

1st Training Course on
**IMPROVING CAPACITY OF
RURAL WOMEN**

Thailand-Japan
12th November to 10th December 2014



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COURSE REPORT

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9 Aradhana Enclave, R.K. Puram, Sector-13,
New Delhi-110066, India.



Report of the
1st Training Course on
Improving Capacity of Rural Women
Thailand and Japan
12th November to 10th December 2014

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Improving Capacity of Rural Women
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COURSE REPORT

SECTION-I

Executive Summary

Background

Gender equality is a fundamental factor for the socio-economic well-being of all. It has particular importance in terms of global economic recovery and global development. Yet, despite the gains made so far and the efforts and political commitment of the international community, visible and invisible obstacles continue to persist that prevent rural women from fully exploiting their capabilities. These barriers equally deny them their right to be recognized as the driver and the main actor in rural development.

Rural women face a number of constraints. Rural women have limited or no access to natural, infrastructural, technical and financial resources due to both cultural and legal constraints; rural women are not heard since they have no voice; and rural women mainly work in the informal sector and in subsistence agriculture. As a consequence, their access to education and basic social services is compromised.

The role of rural women is vital. Rural women not only contribute to feeding the world in a safe and sustainable way, but also promoting a true development and contribute to building peaceful and socially cohesive communities.

Introduction

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) is an independent non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves cooperatives worldwide. The ICA was founded in London on 18th August 1895 and is now headquartered in Brussels (Belgium). ICA is a member-based organization with national and international cooperative organizations in more than 95 countries active in all sectors of the economy including agriculture, banking, consumer, fisheries, health, housing, insurance, tourism and worker cooperatives. ICA's four offices in Africa, America, Asia-Pacific and Europe, together, serve more than 275 Member-Organizations from 95 countries, representing over one billion cooperative members around the world.

The ICA-Asia and Pacific Office is operating from New Delhi since 1960, serves 85 national level organizations from 26 countries, representing over 500 million cooperative members.

Training Course

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan has chosen the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) to implement an umbrella Project on "Strengthening of Capacity Building in Developing Countries in Asia" for three years starting from 2014.

Under this Project, the 1st Training Course on “Improving Capacity of Rural Women” was held in Thailand and Japan. Part-I of the Training Course was held in Thailand in collaboration with the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) from 12th to 18th November 2014 and Part-II in Japan in collaboration with the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA) from 19th November to 10th December. The Training Course was funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan, and implemented by ICA.

Objective

The main objective of the Training Course was to assist capacity building of leaders of rural women for promotion of more organized business activities in the countries of South East Asia and South Asia regions.

Course Participants

Ten (10) women participants were selected by ICA-AP for the Training Course from the following nine countries – Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam. A list of participants is placed at Section-XI.

Home Country Assignments (HCAs)

The selected participants undertook their Home Country Assignments (HCAs) for a period of one week (5-11 November) prior to the actual commencement of the Training Course. They prepared (i) a **Country Report**; and (ii) a draft **Action Plan** for the development of their own organizations including social and economic activities so as to meet the objective of the Training Course.

The draft Action Plan prepared by the participants in their home countries was finalized based on the experience and knowledge gained during the Training Course in Thailand and Japan.

The Training Course was divided into two parts, as has been explained below:

Part-I: Study Visits in Thailand

A one-week study visits program with a focus on observation of the activities of cooperatives/women groups and social institutions was held in Thailand from 12th to 18th November 2014 in collaboration with the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) – a member organization of ICA.

Part-II: Training Course in Japan

Part-II of the Training Course, including field study visits, was held in Japan for 22 days (19th November to 10th December 2014). The Training Course was conducted by and located at IDACA. Some of the key subjects covered at IDACA were:

- *Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Japan;*
- *Women’s Associations of Japanese Agricultural Cooperatives;*
- *Rural Women’s Entrepreneurship (marketing and local agro-processing);*
- *Women’s Participation in the Rural Development;*
- *Finalization and Presentation of Action Plans; and*
- *Reporting and Evaluation.*

Financial Support

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries [MAFF] of the Government of Japan contributed funds to the 1st Training Course on “Improving Capacity of Rural Women” which was followed by a grant for its implementation. The ICA is highly appreciative of the contribution made and grateful to the Government of Japan for this gesture.

