



Co-ordinator's Comments

It is ordinary workers, the poor and the natural world who are paying the price of the unjust global economic system. In Spain, youth unemployment is at almost 50%. www.telegraph.co.uk/ Jan 27, 2012. The few who are using the system to entrench wealth and power just don't care. *"In fact, the (global financial) crisis has revealed behaviours like selfishness, collective greed and the hoarding of goods on a great scale"* For more on this, read the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace 2011 publication on international finance. www.news.va/en/news/full-text-note-on-financial-reform

But as corporations and financiers move their businesses around the world seeking greater profit with less social and environmental responsibilities, people are responding by connecting with each other over common areas of concern: health, food, affordable finance, transport, nature and peace. **They are taking co-operative action for the good of the whole community. This is how co-operatives begin.** Catholic social teaching principles are at the heart of these initiatives, though they may not be recognised as such. *"Recognizing the primacy of being over having and of ethics over the economy, the world's peoples ought to adopt an ethic of solidarity as the animating core of their action."* *ibid*

2012 is the UN International Year of Co-operatives.



Let us use this time to make more visible the positive efforts of the many co-operatives which have sprung from a sense of belonging and a desire to live the Gospel.
Anne Lanyon

What We've Been Up To

■ **The Grace of Forests: *God Revealing, God Inspiring, God Challenging.*** This six part resource for Lenten reflection and action explores six Australian forest types. It is for use in conjunction with the **Stations of the Forest Australian Version** dvd and booklet. Available online at www.columban.org.au or in hard copy from the PEJ Centre.



Catholic Social Teaching One of its enduring principles is the *common good*. Sometimes it does well to revisit the source of such teaching. In Luke's Acts of the Apostles, chapter 4, we read that belonging, sharing possessions, looking after one another, with primacy of care given to the widows and the desperately poor, were the hallmarks of the very first Christian communities.

Given the especially harsh living conditions for the sick and the 'have nots' of the time, such a community would have been, initially, a very attractive prospect – whether one acknowledged Jesus as Lord or not! We don't have to look hard to discover that the practices of the early church were abandoned long ago. It seems that so often we reason away Jesus' vision of community.

Jack Evans

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The work of the PEJ Centre specifically makes the connections between peace, ecology and justice from a Gospel perspective.

Cooperatives and Generosity

Cooperatives as recognised in the International Year, are mainly about trade: *"They drive the economy, respond to social change, are resilient to the global economic crisis and are serious, successful businesses creating jobs in all sectors."* <http://www.2012.coop/> But **getting together to cooperatively share skills, time and knowledge for the good of the community without monetary payment** is something that people the world over have been doing for centuries. It is the way most religious communities operate. It is part of rural Australian life. It is still alive in cities, though stifled by our culture of individualism. It is what drives initiatives like **LETS** (Local Energy Trading Systems) <http://www.lets.org.au/> and **Community Exchange** (Australia is the largest user of community exchange in the world). www.community-exchange.org It is in fact the **foundation for growing a culture of peace.**

Organised or Unstructured?

The popular uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa as well as the Occupy movement evolved **spontaneously**. As people oppressed by injustice and the abuse of power they have been impressive in their collective actions using non-violent methods. Working co-operatively for peace can also involve **organization**. There are many examples of both these approaches here in Australia and around the world.

ANCORW Cooperative Limited (Australian National Committee on Refugee Women.)

I met **Eileen Pittaway**, Chair of ANCORW in 2001. She was passionately involved in making the lives of refugee women better. 80 percent of the world's 20 million refugees are women and their dependent children. They are forced to flee from their homes and their countries, in danger of their lives. They often suffer violence, rape and sexual abuse, torture, hunger,

and loss of everything they hold dear. Family members are lost or killed. Refugee camps are often as dangerous as the places from which they have escaped. Despite all they suffer, refugee women are resourceful. They protect their families, maintain their culture and rebuild shattered communities once conflict is over. When resettled, the women take the role of supporting their families to settle into a new and strange environment. The ANCORW cooperative was established to support these women, both in the camps and in Australia. <http://www.ancorw.org/>

Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement

Almost 80 years ago, in 1933 during the Depression, Dorothy Day supported by Peter Maurin, began the Catholic Worker movement in the USA. www.catholicworker.org/ Dorothy, who had been passionately involved in communist organisations, was baptised into the Catholic Church. She turned her energies to providing volunteer assistance for the poor in run-down city areas. "Our rule is the works of mercy," said Dorothy. "It is the way of sacrifice, worship, a sense of reverence."

