New Internationalist

Community Share Offer 2020

Buy into a better story
Journalism with facts and heart
‘If information is the accelerator of real change – as I believe it is – then the New Internationalist is invaluable. That’s why I endorse this innovative Community Share Scheme. Please give your support.’

John Pilger, journalist
What’s the story?

New Internationalist is inviting our supporters to be part of an exciting moment in its history. We are reopening our share offer on a rolling basis. This gives all our supporters the opportunity to invest – either for the first time or by buying additional shares.

In 2017, our readers invested over £704,000 in 36 days via our ‘Buy into a better story’ campaign. This means New Internationalist is now co-owned by over 3,600 people, across the world.

It was the biggest media community share offer in UK history and was widely covered by the press.

By continuing to issue shares, we will raise the funds that can set our organization on a long-term path to profitability.

Your investment will allow New Internationalist to survive and thrive into the future – without compromising our core values.

We invite you to join us. Buy into a better story and change the conversation through journalism with facts and heart.

About us

New Internationalist was formed in 1973. From the outset, we have pioneered truly global journalism that has reported on inequality and the reasons behind it. Over many years, in print and online, hundreds of thousands of people have benefited from our honest, unique reporting and analysis. Our stories deliver the facts in context, the authentic voices that connect people with each other across the planet, and bright, bold ideas of ways to change things for the better.

For decades, we were funded by subscriptions from our readers. Then the world changed – the internet broke our business model; people expected journalism for free. We took a major knock – our subscriptions income fell sharply.

And while we’ve embraced digital technology and seen website views catapult into the millions, we – like most other media – have not hit on the winning formula to make quality digital journalism pay. Unlike most other media, we have no billionaire backer waiting in the wings. It’s been our blessing for over 40 years, enabling our journalism
to respond to the world as it is, not as a proprietor thinks it is, or should be. But in a time of great change in the world, it means we are under threat. We investigated every possible way to raise funds and keep doing what we – and our readers – love, and chose a share offer as the way forward.

The generosity of our readers was overwhelming. They responded en masse to our call out in 2017, sending us past our £500,000 target to reach over £700,000. Thanks to that investment, we’ve made some big, positive changes. The past three years has seen the relaunch of a harder-hitting, more beautiful magazine – and the first increase in subscriptions for over a decade.

These were all important steps towards safeguarding the future of independent journalism. But print media is still fighting for survival and we are no exception. Yet the stories we tell – how to avoid climate breakdown, end wars and protect our seas – are needed more than ever. We want to strengthen our sustainability, connect with more people and increase our impact. And now we want your help to make this happen. Join our global media co-operative, owned by thousands of ordinary people from round from the world.

With our supporters and readers as co-owners, we can open up perspectives and connect people at a time when fear, global uncertainty and division conspire to shut them down. Armed with knowledge and bold ideas, we can drive the change we wish to see, together.

Let’s buy into a better story.
We are building a movement for media that brings people together
How will the money be used

It has long been recognized that there is no silver bullet for publishing in the internet age. But there are successful independent media projects all over the world that show it can be done.

Your investment will be used to help us to keep on telling the stories that matter. It will allow us to continue to publish high-quality, beautifully produced stories from journalists living in the Global South, online and in print.

It will help us develop meaningful engagement with our readers at a time when people need a sense of connection – and of our shared responsibilities as global citizens – more than ever.

And it will help us to continue to reach out to more new readers, particularly those such as schools, universities, community groups and activists who could benefit the most from our journalism.
What are community shares?

A community share offer is an invitation to invest in a business that serves a social purpose.

It's different from a conventional public share offer because rather than profit being the primary motivating factor, the focus of the investment is often on the social benefits that investor capital will make possible. It's about investing in the kind of world you would like to live in.

The idea is that you join a community of people with shared values. In our case, that's a global network of people that value consistent and truthful reporting and media that brings people together.

Shares are ‘potential repayable philanthropy’ (withdrawable share capital) which investors may be allowed to withdraw if the enterprise is secure and sustainable.

In return for their capital, investors get to co-own and have a say in how the organization is run.

Community shares can only be issued by co-operative and community benefit societies. Both have an asset lock written into their rules, meaning that any residual profits in the event of dissolution or conversion of the society cannot be shared out among members.

Unlike ordinary shares, no investor can take control and shares cannot be sold on. Members have just one vote, regardless of how much they invest, and there's an upper limit to stop a society being dependent on a handful of large investors.

