

# JOURNAL OF RURAL COOPERATION

Vol. 34

No. 2

2006

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## Editorial

This special issue of *Journal of Rural Cooperation* contains selected articles presented at the XXII International Research Conference of the ICA on *The Contribution of Cooperatives to Community Culture* (Cork, Ireland, 11-14 August, 2005).

The criterion behind the selection of articles was the concern to present the reader with a wide range of topics, as included under the Conference title. Among such issues we find cross-national and national comparisons based on different farm branches; the issue of small and medium versus large enterprises; the place and role of cooperatives facing globalization and the ensuing emergence and development of welfare cooperatives on the international scene .

A cross-international comparison is used in the articles by **D. Kaupelyté and O. McCarthy** and **P. Enright** and **I. Bowler** who discuss the development and role of credit and dairy cooperatives, respectively in Ireland and Lithuania and in Ireland and Denmark. **R. Briscoe and M. Ward** tackle the issue of “Is small both beautiful *and* competitive” to gain new insights into the danger of cooperatives' demutualization. This seems to threaten large and small cooperatives alike and limit the alleged advantages of the large ones.

In his plea for cooperatives as “space of resistance” in the face of globalization, **R. Dobrohoczki** maintains that cooperatives have a clear edge over mainstream trends, owing to their local-community attachment, their potential for democratization and their sense of “Third Sector” that enables them to supply public services though independently from the government.

The contribution by **Y. Stryjan** deals with a totally different subject like cooperatives and similar community enterprises, mainly in the welfare domain, based on examples from Sweden. Social entrepreneurship is viewed as a means to mobilize “socially-embedded” resources. By drawing upon the notions of “social capital” and the interconnectedness of socio-economic factors in a community discourse, the author enriches our knowledge and arouses our interest in the suspect, beyond the Swedish examples.

This collection of articles brings us one step forward towards a better understanding of what is meant by the *contribution of cooperatives to community culture*. Instinctively, we are inclined to think in terms of meta-economic factors, mainly from the “community empowerment” and the “nonprofit” vocabulary. This issue invites a more balanced perspective.

Guest editor: Yair Levi  
Centre for the Advancement of the Social Economy in Israel  
(Former editor of the JRC)