Acknowledgements

In the implementation of the 1st Training Course, the ICA has received full support and cooperation from the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA-ZENCHU); Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries [MAFF] of the Government of Japan; Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia [IDACA] in Japan; Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) and other ICA member-organisations in the Region. The ICA is grateful to its member-organisations for their support.

Administrative Arrangements

Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, Advisor-Planning & Membership, ICA-AP, was responsible for the conduct of the 1st Training Course. The entire Training Course was coordinated and implemented by him for its full duration, under the direction of the ICA Regional Director for Asia and Pacific.

Part-II of the training program held in Japan at IDACA was conducted under the direction and guidance of Mr. Masahiro Konno, Executive Director of IDACA. Ms. Eiko Oshita of Training Department was designated by the IDACA as the Course Coordinator for this part.

Summary of the Time Table

The following was the summary of the time table:

<i>Home Country Assignments (HCAs)</i>	:	<i>5th to 11th November 2014</i>
<i>Arrival of Participants in Bangkok</i>	:	<i>12th November</i>
<i>Part-I: Field Study Visits in Thailand</i>	:	<i>13th to 18th November</i>
<i>Arrival of Participants in Narita-Japan</i>	:	<i>19th November</i>
<i>Part-II: Training Course in Japan-IDACA</i>	:	<i>20th November to 9th December</i>
<i>Departure of Participants from Japan</i>	:	<i>10th December</i>

SECTION-II

Inauguration of Part-I of the Training Course in Thailand

The inauguration of Part-I of the 1st Training Course on "Improving Capacity of Rural Women" was held in the forenoon of 13th November at the premises of Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT). The inaugural session was attended by Mr. Nakorn Tangavirapat, Executive Director of CLT; Mr. Kriangkrai Khamin, Deputy Executive Director of CLT; Mr. Sutus Chan Ngiab, Deputy Executive Director of CLT; Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, Advisor-Planning & Membership/Program Coordinator, ICA-AP and a number of CLT officers and staff.

Mr. Nakorn Tangavirapat welcomed the participants and the guests on behalf of CLT. He said that the CLT has the honour to organize this international training program in Thailand for the last four years. He said that the CLT is intensely involved in the promotion of capacity of rural women which is the theme of the training course.

He further said that "The Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) is functioning as an apex body of the whole cooperative movement. Currently, there are almost 8,000 cooperative societies with its membership around 10 million households or around 14% of total population of Thailand. The main duties are acting as a facilitator, coordinator and educational support for promotion of all cooperatives to promote and develop throughout the country without sharing any profit. The cooperative will pay subscription to CLT annually 5% of their net profit but not more 10,000 Baht.

I personally wish to congratulate all people concerned for successful implementation of the training course. I wish to convey my thanks to various different women groups that the participants will visit during their stay in Thailand. I sincerely wish that this part of the training course will continuously inspire all participants in different countries in Asia and Pacific to work towards poverty reduction and rural development".

Finally, he wished the 10 participants from nine countries a comfortable stay and meaningful visits in Thailand. He also conveyed his appreciation to the women groups and the cooperatives that the participants will be visiting during their stay in Thailand.

Mr. Sethu Madhavan welcomed all the distinguished guests and the participants to the inaugural session. He expressed the gratitude of the ICA to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan, for their continued financial support to the program and IDACA for its active collaboration in the implementation of the training program. He expressed the gratitude of ICA-AP to CLT for making all arrangements for the field visits in Thailand. He also mentioned about some basic discipline to be maintained throughout the training course.

After the inauguration, a presentation on the Cooperative Movement of Thailand was made by Dr. Asanee Ratanamalai, Director of Rasami International School, for the benefit of the participants.

Cooperatives in Thailand are vertically organized in a three-tier system; primary cooperatives at district level and federations at provincial and national level. The primary cooperative consists of individual members while members of provincial and national federations are cooperatives. The members elect the board of directors through the general meeting with maximum number of 15 persons for cooperative development policies formulation. The board of directors, then, appoints a manager and staff to run the cooperative business.