Since then the unstructured Catholic Worker movement has grown to over 200 communities around the world, though there are none in Australia. Its members are active in support of human rights, cooperatives, and the development of a nonviolent culture.

Many have been jailed for acts of protest against racism, unfair labour practices, social injustice and war.

The cause for the canonisation of Dorothy Day was opened by the Holy See in 2000. <http://dorothydayguild.org/hercause.htm>

Bringing War to Our Door

Australia is increasingly becoming more militarized. The influence of the global military industry so closely aligned to the US administration has spread to our shores. Without consulting the Australian people, the Government has given the go-ahead for up to 2,500 US marines to be stationed in Darwin. People who see this as a threat to peace, are beginning to connect with each other. This may well be the beginning of cooperative movements for peace and de-militarisation. http://sydney.edu.au/arts/peace_conflict/

Anne Lanyon

**Culture of Peace Formation Program
For Educators
Making the Connections between Peace, Ecology and Justice
May 8 & May 29
A Two Day Program run by the
Centre for Peace Ecology & Justice
Cost \$230 Inquiries to 02 9352 8021**

Community and Inter-connection are key words in the science of ecology. All things in nature, both living and dead, are in relationship. Each form communities and become parts of a community of communities – the ecological web of life.

Picture a mighty **River Red Gum**.



Within its branches there are communities of ants and grubs, families of birds, possums and much more, each interacting. From its multiple branches to its complex root systems the gum displays an array in balance - leaves, bark, wood, fungus all connected by a flow of sap. Surrounding the individual tree and supporting it is the living soil and water that ebbs and flows according to the seasons. Poets have lauded the River Red Gum and scientists explain its complex communities. <http://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/WfHC/Eucalyptus-camaldulensis/index.html>

Bio-mimicry tells of how humans can learn from nature's interactive systems. Humans can profit from trying to mimic the way communities operate in nature, to value the fruitfulness of cooperation. We recognize ourselves as part of nature, part of the united creation of God. From nature we learn to be humble partners within its wholeness and flourish as individuals within the communal process. Meditating on bio-mimicry helps us create new attitudes of cooperative effort. <http://www.biomimicryinstitute.org/about-us/what-is-biomimicry.html>

Food has emerged as a serious concern for many groups. They have been drawn into cooperative efforts to address concerns such as food-security and healthy

food, food distribution and how to feed an emerging earth population of nine billion.

The **Sydney Food Fairness Alliance (SFFA)** has the goal of developing food policies for all levels of government. Members cooperate on this task knowing that it benefits the particular goal of each member of the Alliance. Individual concerns are put in a wider context and related to other food issues. <http://sydneyfoodfairness.org.au/blog/2011/03/27/sffa-annual-report-2009-10/>

Concern about food has flowed over into action. Individuals have committed themselves within multiple networks. Some foster better production methods and saving food producing soils from house developments, mining or coal seam pollution. Some create fresh food distribution networks and take back control of fair food prices.

www.foodconnect.com.au

<http://www.farmersmarkets.org.au/>

<http://communitygarden.org.au/>

Taking the cooperative approach to solving problems is not new.

Stefan Gigacz wrote recently on '*Cooperatives and Catholic Social Teaching*' (CathNews 16 Feb 2012). He notes that Australia has more co-ops per head of any English speaking country yet seems ignorant of the mega success of Mondragon in the Basque region of Spain.

