

SUPPORTERS CORNER

SEEING FIRSTHAND THE CREDIT UNION MODEL AT WORK



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The real way to succeed in development is economic self-help. Even in the smallest community, there is wealth of some kind—maybe with a small “w”. The secret is the economic engine that is the credit union.

In 40 years with credit unions, I have had the privilege to work in South America, Africa, Europe and Asia and as a World Council volunteer in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe. I’ve helped evaluate credit union operations while trying to instill an economically sufficient mindset in Africa, where the system is becoming too reliant on external credit. During a time when Bolivia’s inflation was rampant, I worked with two of the country’s largest credit unions. Banks and credit unions there were failing because of the lack of regulatory controls. In reaction to the crisis, the Bolivian government gave credit unions mere months to meet new standards or face losing their status and eventual closure. We made many difficult changes, and those credit unions are thriving today.

The fiber of Florida Central Credit Union is influenced by what World Council of Credit Unions is doing around the world. Being involved with World Council has permeated our way of thinking. I encourage all staff to become involved locally first, and then carry the interna-

tional credit union message of World Council’s work through our chapter, at the state level and even nationally. We share stories about credit unions and what they mean to people in developing countries and make sure our senior managers understand World Council’s international efforts. The success American credit unions enjoy is because of what is happening in developing countries.

*“World Council
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What concerns me the most now is many U.S. credit union CEOs will soon be retiring, and it is imperative World Council instills in those who take our place the credit union spirit—both in volunteers and professionals. I will always remember what one of the founders of the U.S. credit union system once said, “Keep purpose constant.” World Council acts as the conscience of credit unions.

We each have a responsibility to educate and indoctrinate on what credit unions are all about. The tax-exempt status, for example, is so imperative to retaining our credit union philosophy. If we lose that status,

credit unions will never be the same. As long as we walk the talk, we’ll stay on track.

There is so much more U.S. credit unions can do. Reading and hearing stories of World Council’s successes, I am compelled to continue my support and increase that of Florida Central Credit Union’s. My credit union supports the International Development Fund, which assists credit unions locally and internationally. We were one of the first to become an official World Council Supporter and today also contribute funds for special initiatives.

Involvement with World Council has changed my life profoundly, and I wish every person could have the same experience...to see the kindness, giving and understanding in credit union development work. If others had seen what I have been lucky enough to experience, we could have peace tomorrow.

World Council will continue to make this type of difference, and World Council Supporters can help provide the knowledge and funding necessary to prompt credit unions to flourish. It is my hope that credit unions continue to be meaningful and keep their mission at the forefront. A tremendous burden lies on all of us to tell the story for the future. 🌍

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