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Co-operative Research Network

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An introduction to the new Co-operative Research Network being developed in the UK by the Co-operative College with the support of Co-operatives UK and the University of Lincoln.

The online Co-operative Research Network is the 'end product' of the information collected for the Co-operative Research Database, a project developed by the Co-operative College in Manchester with the support of Co-operatives UK and the University of Lincoln. The network is designed as a 'meeting place' for people involved in global co-operative research, primarily in the fields of education, history/heritage, the world of work and work organisation and international development.

The network is intended to be complementary to other initiatives such as the Canadian Co-operative Research Network at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan. Its aim is to enable co-operative researchers to access information about recent and current co-operative research, encouraging knowledge, ideas and practice to be shared as well as identifying potential research collaborations. Researchers might be experienced academics, early researchers, students, co-operative activists or simply those interested in what is going on in co-operatives globally.

People have been signing up to be part of the Co-operative Research Database since 2015, and it is now in the process of being brought to life as an online platform that will act as a shared tool to be used by co-operative researchers to connect with each other, start forum discussions and get involved with online activities such as webinars and a repository of existing co-operative research.

The design for the online platform has been through several revisions based on feedback from fellow co-operative researchers and the design/IT team to make sure that it will not merely be an online database, but will also encourage more co-operation and create sparks of interest for future research. The plan is currently 'in progress' with web developers and it is anticipated that there will soon be a working model to test out prior to an official launch.

If you are interested in joining the database, which will include automatic sign-up to the online research network once it is launched, please visit the Co-operative College's website to join:

<https://www.co-op.ac.uk/our-work/researching-co-operatives/co-operative-research-network/>

The Author

Amanda Benson holds a Masters in International Natural Resource Development, focusing on gender and agricultural development, particularly in relation to access to resources and preserving indigenous knowledge of both plants and growing systems. This led on to a PhD that used a multi-institutional perspective to examine women farmers' access to resources and gender sensitivity within the Indian agricultural extension system. More recently Amanda has worked in asset based community development in the UK voluntary sector, and is now part of the Co-operative College working on a variety of research projects.