

ICETT Webinar on “What is Work? – Cooperatives’ response”

Background

What is the ICETT?

The International Cooperative Entrepreneurship Think Tank (ICETT) was formed in 2018 by the ICA to strengthen cooperatives' entrepreneurial performance by seeking and using innovative ideas, research, education, and cooperation to address the challenges that cooperative enterprises are facing. It aims to offer strategic thinking on cooperative entrepreneurship to demonstrate that the cooperative business model can be a key differentiator for entrepreneurial competitiveness and strengthen cooperatives' business performance.

The [ICETT members](#) are large cooperatives and cooperative groups that are directly or indirectly members of the ICA. They are entrepreneurial entities, differently from representative organizations and associations of cooperatives.

What has been discussed concerning “future of work”?

ICETT Working Group on “Future of work” is composed of 5 ICETT members: Mondragon Group, Smart Belgium, Group Up, Kibbutz movement, and National Co+op Grocers. Facing the fast changes in business and work forms, WG has been trying to identify which issues related to the future of work should be more focused on considering cooperatives' role in dealing with them. Based on internal discussion and inputs from ICETT members, WG is elaborating a “Baseline Report on Cooperatives and the Future of Work” in which 5 issues and 4 cooperative-specific-factors¹ are proposed to be discussed further to make more strong voices of the cooperative movement. WG has an ambition, beyond the existing indicators to measure cooperatives' contribution to SDG 8 (decent work), to propose new indicators to show cooperatives' innovative contribution for the future of work.

What does this webinar aim at ?

In the changing world, we are observing the emergence of new forms of work and employment, the change of relationship between labour and capital as well as producer/worker and consumer, and increasing invisible work contributing to the creation of wealth, such as the generation of data. Many innovations have been made with a good intention, particularly to reshuffle production in order to answer environmental challenges at the global level, in using the technological development. These

¹ Five issues are: new concept of work; cooperatives in the digital era; protection and right for new work forms; proactive transition towards sustainable economy with no one left behind; and social service as potential area of cooperative work. Four cooperative-specific-factors which allow cooperatives to response these issues are: community-based; pragmatism, innovation and complexity; mutualized resources; and cooperation with broader stakeholders and social partners.

new phenomena have created impressive business innovation but at the same time destroyed the existing institutional arrangements by leading us to a new territory without any rules applied so that they have been often abused for exploiting people (not only workers but also users and consumers).

How do these evolutions impact the very notion of work? Should the notion of work and labour be extended to comprise creation of value beyond formal employment relations? How can cooperatives address these challenges?

A cooperative is, above all, an organization often institutionally recognized. One of its specificities is to create an autonomous institutional space in which people are put at the center, and they set a rule to answer their own needs and aspirations through democratic governance. This feature as an autonomous institutional space has allowed cooperatives to create their business innovation and also to test new institutional tools, first for their own structure but sometimes taken by the public policy and legislation, as an institutional innovation.

Many cooperatives are living examples showing how cooperatives create and maintain non-conventional forms of employment (worker-members in worker cooperatives, salaried-entrepreneurs in Smart and business and employment cooperatives in France) in innovating broader institutional environments. Therefore, in this webinar where we will hear about pioneering ideas and experiences on work and employment, we will discuss how cooperatives can be a laboratory for developing and testing new sense and a new form of decent work and quality employment in the future of work.

Speakers and audiences

Speakers

- Antonio Casilli, Telecom Paris of the Institute Polytechnique de Paris, and researcher at the Interdisciplinary Institute on Innovation (i3), an institute of the French CNRS
- Lisa Herzog, Centre for Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Groningen
- Joe Holtz, Representative of the Park Slope Food Coop supermarket cooperative (the prosumer approach)

Target audiences

- ICETT members
- ICA Board members
- Members of ICA thematic committees (research, law, gender, youth and development)
- Regional offices and Sectoral organisations
- Experts on this topic

Programme

Time	Activity	Who	Remark
00:00-00:05 (5ms)	Opening address	Tarun Bhargava, ICETT chair, IFFCO, India ICA President (TBC)	
00:05-00:15 (10ms)	Presentation on the background	Sarah de Heusch, Smart Beligum	
00:15-00:35 (20ms)	Input from panelists	Joe Holtz	
00:35-00:55 (20ms)		Lisa Herzog	
00:55-01:15 (20ms)		Antonio Casilli	
01:15-01:45 (30ms)	Round table discussion		Pre-arranged discussants considering regions and sectors
01:45-02:00 (15ms)	Concluding remarks		