It's a traditional (but forgotten) way to build co-operative and community ownership, but one that has been growing in popularity in recent years. It's more commonly used to buy assets like community buildings, solar panels or football clubs, but in the past five years, media organizations have followed suit. Positive News magazine raised £263,000 in 2015 and the Community Channel TV station attracted £390,000 in 2016, making community share offers a tried-and-tested model for independent media.
‘Co-operative principles are in our DNA. It feels only natural to take these principles one step further and open up to you, our readers and supporters.’
How do I buy shares in New Internationalist?

The share offer is currently open on a rolling basis.

Online
Contact Laura Veitch, our Funding and Engagement Co-ordinator for details of how to invest online via PayPal or bank transfer.
Email laura.veitch@newint.org

Post
You can also buy shares by cheque through the post. Please see the application form, at the end of this document. We accept cheques in pounds sterling from UK banks and all other major currencies.

How much do shares cost?
Shares have a nominal value of £1 ($1.24) each. The minimum investment is £50 ($62) and maximum is £100,000 ($124,000).

Who can buy shares?
Shareholders must be aged 16 or over. You can invest from anywhere in the world.

When can I buy shares?
Currently you can buy shares at any time.

What rights will I have as an investor?
In return for investing, you will become a co-owner of New Internationalist. Our legal structure makes you custodians of our mission by bestowing voting rights over our Charter that enshrines our editorial policy, our values and how we put them into practice.

Regardless of the amount invested, every person who buys shares in New Internationalist will have one vote.

You will also be eligible to join the Common Council, an ongoing forum for engaging with editors, our content and direction, to help us fulfil our mission.

I invested in 2017 – can I invest again?
Yes, you are welcome to increase the number of community shares you own in New Internationalist as many times as you wish. You will still have one vote, regardless of how much you invest.
Why a community share offer for New Internationalist?

We are one of the most longstanding workers’ co-ops in Britain – co-operative principles are in our DNA. It felt only natural back in 2017 to take these principles one step further and open up to our readers and supporters. Our journalism has always been a reflection of who we are and how we are run – we know how to democratize a newsroom like no-one else; we did it 37 years ago.

Our constituency has never been conventional: we are idealistic, energetic and concerned with the lives of others thousands of miles away. All our past appeals, surveys and events show that we have a passionate and committed readership who want to see us make a real impact in the world.

We’ve got a solid track record of 47 years of publishing. As well as over 21,000 subscribers, we have thousands more former subscribers who still hold us in high regard and are supportive of our mission, even if they’ve stopped reading every issue.

Our online community is active and growing – we had 1.4 million visitors to our website in 2019, and a social-media following of over 110,000.

We need these people, who want to live in a world that better reflects New Internationalist’s values, to come forward and play their part in keeping our pioneering journalism alive for the next 500 issues and beyond.

That’s why we’re re-opening our community share offer to raise the funds we need to keep New Internationalist strong and flourishing into the future.
Can I make a financial return on my investment?
As a social investment, the main return is the outputs of the organization where you’ve put your money. So, in our case, your return is a thriving New Internationalist publishing articles with a unique international perspective and eye-opening, beautifully presented long-form investigations.

But it may also be possible to offer a financial return, if New Internationalist is in a sufficiently profitable position in the future. (See ‘Do I get my money back?’, below).

In the short term, we anticipate that any surplus will be reinvested to increase the impact of our work, but the Board of Directors will have the power to pay a small rate of interest on the shares if they have sufficient surpluses to be able to afford to do so.

Do I get my money back?
Community shares are withdrawable shares. That means that the Board can allow people to take their money out at a small rate each year, if we generate enough income to allow it (or have other people who would like to become co-owners too).

In this time of rapid change, with the publishing industry in a state of flux, it will not be possible to allow withdrawals for a minimum of three years. We need to use your money to focus on getting ourselves on the soundest footing possible. We will consider withdrawals – and interest – once New Internationalist has built up uncommitted reserves of £500,000.

At this point, the Board will open up discussions with the Common Council to set realistic rates of interest and/or repayments. Like any investment, there is no guarantee of repayment. You should only invest money that you do not rely on being returned to you either in interest or withdrawals.

Can I sell my shares to someone else?
No. Shares can only be transferred to someone else upon death. Shares can only be withdrawn as per the terms laid out by the Board.

