farmers. Of the £591m paid to farmers in 2009, 10% or £59.2. went to 182 farmers or 0.95% of the total, 20% or £118.3m went to 538 farmers or 2.77%, and 30% or £177.50 m went to 1,032 farmers or 5.3% of the total number of farmers. Farmers who buy SFP rights can even offset the cost against tax! Those who have the most, receive the most, raising the price of land.

In his fine book Wightman argues that the way ahead for land reform includes:

- A public debate about what land is for so as to prepare the way for an informed approach to more equity, fair play and social justice.
- Reforming land law to ensure land restitution law for recovering common land.
- The abolition of all Crown rights over Crown land putting the revenues into a Scottish Land Fund and a Scottish Sovereign Wealth Fund.
- An improved and democratised system of land registration.

The last point is crucial and a key proposal relevant to all of the UK. As Wightman writes, "All entries recorded in the Land Register should be in the name of a natural person or a legal entity registered within the EU. The ultimate ownership of all corporate owners should be declared."

He also argues for policies and resources to promote community land ownership, simplifying the community right to buy process and surveying all remaining common land; all tenants holding a protected agricultural tenancy should be given the right to acquire their farms, and a policy of one farm per farmer as in Denmark, with a cap on public subsidy; the abolition of Council Tax and Business Rates and the introduction of land value taxation to finance local government; decision making and management of all public land should be placed in the hands of regionally elected land boards.

From a research angle, there is clearly an agenda arising here concerned with researching the co-operative ownership of land, the issues involved in mutualising land, of governance and of securing equitable access. Such research is needed to guide the development of profound, well-grounded co-operative land trusteeship solutions which have stood the test of time, like Ebenezer Howard's Letchworth Garden City.

This book is so timely and well argued for Scotland that the need is highlighted for a similar hard-hitting critique of landed power and the way ahead for England, where fewer than 1% of the population own around 70% of English farm land. In this age of austerity we should remind our politicians to look to offshore property-owners who avoid significant taxes and large-scale builders who sit on land-banks awaiting unearned capital gains, while a good proportion of land is still unregistered, and large landowners receive proportionately the lion's share of the single farm payments.

The Reviewer

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Note

- 1 A Scottish term for areas of land where use rights are shared but that are not available for use 'in common'. This distinction was used to privatise areas that were not considered to have the protection of being common land.

Co-operation: A Post-war Opportunity Missed? — Alun Burge, 2012, published by the Bevan Foundation, Merthyr Tydfil. ISBN 978-1-904767-54-1, free to download at <http://www.bevanfoundation.org/publications/co-operation-a-post-war-opportunity-missed-a-welsh-perspective/>

Reviewed by Molly Scott-Cato

Alun Burge begins his pamphlet with a contrast between the views of mutualism taken by Rowan Williams, who spoke on the theme to the Welsh Assembly, and David Cameron's sad and now defunct concept of 'the Big Society'. He uses this as a springboard to make a comparison between the opposing views of welfare and social security that were in active debate in the post-war period and during the development of the welfare state as we know it today. If the idea of mutual public services is to be anything more than the 'aspirational waffle' of Williams's critique, it is likely to be in Wales that this is developed, argues Burge.

His pamphlet focuses on the writings of a number of Welsh co-operators, who had worked for a Labour victory in 1945 but, once the government was in power, sought to preserve the power of working people to manage their own economic and social affairs through co-operation, rather

than allowing the domination of centralised state power. As he characterises the situation:

Profound differences of view existed, based in the distinct histories and philosophies of these two parallel arms of the labour movement. The co-operative movement had long worked to provide for all its members needs “from the cradle to the grave”. The decades-old vision of creating a “Co-operative Commonwealth” was based in a markedly different approach to how industries and services should be collectively organised and delivered from that adopted by the Labour Government.

This questioning of the ‘relationship between the individual citizens and the state’ and the need to determine the rights and responsibilities on both sides could not be more timely as the politics of austeria is being used to destroy the rights we have taken for granted as part of a civilised society, and as the social contract comes under greater strain.