Opening of the Training Course at CLT in Thailand



Study visits in Thailand



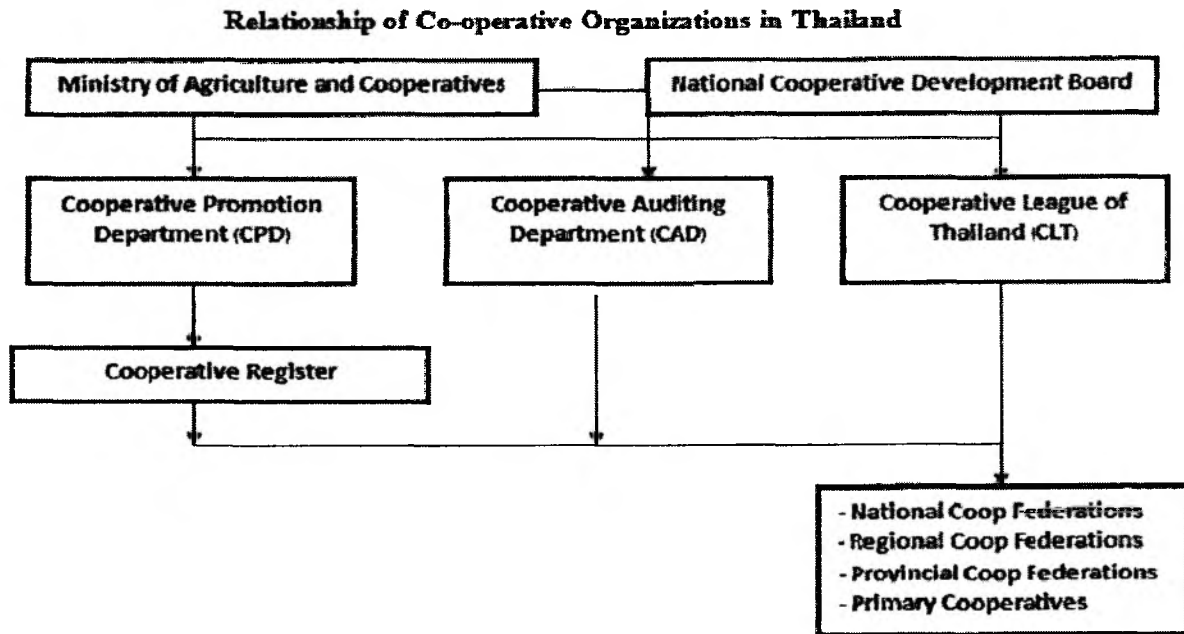
Five or more cooperatives at primary or provincial level can form a provincial or national federation together to undertake joint activities on behalf of their affiliations such as processing and trading of agricultural products.

At national level, there is the Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Thailand of which all 76 provincial agricultural cooperative federations are affiliated. There are also the Sugarcane Growers Cooperative Federation of Thailand, Swine Raisers Cooperative Federation of Thailand, Dairy Cooperative Federation of Thailand and Onion Growers Cooperative Federation of Thailand. Thrift and Credit Cooperatives and Consumer Cooperatives are affiliated to a national federation of their own.

All types of cooperatives at all levels, according to the Cooperative Act, A.D. 1999, have to implicitly be affiliated to the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT). The CLT is functioning as an apex body of the whole cooperative movement. It does not run as a business enterprise, but acts as a facilitator, coordinator and provides educational support in the promotion of all cooperative progress.

At present, the cooperatives in Thailand are officially categorized into seven types, namely:

1. Agricultural Cooperatives
2. Land Settlement Cooperatives
3. Fisheries Cooperatives
4. Consumer Cooperatives
5. Thrift and Credit Cooperatives
6. Service Cooperatives
7. Credit Union Cooperatives



SECTION-III

Field Study Visits in Thailand

The field study visits were arranged from 13th to 18th November 2014 in and around Bangkok by the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT).

The participants visited the following cooperatives in Thailand to get an opportunity to meet some of the progressive women members and observe their participation in the business operations of their agricultural cooperatives.

Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT)

The Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) was established according to the Cooperative Act (Cooperative Law) on 9th June 1968. It is a non-profit organization functioning as the national apex body of the cooperative movement in Thailand. All cooperatives registered under the Cooperative Act will be automatically affiliated to the CLT.

The main functions of CLT are: (a) Promote cooperative ideology and principles; (b) Provide technical assistance, training and education; (c) Promote business, trading, industry, and services of all cooperatives; (d) Strengthen cooperative networking and relationship locally and internationally; (e) Protect cooperative members' interests and benefits; and (f) Provide cooperation with the government concerned in promotion of cooperatives for genuine and real benefits to cooperatives in general.

