

Abstract

This paper begins by briefly examining the current role of women within the Irish credit union movement and by tracing the key role of women in the foundation of the movement. It focuses mainly on an examination of recent innovative job creation strategies adopted by a small number of Irish credit unions and traces the pioneering role played by women in developing these strategies.

Case studies of two credit unions are presented: Tallow Area Credit Union Ltd. in the southern region of Ireland and Blessington Credit Union Ltd. in the east. Both credit unions have established enterprise centres in their communities that house fledgling businesses in incubation units. Much of the impetus for these centres and the drive to make them succeed have come from credit union managers and directors who are women.

To conclude, the paper identifies the great need for further research on the role of women in the Irish credit union movement.