Reading between the lines of Burge’s historical account we might suggest that the welfare state removed working people’s awareness of the need for eternal vigilance, and that this has been exploited in a way the wartime co-operators would never have permitted. Here is William Hazell, for example, a collier at Lady Windsor Colliery at Ynysybwl, South Wales, critiquing the Beveridge Report because it made no attempt at structural economic change. Beveridge’s ‘five giants’ (Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness), he argued, were in fact “One Giant with five heads, the giant being Competitive Capitalism”. He continued his invective against “The worse than feudal land system; the financial octopus; the great industrial interests; the landlords — all can breathe again, for they remain untouched.” With slight changes of vocabulary the exact same critique could be made today, and as the party of capital retakes the reins of power we see how the failure to tackle these bastions of monopoly power, or to enable local people to do so, has left us vulnerable to the destruction of the very services that Hazell celebrated.

Others are better placed than me to provide an account of the battle within the Labour Party over the nationalisation of industry during the post-war period. Burge notes the particular role played by Ian Mikado who “argued that the whole co-operative movement was not a valuable example of public ownership because it was difficult to distinguish its relationship with the community from that of the private sector”, while suggesting that the CIS’s opposition to the nationalisation of the insurance industry was akin to Lord Lyle’s opposition to the nationalisation of the sugar industry.

It is easy in retrospect to see the errors that were made in the push for wholesale nationalisation of industry and the drive for centralisation. Although Burge characterises this period as one where the opportunity for co-operation was missed, it is also, of course a period when many opportunities to improve the lives of working people were grasped and huge advances were made. The pamphlet is therefore useful at precisely this time when the welfare state we have all relied on is being questioned as never before.

I have recently become a member of the Welsh Government’s Co-operative Commission, whose members also include Pauline Green and Robin Murray. We are greatly inspired by the heritage of the Welsh co-operators, as well as the achievements of the many Welsh Labour politicians who helped build the welfare state. With Robert Owen in mind, we ask why there are not more worker co-operatives in Wales; with Nye Bevan in mind we ask whether Wales can play a role in the evolution of public services. We hope this next opportunity will not be missed.

The Reviewer

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***Economic and Other Benefits of the Entrepreneurs' Co-operative as a Specific Form of Enterprise Cluster* — Nicole Göler von Ravensburg, 2011, published by International Labour Organisation, ISBN 978-9-2212-3416-6, free to download at: http://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_173050/lang--en/index.htm**

Reviewed by Gabrielle Ullrich

We have just finished celebrating the International Year of Co-operatives, a form of enterprise which has existed in modern economic systems for more than 150 years and which has never lost its attraction across all population groups and economic and social sectors. Coinciding with this year declared by the United Nations in homage to the long-standing success of co-operatives, this book by Nicole Göler von Ravensburg is timely for many reasons. The book explains why the co-operative system of enterprises is of critical importance for the success of entrepreneurs of different sizes and sectors.

The publication was issued in 2011 by the International Labour Office (ILO) and the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives (COPAC), a joint committee of the United Nations, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the ILO and the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA). In over 200 pages, the author shares her wide international experience in co-operative enterprise development. She analyses the establishment of entrepreneurs' co-operatives and their economic, social and employment benefits, the reasons why they have not more evenly spread across the world, and provides suggestions as to what could be done to promote this type of enterprise.

According to the author the definition of "entrepreneurs' co-operatives" is not easy for various reasons. In the first chapter she considers the most important reasons why outside Europe many co-operative laws do not provide for co-operatives comprised of entrepreneurs and that many associations of entrepreneurs, although working essentially in a co-operative way, either do not want to formalise their relationship or decide to choose other legal forms. Many NGO-initiated enterprise clusters remain dependent on external aid and thus do not fulfill the definition of a co-operative as provided for in ILO Recommendation No 193 and in the ICA Definition of Co-operatives which is incorporated into this ILO Standard and is hence confirmed by ILO's tripartite constituency (governments, employers' and workers' organisations).

In Chapter 2, in search for a working definition, the author explores similarities and differences between a co-operative enterprise cluster as compared to non-co-operative business clusters. In doing so she looks at membership, benefits and activities as well as the ownership and governance of enterprise consortia. She thus outlines the specifics that characterise a co-operative in distinction to other legal forms. Such characteristics include the ownership of equity by members, democratic voting rights and self-governance by way of co-operative members constituting the board(s). However, she also distinguishes entrepreneurs' co-operatives from better known types of co-operatives such as agricultural or credit co-operatives.