Resources and Facilities

1. CLT Training Center with broad services of training, conferences, seminars, meetings, parties, food & beverage, accommodation up to 69 twin sharing rooms serviced to both members and non-members,
2. Publications/Magazines/Newsletters/TV Program and cooperative texts,
3. Training programs and consultations concerning cooperative laws and information,
4. Cooperative Museum and Library,
5. Arrangement for good relationship with cooperative organizations or international cooperative organizations.

Current Number of Cooperatives and Membership Classified by Types

No.	Types of Cooperatives	Number of Cooperatives (2013)	
		Cooperatives	Percentage
	Agricultural Cooperatives Sector		
1	Agricultural Cooperatives	4,444	54.95
2	Fisheries Cooperatives	101	1.25
3	Land Settlement Cooperatives	96	1.19
	Non-Agricultural Cooperatives Sector		
4	Thrift and Credit Cooperatives	1,478	18.28
5	Consumer Cooperatives	264	3.26
6	Service Cooperatives	1,202	14.86
7	Credit Union Cooperatives	502	6.21
	Total	8,087	100.00







Cooperative Promotion Department

In 1915, a year before the first cooperative was introduced to Thailand the Cooperative Section was established under the Ministry of Finance responsible for cooperative promotion. With an increasing role of cooperatives in the Thai economy, the Cooperative Section was transformed to be the Cooperative Department under the Ministry of Commerce in 1920, thus becoming the Ministry of Cooperatives in 1952. The reorganization of the government agencies in 1963 caused the abolishment of Ministry of Cooperatives and the establishment of Ministry of National Development in substitution. Under the new Ministry, there were three newly established departments responsible for all previous cooperative duties as follows - Land Cooperative Department, Cooperative Auditing Department and Trade and Finance Cooperative Department.

Again in 1972, the Ministry of National Development was abolished and replaced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. All cooperative works, except duties under the Cooperative Auditing Department, were merged together under the new department named Cooperative Promotion Department (CPD) and attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

In 2002, the internal reorganization of Cooperative Promotion Department took place according to the Regulations of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. It resulted in the changes of roles, duties and responsibilities.

Vision: To be the key organization aiming at developing cooperative system to be the main force in developing the country towards a pleasant society.

Mission: (1) to create values and push forward the cooperative system to get involved in establishment of pleasant society based on sufficiency economy philosophy; (2) to strengthen cooperatives and farmer groups, equip them with good governance, being a learning organization, and providing services for members' satisfaction; (3) to encourage cooperatives and farmer groups to carry on businesses with high quality and fair play and to build up the networks among various stakeholders subject to a legal framework; (4) to promote the cooperative and farmer group participation with communities in social and environmental development activity; (5) to improve the personnel cooperation and participation in management and business operation on self-reliance and mutual help basis; (6) to improve the public administrative system and the Cooperative Promotion Department officer competencies through the good governance principles; and (7) to accelerate the land and promote occupation in cooperative settlement areas.

The CPD is responsible for promoting and disseminating the cooperative ideology, principles and methods to cooperative personnel, farmer groups and the public, promoting, supporting and strengthening the cooperative system, improving cooperatives' learning process to increase the capacity of business management as well as the efficiency of their operation, and encouraging cooperatives to upgrade the business linkages to international levels for better living quality of cooperatives members and socio-economic aspects.

The administration of CPD is divided into 2 parts - Central and Provincial ones. Central Administration, which is located in Bangkok, consists of 3 divisions, 1 center and 7 offices. Provincial Administration comprises 75 Provincial Cooperative Offices.

The Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Thailand Limited (ACFT)

The Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Thailand Limited (ACFT) was established and operated under "The Cooperative Act" formed to be the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation and for the agricultural cooperatives throughout Thailand under the supervision of the Cooperative Promotion Department (CPD), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

Set up as "The Wholesale Cooperative of Thailand Limited" on 30th May 1952, the name was changed a few times, finally to "The Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Thailand Limited" since 1st October 1975. The regulations had been amended to fit the policy and objectives. Its network covers enormous number of its cooperative members. It has over 4,000 cooperative members covering over 6.3 million farm family members.

The main objective of ACFT was to encourage members to do business and assist each other by means of cooperative procedures with a non-profit business concept which will benefit the members and the society as a whole in both economic and social aspects.