What happens if New Internationalist closes?
We love New Internationalist as much as you do – this is our pitch and our bid for long term sustainability. But we make no promises. If we do not attract the income we need to become profitable – not enough subscribers – then the value of the shares will fall and may be lost in the event of the business having to scale down or ultimately cease trading.
You won’t be liable if we go under, but the money you invested will be lost. You have no right to compensation from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, or recourse to an ombudsman, because Co-operative Societies are exempt from the regulations governing public share offers.

**How is New Internationalist governed?**

When our supporters invest, they become the joint custodians of our mission, charged with keeping us on track. From this point on, New Internationalist can never deviate from its founding principles without agreement of its investors.

The most important document defining what we do is our Editorial Charter. This defines why and how we do our journalism. The Charter is something we own together.

For any changes to the mission or Charter, we need 75% of the worker members to agree it AND 75% of you, our investors, to agree to it too. You get to be a steward of New Internationalist, with a voice on what we write about, how we write it and why we write it.

In addition, investors are eligible to join our Common Council. The Common Council is tasked with shaping meaningful engagement into the future, exploring ways to achieve real democracy that take account of the logistical challenges presented by our truly global supporter base.

**Our legal structure**

At a day-to-day level, New Internationalist is currently published by the not-for-profit New Internationalist Publications Limited, which employs the staff and runs our projects.

This is a trading subsidiary of the New Internationalist Co-operative Society, a multi-stakeholder co-op. All those who invest in the co-operative through buying shares, become a member and owner of that co-operative society.

Within this new multi-stakeholder co-operative society there are two different classes of members. The first is ‘user-members’, who will be the employees of New Internationalist Publications and make up the board of the co-operative who will be concerned with the day-to-day overseeing and running of our business. The investors will be ‘non-user members’ who have voting rights over the Editorial Charter and access to the Common Council.

The money raised by the share offer will be deployed by the co-operative by way of a loan to our subsidiary company, New Internationalist Publications. Its repayments to the co-operative will be the source of funds used to pay interest and enable withdrawal to investors in future.
‘At a time when facts are under constant assault from an alt.right determined to muddy the waters, we need to actively support journalists dedicated to holding their feet to the fire. New Internationalist’s Community Share issue deserves your support.’

Billy Bragg, musician
‘New Internationalist gives me a vital sense of being part of a global community, not just British or European’

Co-owner

Contact

factsandheart@newint.org
+44 (0)1865 403345
New Internationalist
The Old Music Hall
106-108 Cowley Road
Oxford
OX4 1JE
UK
Application form for purchase of shares in New Internationalist Co-operative Ltd

You can also invest online email laura.veitch@newint.org

I wish to become a co-owner of New Internationalist Co-operative Ltd in accordance with the society rules and apply for:

Shares to the value of (please add currency):
We accept all major currencies.

For this offer the minimum shareholding is £50/€59/US$62 and the maximum £100,000/€117,000/US$125,000.

Please make cheques payable to New Internationalist Co-operative Ltd and send with this form to the following address: Worldwide: New Internationalist, The Old Music Hall, 106-108 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1JE, UK.

Name and Address (PLEASE USE CAPITAL LETTERS)

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If you have been living at the above address for less than 3 years please provide us with your previous address:

If you are applying for shares on behalf of an organization/company, please supply the following additional information.

Please note, this form must be signed by a director of your organization.

| Full official company/organization name | |
| Registered company/organization number | |
| We nominate this person named to be our nominee for the purposes of receiving membership communications and exercising membership rights | |
| Signatory of nominee | Position in organization/company |

Agreement

- I have read the Share Offer Document, including risk factors.
- I wish to become a Member of the New Internationalist Co-operative Ltd.
- I agree to be bound by the society rules and understand the terms of the offer as laid out in the offer document and business plan, which can be found at www.factsandheart.org
- I understand that the Board of Directors of New Internationalist Co-operative Ltd may reject my application, and are not obliged to tell me why it has been rejected.
- I confirm that I am 16 years of age or older.

Signed as a Deed

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Data protection and money laundering

The data provided by you on this form will be stored within a computerised database. This database will be used only for New Internationalist Co-operative Ltd purposes and will not be disclosed to any third party. It is a condition of the offer that to ensure compliance with the Money Laundering Regulations 2003, New Internationalist Co-operative Ltd may at its absolute discretion require verification of the identity of any person seeking to invest.

Notices by email

Please tick if you are happy for us to use email as your preferred means of communication, reducing our administrative costs.

If you have any queries about your application, please call: +44 (0)1865 403345, or email: laura.veitch@newint.org