

Impact Report

2014



Promote

Co-operatives UK championed the sector as The Co-operative Group's troubles hit the national news over a sustained period in early 2014. We took on national TV, radio and print media to voice the truth of a sector in overall good health. We published *The Governance of Large Co-operative Businesses*, demonstrating that co-ops can, as businesses, be large, successful and governable. Our *Co-operative Economy 2014: Untold Resilience* publication revealed that the co-op sector is growing quicker than the economy at large, contributing more than **£37 billion**.

“ **Governance in co-operatives worldwide is as good, if not better, as anything we find in the plc realms.** ”

Professor Johnston Birchall



“ **Co-operatives UK's Untold Resilience will help all those who care about and want to champion the sector in what are undoubtedly very difficult circumstances.** ”

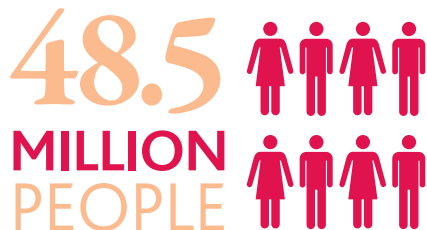
Leading environmentalist Jonathan Porritt

Our secretary general **Ed Mayo** appeared on the BBC Breakfast sofa, BBC Radio 4's Today programme and BBC Radio 5 Live. We also championed the sector in The Guardian, Huffington Post and The Herald.



of members surveyed say public awareness of co-ops in 2014 is more positive because of Co-operatives UK

Co-operatives Fortnight enjoyed its greatest levels of exposure ever – despite being delivered at **50 per cent** of the cost. The sector's annual two-week celebration touched the lives of a potential



and helped raise awareness of co-operatives to **76%** of adults.

Our Co-operatives Fortnight social media campaign, which played to an audience of **400,000** in 2010, reached out to an incredible

7.6
MILLION
PEOPLE
IN 2014



Edinburgh Bicycle Co-operative celebrating Co-operatives Fortnight

Satisfaction with Co-operatives UK events is **high**, at



“ I attended my first Co-operatives UK event this year and was really impressed with how well the event was organised, the interesting and thought-provoking content and the opportunity to network with co-operators Co from a wide range of backgrounds. I will definitely be going back next year. ”

Linda Evans, The Co-operative Credit Union Chief Executive

We have launched the £10,000 Young Innovators Prize in partnership with our member **AltGen** to help inspire a new generation of co-operators. The prize is the latest element in a programme of work with members that has helped raise public perception of co-operatives as innovators by 16 percentage points since 2010.

“ The Young Co-operators Prize is not just about helping alleviate youth unemployment, but about empowering students and graduates to create a more equal and sustainable economy. ”

Rhiannon Colvin, AltGen founder



Develop

We led the campaign for the government to clean up 50 years of legislation with the introduction of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act in August 2014, making it easier than ever to start and grow a co-op. To support our members in the context of these substantial changes in legislation, we have helped publish what is the only legal textbook available to practitioners working for and within co-ops. The Handbook of Co-operative and Community Benefit Society Law has helped spread the idea among business and legal advisers that companies are not the only option.



“ It will cut red tape for the 6,000 co-operatives in the UK and make it easier to run different and more ethical forms of business ”

Andrea Leadsom, Economic Secretary to the Treasury



Societies now benefit from a



**FOLD
INCREASE**

in investment limits following co-op law reforms. Our modelling shows that the new higher limit could, over time and with appropriate action, save larger societies around **£2.5 million a year** in financing costs, allowing new co-operatives to reach scale sooner with less exposure to debt finance.



Changes in legislation have banished fears that employees of co-ops paying into the Pension Protection Fund would not be covered. Significant amounts are paid into the fund by a number of our members. For every pound paid in membership subscription by eight of our largest societies, our advocacy has helped secure an **equivalent of £1.42** in terms of effective pension protection.

Microgenius, our community shares platform that operates in support of and in partnership with our members, has listed eight successful share offers, helping societies raise **more than £1 million** for ventures spanning pubs, shops, community energy, heritage and football.

“ Co-operatives UK provided tremendous support in our recent, ground-breaking conversion to a Community Benefit Society. The team guided us through the complex legal challenges extremely efficiently, and the Microgenius platform was critical in enabling us to far exceed our expectations for the launch of our Community Shares. The Co-operatives UK team has been a major contributor to an amazing success story. ”



Simon Opie, Chief Executive Hastings Pier



“ Thanks to Co-operative UK’s excellent governance guidelines and advice we were able identify key areas to focus upon, allowing us to strive for improvement. ”

Ellen Tredwin, Chelmsford Star Secretary

As the driving force behind the Cross-Party Group on Co-operatives we have helped feed into Scotland’s Community Empowerment Bill and continue to ensure the benefits of co-operation remain firmly on the Scottish agenda.



Unite

Dynamic, reinvigorated and **energised** were just some of the words which came out of our revamped 2014 Congress. Almost 300 people attended and most importantly, participated in a Congress unlike any that had gone before. Together with our members, we created a Co-operative Plan of Action to help drive the sector forward, while almost 100 individual pledges were made. And it all resulted from a lower cost one-day format which our members requested.



Delegates give Congress 2014 the thumbs up

Congress pledges:

“ Sustainable Change
Co-operative will share
its skills and knowledge
on environmental issues
to help co-ops tackle
their issues themselves. ”

“ Cornerstone Housing
Co-op will invest
£4,000 in other new
housing co-ops
this year. ”

“ Promote the use
of the co-op marque
and the co-op domain
in Delta-T devices
from now on – I wasn’t
convinced last year! ”



“ It was a great format – probably
the best I’ve ever been part of! ”

Steph McGovern, Leading business journalist

We **united 70 community energy co-ops** in successfully lobbying against damaging 2014 Budget changes that would have killed numerous green energy projects. The key win ensured continued access to millions of pounds of Enterprise Investment Scheme tax relief.

“ Co-operatives UK deserves praise for the manner in which
it reacted quickly to the March Budget statement and helped
mobilise some **70 groups** across the UK to protest the original
removal of tax relief for community energy investment. ”

Ramsay Dunning, Co-operative Energy General Manager

Our Community Energy Peer Mentoring programme is uniting a growing sector. The scheme, launched in July 2014, enables new and existing community energy groups to benefit from valuable support delivered by established co-ops.

“ If the community energy movement is to grow to its full potential, it is vital that we share knowledge and support each other. ”

Jon Halle , Sharenergy Co-operative Director

“ The more that community groups are able to share their practical knowledge and experience with other communities the quicker the sector will be able to grow and scale. ”

Peter Capener,
Bath and West Community Energy Chairman



With our help non-league FC United has become the first organisation to gain advanced assurance on their application to HMRC for Social Investment Tax Relief.

“ Co-operatives UK’s help and guidance has potentially unlocked **more than £200,000** of investment to help fund our new football ground and community facility in Moston, north Manchester and help secure the long-term future of the club. They gave us quality, professional advice and really understood our needs as a member-owned social enterprise. ”




Andy Walsh, FC United General Manager





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