The ACFT has got the following divisions: (a) Agricultural business division; (b) Training development division; and (c) Printing Division.

To increase cooperative's business capability and network, the ACFT is supporting the following facilities: ACFT Business Center in Chiangmai Province; TJC Chemical Company Limited; ACFT Business Center in Ayutthaya Province; and ACFT Cooperative Rice Center.

Rice Center: Rice is the most important economic crop of Thailand. It is a staple food for more than 50 percent of world population including Thai people. Most of Thai farmers are rice growers. Thus, rice is the top five income earning crops for farmers and the country. The ACFT is a national cooperative and the center of all national agricultural cooperatives. Its mission is to support and promote agricultural cooperatives in all aspects including farm inputs, marketing and knowledge for management and services according to principles of cooperative for the social and economic welfare of members. The ACFT is also authorized by the Cooperative Promotion Department to be the principal cooperative for rice business. Therefore, the Thai cooperative Rice Center Project is launched to be the central agency for compiling all kinds of paddy rice from cooperatives nationwide and process into white rice and brown rice including jasmine rice, sticky rice, non-sticky rice and native rice for direct consumption and marketing to conserve and maintain the best rice of the world.

Distribution Center: There are 4,000 agricultural cooperatives throughout Thailand. Among these localities, there are high quality agricultural products that meet consumer demand. The deficiency in the supply chain is the distribution center for such goods as vegetable, fruits, organic products, coffee, tea and seasonal fruits. The ACFT has thus opened the Distribution Center to serve as business channel for propaganda and selling agricultural produces.

The ACFT has a total of 18 board of directors, all of whom are men. The term of office of the directors is for two years. They can be re-elected only two times consecutively. The ACFT has got 137 employees out of which 80 are women. The net surplus of ACFT for the year 2013 was 38.908 million Baht. The cost of one share of the cooperative is 100 Baht. A maximum dividend of 10% can be paid by the cooperative.

Credit Union League of Thailand (CULT)

History

- In 1965 first Credit Union was established under the name "Soon Klang Thewa Credit Union".
- In 1966 the Catholic Council for Social Development which sponsored credit union organizing and extension approved to establish the Committee of Credit Union in Thailand and responsible for all credit union promotion.

- In 1969 the Credit Union Center of Thailand was established. Its office was in the same building of Soon Klang Thewa Association and its function was to promote organization of credit union chapter in each region that could organize national organization.
- In 1970 the Credit Union Center of Thailand became the associate member of the Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU).
- In 1971 the representatives from 60 credit unions all over Thailand attended the meeting at Xavier hall in Bangkok, to organize the Credit Union Nation Federation of Thailand or CUNAFT. The Executive Board was selected from the representatives attended.
- In 1973, the Credit Union Center of Thailand was recognized as regular member by ACCU.
- In 1974 the CUNAFT changed its name to the Credit Union League of Thailand Ltd. (CULT). Loan Protection and Life Saving Program from CUNA Mutual were launched in Thailand.
- In 1977 MISEREOR, one of donor agencies in Germany granted the fund for CULT Building. That was the nation league's first office and training center located at Ramkhamhaeng Road, Bangkok.
- In 1978 CULT office was moved from Soon Klang Thewa to new home.
- In 1979 the Credit Union movement in Thailand was legally accepted by the government and registered under the Cooperatives Law and supervised by the Cooperative Promotion Department, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

Vision: Financial institution for excellent one-stop service based on members' needs.

Mission: (a) To develop human resource as a professional; (b) To develop management system in an efficient way; and (c) To develop an excellent one-stop service based on members' needs.

Objectives: (a) Encourage Credit Union members to save; (b) Provide fund and credit services for livelihood and occupational development; (c) Procure raw materials, joint purchasing and selling, supply consuming or processing products and services of members; (d) Coordinate with cooperatives, national federations, Cooperative League of Thailand, community organization, private sector and government agencies to promote and develop cooperatives' businesses; and (e) Enhance knowledge and develop living standard of members and communities as well.

Funding Resources: Shares from affiliated members; Bonding Loan; Deposit from individual credit union and other cooperatives; Loan, Promissory Note and Bond; Reserve and other fund; and Donations.

