

# People before profit: the response of co-operatives to the global financial crisis and economic recession

*ICA Co-operatives Research Conference: Oxford 2-4 September. 2009*

## Further Details

### Venue: Queens College, Oxford University.

Queen's College was founded in 1341, and is a delightful venue in the Centre of Oxford. Conference rooms are set in traditional surroundings but all modern facilities are provided. All bedroom accommodation is ensuite. See: <http://www.queens.ox.ac.uk/>

### Location and Transport

Queen's College is in the Centre of Oxford, about 15 minutes walk from the railway station. There is a frequent (and rapid) bus service from Heathrow Airport which stops opposite the College. If driving it is advisable to park on the outskirts of Oxford and take the park-and-ride service.

### Registration

Registration will be set up on our website soon (<http://technology.open.ac.uk/cru/>). The registration fee covers 2 nights bed and breakfast, lunch and dinner; a reception on first evening; a CD-Rom of papers sent in advance.

Early bird Registration fee before 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2009:	£350
Later Registration fee (must be before July 31 <sup>st</sup> ):	£400

## Call for Papers

The Chair of the International Co-operative Alliance Committee on Co-operative Research, Lou Hammond Ketilson, is pleased to announce that the 2009 ICA Research Conference will take place in Oxford, on September 2-4.

### Conference Themes

Since we met last year, the world has been thrown into a financial crisis caused by short-termism and greed on the part of bankers, fuelled by huge bonuses, facilitated by financial instruments nobody understands, and accompanied by complete regulatory failure on the part of governments. The financial crisis has caused a 'credit crunch' that has propelled the global economy into recession, with rising unemployment and home repossessions already affecting millions of people. Governments have 'mortgaged our future' by borrowing hugely to bail out banks and failing industries. Among governments, a rather narrow discussion has begun on how to regulate the banks so this can never happen again. Among citizens, a broader discussion has begun on how to create more sustainable, fairer, and more people-centred economies. Researchers into co-operatives can contribute a lot to both discussions, and this conference will enable us to share what

we know and to create new knowledge to meet the challenges of these extraordinary times. Here are some of the questions we want to consider:

**Declining trust – governance and regulation innovations:** Are financial services co-operatives such as co-operative banks, building societies and credit unions weathering the crisis better than their investor-owned counterparts? If so, what lessons can they teach governments about good governance and bank regulation? Can they provide a viable alternative, or will they suffer from over-regulation as governments that do not understand the ‘co-operative difference’ tighten up on all banking institutions?

**Unemployment and social cohesion:** With rising unemployment, what role can employee-owned and other co-operatives play in generating new jobs?

**Declining state services:** as the state faces dramatically increasing budgetary demands, and is turning more to market solutions, how can co-operatives help fill the gap and be both distinctive and competitive?

**Support Needs:** What is the role and potential of co-operative development agencies? How can federal bodies and consorzi strengthen the sector?

**Housing crisis:** With rising home repossessions, can housing co-operatives provide a people-centred alternative? What kinds of government policies are needed to enable housing co-operative sectors to expand to meet the affordability gap? Are there specific models such as limited or shared equity co-ops that can combine individual home ownership with collective security?

**Local-global tensions** - With a shrinking global economy, what is the role of co-operatives in sustaining local economies? Are there models that can be replicated, such as consumer/farmer partnerships in local food strategies, or shared service co-ops for local businesses?

**North-South issues** - With falling demand for products from developing countries, what is the role of consumer co-operatives in increasing fair trade? What can we learn from existing north/south partnerships, and can these be replicated?

This list of themes is not exhaustive. Submissions that analyze other topical issues concerning co-operatives are also welcomed.

The title of the paper and abstract in English should be submitted (by e-mail only) **no later than April 30th 2009**, to the following address: [Johnston.Birchall@stir.ac.uk](mailto:Johnston.Birchall@stir.ac.uk)

All abstracts should be prepared in A4 MS Word format (Times New Roman, Size 12 font, single-spaced) and ideally be no more than 500 words in length. Author(s) full title, name, address, organization and email address should be included at the end of the abstract.

## **Conference Venue and Programme**

The conference will be held in an Oxford College which will provide accommodation, meals and meeting rooms.

Participants will arrive on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, and register. A reception will be organised for early evening followed by a meal. The main programme will be on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> September, finishing late afternoon. Further details and a registration form will be posted later.

Participants may be interested in joining the Society of Co-operative Studies Conference which begins midday Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September, and finishes midday Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September – see their website for registration and programme details which will be published later:

<http://www.co-opstudies.org/>

## **Schedule for abstracts, papers and registrations**

April 30<sup>th</sup> Deadline for submitting abstracts

May 15<sup>th</sup> Decision made regarding accepted abstracts

July 30<sup>th</sup> Completed papers submitted and final date for registrations and full payment  
[Later registrations may be accepted but these participants will be responsible for booking their own accommodation in hotels, etc.]

**Scholarships** may be available for presenters coming from developing and transforming countries. We will provide more information on availability and application procedures together with the registration forms.

## **Scientific Committee**

Johnston Birchall(chair)

Roger Spear

Lou Hammond-Ketilson

Yohanan Stryjan

## **Organization Committee**

Roger Spear

Lou Hammond-Ketilson

Hanho Choi (ICA Support Staff)