In Chapter 3 the benefits of entrepreneurs' co-operatives are briefly demonstrated through examples of the European retail sector. The state of empirical and theoretical research is outlined in the first section. It becomes apparent that internationally the number of empirical studies on the subject is very limited, while the theoretical body of knowledge is quite extensive. The author points out that the arguments in favour of economies of scale and market share might be important. Nevertheless, one of the main advantages of the many documented co-operative business clusters outside Europe may lie in obtaining information on markets and customers and thus greater planning certainty. At the same time the author underlines

the need for such co-operatives to focus on operational efficiency and good business relationships among their members. The chapter then moves on to report internet research on 69 entrepreneurs' co-operatives which demonstrates how various economic and social benefits are achieved in this kind of co-operative. The author elaborates some differences which occur depending on whether an entrepreneurs' co-operative operates in a highly industrialised or post-industrial setting or in a less differentiated, less industrialised economy.

While Chapter 4 gives an insight into what is known about the employment effects of entrepreneurs' co-operatives Chapter 5 outlines the operational potential and problems faced by this type of enterprise cluster. The arguments here are firmly based on the view that co-operatives are voluntary organisations and that members will only trade with their entrepreneurs' co-operative as long as they see that the benefits outweigh the investment of time and more tangible investment the co-operative demands. Again, this chapter is based on the available empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives about the sustainability of such co-operatives, on their organisational development and management and also on development goals such as poverty reduction.

The question of how entrepreneurs' co-operatives could be promoted is the focus of Chapter 6. The author systematically analyses the effects of past co-operative promotion activities, the normative environment, SME promotion policies, co-operative policy and law, as well as the influence of co-operative unions, public administrations and the attitudes of the wider business community. Again the author illustrates many of her findings with carefully selected citations and examples.

Lessons learned from international experiences are reported in Chapter 7 "Legal and policy framework for good practice". The author reaches the conclusion that a conducive legal and cultural framework is necessary for entrepreneurs' co-operatives to thrive in a competitive world. In order to describe what these might be the author adopts the position of entrepreneurs wanting to co-operate voluntarily. She also examines how the creation of such conditions can reduce the cost financial development support. She emphasises that the support needed must recognise the special character of co-operatives as self-help-organisations and respect especially their unique governance requirements. She discusses the possibilities of fashioning the co-operative law accordingly, to initiate a national co-operative dialogue, to support federations and networks rather than individual entrepreneurs' co-operatives and also to invest in research and systematic data collection.

Chapter 8 outlines promotional activities that go beyond legal measures, research and development and institutionalised dialogue. The author is convinced that there should be no favoritism for co-operatives over other forms of enterprise clusters. She explains how to assess a national situation, identify relevant actors and design promotional measures that are both specific to entrepreneurs' co-operatives and conform to economic policies. Such policies are aimed at achieving a level playing-field of organisational forms in regard to issues such as competition, taxation, and marketing. The study comes to the conclusion that ILO, with its tripartite structure, would be well placed as the catalyst for such developments in many countries of the world.

This publication can be considered as a wide-ranging resource book for entrepreneurs' co-operatives specifically, but with relevance that also extends beyond this specific organisational form and is relevant to co-operatives generally. Hence, it can serve managers of primary and secondary co-operatives as well as collaborators in promotional agencies. Beyond an extensive internet search the author gives an insight into the state of empirical as well as theoretical research. Importantly, the study gives access to the results of German research on the subject to non-German speakers. Of specific value are the two tables in the appendices which summarise the benefits as identified in the literature as well as the economic and social benefits of practical cases. Over 30 examples, dozens of carefully selected, short citations, several tables and figures illustrate the study. It is almost impossible to identify subjects which are not covered in this study. One area which might need more consideration in future

research is the development of the human resources of all actors who are responsible for the implementation of the complex managerial and promotional structures. There is also further scope for the empirical study of the implementation of entrepreneurs' co-operatives as a specific form of enterprise.

It is hoped that this publication will be read by the many people who are involved in the creation and promotions of co-operatives. The recent boom of newly created co-operatives in various economic and social sectors as well as the proclamation of 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives should be reason enough for an increased attention to this publication. But what makes this study unique and gives a stark argument for reading is the emphasis that author puts on the advantages of co-operatives for independent entrepreneurs and their enterprises, above all with respect to obtaining information on markets and customers. Once the legal provision is made for entrepreneurs and their enterprises to form co-operatives and this form of enterprise cluster is made known to entrepreneurs, the probability of SMEs to surviving in ever-more competitive global markets can be enhanced. The study is based on strong theoretical and empirical research and offers practitioners and politicians alike the detailed arguments for introducing and promoting entrepreneurs' co-operatives.

The Reviewer

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