As on 31st December 2013 the CULT has got 1,129 members (542 regular, 522 affiliated and 65 non-affiliated). Share capital is one of the components of CULT to show the participation and ownership of credit union members. As on 31st December 2013 CULT has got a total of US\$ 13.926 million share capital. The CULT utilizes the surplus to maximize the profit for members by investing in various stock and/or bonds based on the framework of the cooperative law and regulation of cooperative registrar. As on 31st December 2013 the CULT has got a total investment of US\$ 23.859 million.

Floating Marketing – 4 Regions Products

Pattaya Floating Market has been a major attraction that visitors would like to visit. Activities, traditional shows and a variety of items available there would be a key reason to attract visits.

It is considered as one of the biggest floating markets in Thailand at present. At almost 27 acres, the noticeably classy market houses more than a 100 shops selling authentic Thai cuisine, souvenir items, and other food products. Wooden structures stand proud on a manmade lagoon, each representing a particular architecture from the four regions of Thailand (northern, southern, central and north-eastern). The concept covers how people from these four regions live, what their main activities are, and what the main products from there are, so that the floating market could indicate what people in different areas live and what they earn from their ancient times. Additionally, this floating market is the largest tourist attraction in East Thailand.

It not only presents cultures and traditions from different regions of Thailand but also presents niche products from there, such as wooden sculpture, silverware, textile, paper handicrafts, sailing-boat model, wooden handmade bags, Thai silk and so on. Not surprisingly, the visitor usually buys souvenirs or gifts for their friends and their family from this floating market.

Doem Bang Nang Buat Agricultural Cooperative Limited

The Doem Bang Nang Buat Agricultural Cooperative Limited was established in 1974. It is located in Suphan Buri Province.

At present the cooperative has got 3,180 members. Its major business is credit (13.362 million Baht in 2013). Its processing business is in loss (497,000 Baht). The turnover of the cooperative for the year 2013 was 83.980 million Bhat.

Elections are held every two years to elect 15 Board of Directors. They are eligible for re-election up to a maximum of two terms.

The cooperative conducts many training courses for the members. It got the best cooperative award in 1982. The cooperative also got inter-state awards in 2011 and 2012.

Baan Huay Wai Women Group

The Baan Huay Wai Group was established in 1992 with 30 members. At present the group has got 178 members. The initial fund of 900,000 baht was provided by the Cooperative Promotion Department (CPD). The Chairperson of the group was a farmer. She wanted to provide additional income to farmers. Three organizations are supporting her for marketing the products. The group has got ten awards so far.

Water hyacinth is one of the fastest growing plants known to man. It is a free-floating plant, rising up to one meter above the surface of the water. In many areas, including Suphan Buri Province, water hyacinth was a problem weed. If it is not controlled, water hyacinth will cover the waterways, having an impact on water flow and waterway access, and starving the water of oxygen, killing fish. The plants also create a prime habitat for mosquitoes.

The group uses the spongy system of the plant in woven products such as baskets and bags. The water hyacinth is harvested and dried, changing colour from green to tan. As the women weave the strips, they push the air out of the stem, creating popping sounds as they work. The famous products are luggage handle, bag, tissue box, fruit basket, box, etc.

Water hyacinth is known for its soft feel and distinctive smell, reminiscent of leather and fine tobacco. Creating products from water hyacinth is part of an environmental solution to a local problem, turning a weed into an asset.

The Doem Bang Nang Buat Agricultural Cooperative Limited is providing credit facilities to the group. The cost of one share is 100 baht. One member is allowed to buy a maximum of 10 shares. Profit is

shared among the members. The monthly sale of the group is 200,000 baht and the net profit is 30,000 baht. The group exports their products to Japan, Italy and USA through the agent. The export price is 5% higher.

Women Coop Group Bang Chao Cha Community Enterprise

The Women Coop Group Bang Chao Cha Community Enterprise is located in Anghong province. The villagers in weaving group of Bang Chao Cha use bamboo which they learned from their ancestors and apply into handbags with many different shapes. They also dye the cane with various color for more beauty, including padding fabric inside the handbag for increased value and more convenience in using, also being able to be sold in the market.

The group was promoted by the Pho Thong Agricultural Cooperative Limited in 1977 with 20 members. Currently the group has got 300 members out of which 80% are women. The local enterprise development office provided 25,000 baht for two years to the group. The group got a fillip in 2004 when OTOP started in Thailand.

