

# The future looks bright for mutuals and co-ops, as young leaders make their mark



**ABOVE** The 55 delegates who attended the Young Leaders Programme at the 2017 ICMIF Biennial Conference

**B**y almost universal agreement, it was an outstanding success: ICMIF's Young Leaders' Programme, held for the first time as part of the ICMIF Biennial Conference in London last October, attracted such positive feedback from its 55 delegates, that this is an initiative that could well feature again at future ICMIF events.

Meagan Phillips from Securian (US) spoke appreciatively of the benefits which came from talking with other young people from mutuals and cooperatives around the world and finding that, in many cases, they shared the same experiences and the same attitudes. "It's completely different from anything else I've ever had the opportunity to do. The first thing I'll tell my manager is that this has been an invaluable

experience for me in my leadership development, and it's something I will encourage my company to do again so that other young leaders can build their skill sets and be ready for the future," she said.

Those on the Young Leaders Programme participated fully in the plenary sessions and workshops of the ICMIF Conference, and indeed three of them - Alec Casturos



**ABOVE** “Meet the CEO” networking breakfast for the Young Leaders Programme

(Thrivent Financial, US), Julia Ludin (DEVK, Germany) and Jean-Baptiste Clerc (MACIF, France) – also shared their knowledge and experience as speakers in the main conference. But the Young Leaders Programme also had side sessions which were open only to the Programme’s participants. One of the real highlights, according to many, was the business breakfast which was attended by several CEOs from ICMIF member firms and ICMIF CEO, Shaun Tarbuck.

“The CEO session was obviously really invaluable, getting to know the CEOs and learning how they got to where they are,” said Bianca Tse from The Co-operators (Canada). But for her, the networking opportunities were perhaps the greatest benefit of the

event. “What comes out of discussing the issues that other young leaders may have, and indeed that senior executives may have, is collaboration that could lead to solutions for all of us,” she added.

“Thirty-one companies from sixteen countries sent their young leaders to participate as delegates, and one of the threads running through the whole Conference was the need for mutuals and cooperatives to develop the next generation of talent,” says ICMIF Vice-President - Business Intelligence, Ben Telfer. “The young leaders were fully welcomed by the CEOs and senior executives who attended, and their presence added to the diversity of thought at networking events and discussions.”

The Young Leaders Programme was an early initiative from the ICMIF Young Leaders Forum, launched in Copenhagen in November 2016 (Voice 87). The group has continued to work together in the months since the London Conference, both to maintain communication between the delegates and to stimulate further post-conference collaboration. “ICMIF wants to build on this momentum and help its member organisations develop their young talent. The YLF is working closely with ICMIF’s Intelligence Committee to achieve this,” Ben says.

The last word goes to Catho Ba, an underwriter with American Agricultural Insurance (US), whose thoughts on the event were captured on video: “When I get back to the office, the first thing I’ll say is, please allow us to attend these events in the future. The overall experience was extremely rewarding”.

**BELOW** Alec Catsuros, Senior Product Manager, Digital Experience, Thrivent Financial (USA) was both a Young Leader delegate and a speaker at the ICMIF Biennial Conference



The opinions of several delegates about the value of the Young Leaders Programme to them and to their companies were recorded, and the videos can now be accessed via the **ICMIF Conference 2017 YouTube channel**.

For more information about the Young Leaders Forum, contact Ben Telfer on **ben@icmif.org**