The first Mondragon Co-ops were founded for industrial workers in 1956 by Father Jose Maria Arizmendiarietta. A network of 80,000 workers in local co-ops even created their own bank to fund it. The Mondragon system now has 75 subsidiaries in 17 countries.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NORmQ8zaL1c>

Gigacz notes that Catholic social teaching remains merely as doctrine unless there are mechanisms to put it into action. He sees the Cardign method as an entry point to dialogue and collaboration but states that forming cooperatives in the style of Mondragon takes a further step. An international summit will be held this year in Quebec Canada. www.2012coop/

Belonging is a psychological and physical human need that springs from our nature as social beings. Church communities meet part of this need. Becoming a sharing member of a cooperative is an emerging way of belonging.

Charles Rue

The Chocolate Chain

Our PEJ Centre runs workshops to educate about the chocolate labour chain. We highlight the connection between our love of chocolate, the suffering of those who produce the cocoa beans and the structural injustices in the production chain. <http://www.columban.org.au/our-works/peace-ecology-justice/campaigns/Chocolate-Slavery-and-Debt/>



Ghana is one of the two major cocoa-producing nations (the other is Cote D'Ivoire). When cocoa-marketing was opened up to the global market in 1993, 22 villagers with the help of NGOs, grabbed the opportunity and formed the **Kuapa Kokoo cooperative**. www.kuapakokoo.com Two years later, they received their first Fair Trade certification. Now they have over 1200 farmers who are members.

The social premium they get through being the only farmer-owned fair trade cooperative in Ghana has benefitted their communities with schools, water pumps etc. It is a success story that demonstrates what the collective empowerment of the people does when on their own they are powerless.

Fairtrade guarantees a minimum price of \$1600 per Metric tonne of cocoa, a social premium of \$150 per Metric tonne and an extra premium when the world market price of cocoa falls below the guaranteed price of \$1600. Why not purchase Fair Trade easter eggs this Easter? <http://www.fta.org.au/get-involved/campaigns/make-fairtrade-choice-easter>

Columban Cooperatives in the Philippines

Bantolinao, Negros and Fr Brian Gore

The cooperative is an essential part of their work with the farmers. No matter how efficient farming methods may be, without some control of the marketing of their produce, the small subsistence farmers cannot progress economically.

They hope that through the cooperative the various experimental agricultural projects of the "Negros Nine Demo Farm" will be replicated in the farms of its members. On one section they are maintaining the indigenous trees, shrubs, vines and grasses. On other sections they have planted new trees, as much of the forest had been destroyed by logging and slash and burn farming. The forest protects the water catchment and the spring that allows them to irrigate their farm and provides the water for the various cooperative activities. www.negrosnine.com

Preda Fair Trade, Olongapo and Fr Shay Cullen

The Fair Trade co-op dwpeG from Germany co-operates with the Preda Foundation Fair Trade project. It is an outlet for the dried mangos loved in Europe and grown on small farms in the Philippines. The revenue from the fruits of one big mango tree covers the yearly costs for two schoolchildren, who therefore have a greater chance of obtaining an education and a dignified future. www.preda.org

Ozamiz City Peoples' Co-op and Fr Ollie McCrossan

Tricycle drivers paid a daily rental of one dollar a day to the Ozamiz City People's Cooperative*. The program enabled drivers to take ownership of the tricycle when they had accumulated enough money to pay for the cost of the unit. The drivers and their families live in the poorest areas of Ozamiz City. Many are in crowded and unsanitary shanties; some are living with relatives in extremely cramped spaces. The success of the *Pedaling to Live* project led to an affordable housing project. www.columban.org.au

The principle of business cooperatives is that an enterprise or association should be owned and controlled by the people it serves, and share any surpluses on the basis of each members' cooperative contribution (as a producer, labourer or consumer) rather than their capacity to invest financial capital.^[11] The themes of the International Year of Cooperatives are the relationship between co-ops and the global economy, co-ops as a successful business model and the socio-political influence of co-ops.

As co-ops come together for their various conferences to celebrate the International Year, it is an opportunity for us to tell stories like the above. It is also an opportunity for us to look at our own practices and explore how we might become more engaged in cooperative groups.

Anne Lanyon