

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **Free workshops to help UK co-ops support Northern Syria's transition to a co-operative economy**

UK co-ops are being urged to support Northern Syria's transition to a feminist, co-operative economy by the Solidarity Economy Association, who have launched a Rojava Co-operative Solidarity workshop tour that will take place during Co-operatives Fortnight.

The Rojava Revolution taking place in Northern Syria is transitioning the region into a gender equal, and democratic society, based on communes, co-operatives and citizen committees. The movement is rebuilding society based on three fundamental pillars – direct democracy, ecology, and women's liberation – and co-operation plays a crucial role.

The workshops mark the launch of the next phase of SEA's Co-operative Economy in Rojava and Bakur project, which will involve active solidarity and connections between co-ops in the UK and Northern Syria, as well as the rebranding of the project to 'Co-operation in Mesopotamia' and a new website.

Jo Taylor, project coordinator, said: "Co-operatives currently make up 7% of the economy in Jazira, the largest region of Northern Syria, with women's co-operatives making up 3%, despite never having been present in the region before. We've partnered with women's economic structures in Rojava to build connections between co-ops there and in the UK, which will include a number of ways for UK co-ops to support the movement, for example by becoming a 'sister co-operative'."

The workshop tour will take place in five locations and in partnership with local co-ops in:

Sat 23 Jun – Learning Resource Centre at The City Clean Depot, with Free University Brighton

Tue 26 Jun – Makespace Oxford, with Solidarity Economy Association

Fri 29 Jun – Artefact Stirchley, with Birmingham Bike Foundry

Mon 2 Jul – Holyoake House, with the Co-operative College

Tue 3 July – Location TBC, with Leeds Bread Co-operative

"Solidarity is co-operative work," says writer and activist of the Kurdish Women's Movement, Dilar Dirik. "Supporting the revolutionary efforts in Rojava to create a solidarity-based economy for a communal, self-sustained society means to contribute to the development of a fundamentally different kind of ethical and political understanding of life. Building bridges

between radical, ecological concepts of economy against capitalism's systematic destruction of life itself is a historic struggle that everyone who does not accept domination, colonisation and exploitation as fate, should rally behind."

For more information, and to book a place, please visit  
<https://www.solidarityeconomy.coop/2018/06/coop-solidarity-rojava-tour>

-ENDS-

*For more information, interviews and photos please contact Kat Darling on [kat@solidarityeconomy.coop](mailto:kat@solidarityeconomy.coop) or 07810 832980.*

**Co-operative Economy in Rojava and Bakur** (<https://cooperativeeconomy.info/>) is a project by the Solidarity Economy Association that provides the only comprehensive English language information resource on the subject. The aim of the project is to make it easier for those who want to better understand what's happening in the region to do so, and to learn about the alternative economic changes that are underway.

**Solidarity Economy Association** ([www.solidarityeconomy.coop](http://www.solidarityeconomy.coop)) (formerly known as the Institute for Solidarity Economics) is a not-for-profit, multi-stakeholder co-operative working to support the growth of the Solidarity Economy movement. Its core work focuses on education, research and promotion of the Solidarity Economy - an economy that embodies social justice, diversity & pluralism, co-operation, self-management & ecological sustainability.