

# Happy Holidays! *from*

International Cooperative  
**Research Group**

**OCDC**

US Overseas Cooperative Development Council

The OCDC Research Group has had a productive 2017 including diligent work on several ongoing research engagements, initiation of a multi-year, multi-country research project. The exciting news is that we have completed the Poland Pilot! We have also focused on building new as well as further developing existing relationships with prospective research partners (including CDOs) and donors around the globe.

With this newsletter, we are very pleased to announce the completion of two new reports:

1. The second phase of the Governance Research has been completed with a detailed 2017 Report. We are grateful to the CDOs and consultants who have worked on this project and are looking forward to advancing this work with Phase III.
2. In addition, a report on the Poland Pilot of the research project “What Difference Do Cooperatives Make?” has been completed. We look forward to further interpreting the findings in 2018 and issuing the RG research report prior to moving forward with the next countries.

**The Research Group wishes you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.**

We look forward to continuing our research and working with you in 2018!



## Communication & Dissemination

- In September the OCDC board and collaborative group met for a strategic planning meeting in Minneapolis, MN. One of the major requests of the group, in conjunction with the CDP evaluation, was to significantly improve the communications activities of OCDC and the RG. In 2018 the RG, in support of OCDC, plans to: develop a new website, increase its focus on disseminating research results, and build greater awareness of cooperative development and the great story that the CDP implemented by CDOs tells.
- The RG conducted informal de-briefings of preliminary results of the Poland pilot for USAID and the OCDC members (Collaborative Group and Board) during November and December. In addition the RG has presented the research design and framework at several conferences including the IMPACT conference in October. The RG is also planning two major dissemination events for the Poland Pilot including the RG Poland report releases in Washington DC and Poland. We have identified several interested partners for the events in the US and internationally. A Poland context study is available on the OCDC RG website.

## Continued Research

- The second year of the **Enhancing Development through Cooperatives** research is underway. The RG is working closely with CTA and Oxfam UK to build upon the first year of the research. The next cooperative leadership event is being planned for Rwanda in February 2018 and will be co-hosted by Land O'Lakes. This research project will result in a large database of more than 600 cooperatives highlighting the strengths and needs of cooperatives in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## 2018 New Research Areas

- Member Equity: to what extent member equity affects cooperative development and the social and economic livelihoods of members.
- Women and Cooperative Membership: whether and how women's agency is increased or otherwise affected due to membership in cooperatives.

## Preliminary Findings: What Difference do Cooperatives Make? Poland Pilot

This multi-year, multi-country, and cross-sector research initiative seeks to measure the social and economic effects of cooperatives on their members and the community. This research utilizes quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions:

1. How do cooperative members benefit socially and economically from their cooperative membership?
2. How do communities benefit socially and economically from the presence of cooperatives?

The results of the Poland Pilot will also shape the method and instruments used in future country studies.

### Key Findings

**Cooperative members are better off economically** than the representative sample & the national average.

**Cooperative members feel they can trust the majority of other people** more than non-members do.

Both **cooperative members and non-members believe that co-ops positively affect the community** through infrastructure improvements and the engagement in the life of the community.

**Cooperatives have a positive impact on the national economy** and represent 1.5% of global production and .08% of the national GDP despite a challenging history.

### Methods

**Country Context Study** - A study was done using in-country studies from 1990-2017 to understand the history of cooperatives in Poland and ground the current research

**Desk Review** of USAID funded cooperative development programs

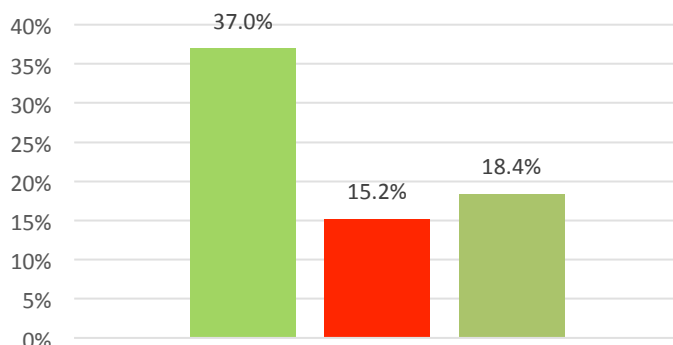
**Quantitative Survey** - A representative sample of Polish citizens and a "boost" sample of cooperative members was used including two survey instruments: community (non-cooperative members) and cooperative members. In total, 2,115 people were surveyed through standardized phone interviews

**Qualitative Interviews & Focus Groups** – Six in-person focus groups and 12 key informant interviews were conducted to illuminate the survey results and nuance understanding of the effects of cooperatives

**Field Interviews & Meetings** with cooperative apex organizations, government agency, academics, and cooperative leaders

### Next Steps

Dissemination of the Poland Pilot results  
Adjust the questionnaires and some methods to reflect lessons learned  
Selection of the next countries



Do cooperatives existing in your community engage in the life of that community? E.g. organize or collaborate in organizing events, festivals, picnics, sport events, etc.?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Do not know  
N = 1116  
(community members)

Does membership in a cooperative positively influence the economic situation of your household?