Bamboo is not a tree but it is of grass family that is one of the fastest growing plants in the world. Bamboos are of notable economic and cultural significance in South Asia, South-east Asia and East Asia, being used for building materials, as a food source and as a versatile raw product.

Rattans are also superficially similar to bamboo; many of the properties of rattan that make it suitable for furniture also make it a popular choice for handicraft and art pieces. Uses include rattan baskets, plant containers and other decorative items.

The method to weave baskets from rattan and bamboo tread has transferred from generation to the next. In the past they used this method to make hold house items for everyday use. Later, products have developed by combining the old method and new technology whilst keeping Thai identity. Many varieties of baskets are produced by the group. The sale of the products is done through the community development center. The group also exports their products directly to Japan, Europe and other countries. The CLT also helps the group to promote their products.

To become a member of the group, one has to buy at least one share of 10 baht. The maximum share allowed per person is 100. The dividend is paid on the share based on the profit. 5% from the wholesales and 10% from the retailers is deducted from the total sales for the group. The big problem facing the group is marketing and also to get a final decision among the group members.

Occupation Women Coop Group Samunphir Ayuwatthana

The Occupation Women Coop Group Samunphir Ayuwatthana is located at Koh Kerd, Bang Pa-in district of Ayutthaya province under Bang Pa-in Agricultural Cooperative Limited. The group was established in 1993 with eight members with their own funds. At present the group has got 200 members. Mostly the income of the group came from the production of herbal medicines and home stay. The product was developed until the CPD certification as a standard cooperative product and also has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The group was formed by people in the community especially the elderly who are not working and have no income. Persuaded to join together as members of cooperatives to hold with the principles and methods of cooperation, the members had a responsibility to work and diversify into herbal preparations, steamed herb, and herbal form. The average income for each member is about 165-200 baht per day.

Mrs. Lumphun Phannawai, Chairperson of the group, said "We had visitors who were interested in the processes and products almost every day. This place located nearby the river; also our

community neighborhood still has Thai's traditional way of life. The visitors very much enjoy the atmosphere and stay overnight and offer suggestions to open home stay. The group saw a great opportunity to earn more income for the group and other members".

This is a continuing business that makes stable and sustainable income to the members.

The cost of one share is 100 baht and a member is allowed to purchase a maximum of 200 shares. The turnover for 2013 was 1.5 million baht and the profit was 400,000 baht. A dividend of 20% was paid to the members on their share capital.

The group is fully supported by the Bang Pa-in Agricultural Cooperative. The office building of the group is provided by the cooperative. Herbals items are easily available from the village itself. 90% of the village households are members of the group. The group also uses tram to visit the villages during flooding. On an average 700 to 800 people are visiting the group in a month.

SECTION-IV

Inauguration of Part-II of the Training Course in Japan

The inaugural session of Part-II of the Training Course was held on 20th November 2014 in the Conference Hall of IDACA. Mr. Masahiro Konno, Executive Director of the Institute for Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA) and Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, Advisor-Planning & Membership, ICA-AP addressed the inaugural session. Mr. Hiroshi Suzuki, Manager (General Affairs Department); Mr. Toru Nakashima, Manager (Training and Development Department) and other officers of IDACA were also present.

Welcoming Mr. Konno and other senior officers of IDACA, Mr. Sethu Madhavan congratulated the participants for successfully completing the Part-I of the training course in Thailand and for attending the Part-II of the training course in Japan. He conveyed the sincere gratitude of the ICA to Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan, for their valuable financial support for the development of women's activities in Asia. He mentioned about the longstanding collaboration between ICA and IDACA. He also spoke about the ICA Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade, an important outcome of IYC (International Year of Cooperatives).

Mr. Konno extended a warm welcome to all the participants to Japan on behalf of IDACA. He extended his sincere appreciation to Mr. Sethu Madhavan of ICA-AP for successfully handling the training course. He said that this project got materialised due to unified cooperation and support of MAFF and JA ZENCHU. He further said that the women's training course was started in 1991 and going on for the last 23 years with the financial support of MAFF and from 2014 onwards a new phase has started with emphasis on "Improving Capacity of Rural Women".

He further said "As you know, the objective of this training course is to assist capacity building of rural women leaders for the promotion of more organized business activities. And the future of this training course is emphasized on drawing up the action plan in particular. Not only attending the training course, but also you are requested to show us a concrete form as an action plan and implement it. All of you are selected woman leaders of government organizations and cooperatives in your respective countries. So we would like you to deepen your knowledge and make good use of it for improving capacity of rural women in your countries. During this course, you will learn various aspects of rural women's activities in Japan. I believe that the information and findings you are going to gain during this training course shall contribute in preparation of your final action plan."

