International Cooperative Alliance
Committee on Cooperative Research

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: DEADLINE: JANUARY 30, 2027

International Cooperative Alliance Committee on Cooperative Research

Global Research Conference

Conference Theme

"Shaping the Future: Governance, Innovation and Resilience in Cooperatives"

Proposed Dates: **August 23-27, 2027**

Place: **NAIROBI, KENYA**

Hosted by:

The Co-operative University of Kenya and Moshi Co-operative University, together with the ICA Committee on Cooperative Research (ICA-CCR), and with the support of the International Cooperative Alliance – Africa (ICA-Africa)

Background and Rationale

The International Cooperative Alliance Committee on Cooperative Research (ICA CCR) Global Research Conference is the world's foremost gathering of cooperative researchers and educators. Held every two years, it provides a platform for rigorous, evidence-based research and dialogue on the contextual and global challenges and opportunities shaping the cooperative movement. It is being held for the first time in Africa.

As cooperatives worldwide navigate an era of rapid economic and technological changes, and as they tackle the effects of climate change, the strength of their governance and leadership structures will determine whether they can adapt (and mitigate), scale, and remain true to their values. Weak governance, leadership succession gaps, limited member participation, and inadequate regulatory environments continue to constrain cooperative performance in many regions, even as new opportunities emerge in digital transformation, inclusive finance, and climate mitigation.

This conference responds to that reality by placing governance, innovation, and resilience at the center of cooperatives' global research agenda — examining not only the problems cooperatives face, but the institutional and leadership solutions that allow them to lead rather than merely respond to change.

Conference Theme

"Shaping the Future: Governance, Innovation and Resilience in Cooperatives" brings together researchers, educators, policy and law makers and practitioners interested in cooperative research, to examine how sound governance, dynamic leadership, and institutional innovation position cooperatives to navigate the challenges of the coming decade. The conference explores how cooperative enterprises can strengthen internal accountability, embrace digital and organizational innovation, and build the resilience needed to sustain member trust and deliver societal impact. This is the first time a Global Cooperatives Research Conference is being held in Africa. Dialogue about marginalization in cooperatives and dialogue among and between all the continents is encouraged during this conference.

Conference Objectives

- Advance global research and evidence on cooperative governance models and their effectiveness.
- Examine leadership development pathways, including the inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized/disadvantaged groups in cooperative decision-making.
- Showcase innovations in governance, transparency, and member engagement tools.
- Explore financing and capitalization models that strengthen cooperative sustainability and growth.
- Strengthen the global research community's understanding of cooperative resilience amid climate and economic shocks.
- Foster dialogue and collaboration between academia, cooperative movements, and policy and law makers; as well as between cooperators from the Global South and the Global North.
- Support and strengthen cooperative education by exchanging good teaching practices, case studies and innovative learning approaches

Conference Sub-Themes

The conference will be organized around ten main sub-themes, each anchoring a set of parallel sessions, paper presentations, and panel discussions.

1	**Regulatory Frameworks: Cooperative Law Reform and Policy** Modernizing legal and policy environments to support cooperative growth, competitiveness, member engagement, and member protection.
2	**Women, Youth and Marginalized groups in Cooperative Leadership** Building inclusive leadership pipelines and addressing barriers to participation in governance structures.
3	**Digital Governance Tools and Transparency** Leveraging technology for accountable decision-making, member engagement, and data-driven oversight. In addition, issues about governing digitalization would be considered at this theme.
4	**Financing Structures and Capital Mobilization** Innovative models for cooperative capitalization, access to finance, and sustainable investment.
5	**Board Effectiveness and Member Participation**

	Strengthening board capacity, succession planning, and democratic participation in cooperative governance. Enhancing member participation, effect of cooperative education on member involvement
6	**Resilience in the Face of Climate Change Mitigation and Economic Shocks** Governance and leadership strategies that help cooperatives withstand and adapt to external disruptions.
7	**Innovation in Cooperative Business Models** New approaches to organizational design, diversification, and inter-cooperative collaboration.
8	**Cooperation among cooperatives** Explore the challenges of cooperating among cooperatives; particularly between different continents, different ethnic and racial groups, different languages, and different classes.
9	**Conflict Resolution** Handling of disputes among cooperators (including between cooperators and cooperatives) and between cooperatives and regulators
10	**Agricultural Cooperatives** Cooperatives dealing with the challenges of intergenerational change, digitalization of the agrifood sector, market access, intermediaries, and providing the appropriate support to farmers

Expected Outcomes

- A body of peer-reviewed research papers and case studies on cooperative governance, leadership, and resilience.
- Strengthened global networks among cooperative researchers, as well as practitioners, and policy and law makers.
- Practical recommendations for cooperative governance reform and leadership development.
- A policy brief for global dissemination.
- Identification of priority areas for future cooperative research and collaboration.

Target Participants

The conference will convene an estimated 200 participants, including researchers, cooperative movement leaders, governance and policy experts, law makers, representatives of national and regional cooperative apex bodies, and development partners.

Conference Format

The conference will be onsite (with dedicated online presentation for keynote speakers) and will include keynote addresses, paper presentations, panel discussions, poster sessions, and a doctoral colloquium for emerging researchers which will be arranged by Young and Emerging Scholars.

CCR-YES Workshop

A pre-conference workshop organized by the ICA CCR Young and Emerging Scholars (YES) Network will bring together early-career researchers for peer exchange, networking, and collaborative reflection on emerging research questions in cooperative studies. The workshop will create space for in-depth reflection and provocative thinking, while encouraging participants to question dominant assumptions, research categories, and ways of producing knowledge. By bringing African researchers into sustained dialogue with scholars from Europe, Americas and Asia Pacific regions, it will explore decolonizing research approaches, to foster mutual learning and more reciprocal forms of international academic collaboration.

Timeline

Launch of call for papers	November 1, 2026
Abstract Submission Deadline	January 30, 2027
Notice of Acceptance of Abstracts	April 15, 2027 ▪ Full paper presentation 15-20 minutes ▪ Flash presentation 3-5 minutes
Full paper/Extended Abstract/Poster	June 30, 2027

Abstracts and papers will be sent by email to: abstracts@cuk.ac.ke (abstracts at cuk.ac.ke)

Registration

Registration Type	Early Bird (Before June 30th)	Registration
Full rate	350.00 USD	400.00 USD
Low-income countries (as per World Bank categorization)	200.00 USD	250.00 USD
East African Participants	150.00 USD	200.00 USD
Young & Emerging Scholars (YES)/Students	20.00 USD	30.00 USD

Conference Dinner

Conference Dinner will be organized which shall be paid for separately by the participants.

- Dinner – USD 50.00
- YES participants – USD 30.00

Template/Guide for an Extended Abstract (see extended guideline)

Title of Paper/Abstract
Author(s), affiliation and email of corresponding author
Purpose (100-150 words)
Theoretical background (100-200 words)
Proposed argument/Research Questions (100-150 words)
Methodology/Approach (75-150 words)
Key Findings, Discussion and Conclusion (100-200 words)
Keywords – 4 – 6 Key words
References (Only references quoted in text following APA referencing style)