He said that IDACA was established in 1963 with funds contributed by all Japanese agricultural cooperatives. More than 50 years history of IDACA, around 6,000 participants, mainly from Asia, have been trained from 110 countries. He further said that IDACA had organized a function in August to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its establishment and also brought out a commemorative DVD and booklet.

He said that during the stay of the participants at IDACA, there would be exchange of experience and knowledge. He hoped that the participants would enjoy the life and a comfortable and fruitful stay at IDACA. He further said that the autumn season will be changing to winter and the temperature is getting lower in these days and he requested the participants to take care of themselves.

SECTION-V

Lectures at IDACA

The following lectures were delivered by the resource persons at IDACA in Tokyo during the training course.

Society, Economy and Culture in Japan

by Ms. Eiko Oshita, Program Coordinator, IDACA

Under this topic, brief basic information on the salient features of Japan was given. The resource person also explained about the following overall characteristics of Japan - land, climate and the people; its four major islands (Kyushu, Shikoku, Honshu and Hokkaido); its four distinct seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter); its population (127 million); its density; literacy rate and language; laws for women's rights; labour force; its economy after World War-II; policies; agriculture; housing; education system; religion; clothing; cuisine; household economy; living conditions and environment; and social security system, etc.

Japanese Experience of Agricultural Cooperative Development

by Mr. Hiroshi Terunuma, Cooperative Development Consultant, IDACA

Under this topic, the resource person explained about the different stages of development of agricultural cooperatives in Japan. He covered the following subjects - characteristics of cooperatives; what is agricultural cooperative; unique features of agricultural cooperatives in Japan; structure of agricultural cooperatives; trends of age composition of members of JA; various types of agricultural cooperatives; JA group organisations; farm guidance activities; better living guidance; diversified and unique marketing methods; marketing business system of JA; and facilities of JA (A coop store, gasoline station, country elevator, collection and shipment centre, funeral ceremony halls, etc.). He also gave an account of salient features and some relevant reasons for the fast development of agricultural cooperatives and agriculture in Japan and the problems being faced by agricultural cooperatives at the moment. Moreover, he shed a light on how the cooperatives can be run and strengthened effectively and also on the main factors responsible for the development of cooperatives.

Assertive Training for Smooth Human Communication

by Ms. Shiom Morita, Executive Director, Specified Non-profit Organization

Under this topic, the resource person explained about the usefulness of the assertiveness. She said assertiveness is a behaviour which helps us to communicate clearly and confidently our needs, wants and feelings to other people without abusing in any way their human rights. Assertiveness consists of three parts - what we communicate; how we communicate; and on which basis we communicate. She said that there are five basic assertiveness techniques - be specific (avoid generalisation); keep to the point (broken record); self-disclosure (say how you feel); understand the other person's feelings; and offer a compromise (try to find the best solution). She also said that one should be aware of your body language (verbal, vocal, visual). She also said that there are 12 rights mentioned in the book "A Woman in Your Own Right" written by Anne Dickson in 1980. Interesting and useful role plays were also performed by the participants at the end.

Organization and Activities of JA Women's Association

by Ms. Ariko Hotta, Better Living Promotion Department of JA ZENCHU

The resource person explained the objectives of the JA Women's Association which were: (a) Cooperate with each other to protect women's rights and improve social and economical status of

Opening of the Training Course at IDACA, Japan



Study visits/lectures in Japan



rural women; (b) Promote participation of women in JA's activities so as to reflect the voice of women; and (c) Create comfortable local communities with affluence, keep close contact with each other and promote mutual help through cooperative activities involving women. She also covered the following subjects – significance of activities of JA women's association; present activities of JA women's associations; problems and action of JA women's associations; and activities for supporting disaster stricken area.

Historical Background of Establishment of JA Women's Association

by Mr. Yoshiaki Ogane, Founder Editor, Ie-No-Hikari Association and Writer

Under this topic, the resource person explained the background of establishment of JA Women's Association. The important aspects covered by him were: (a) Unconditional surrender of Japan – defeat in the imperialism war (war of aggression) against the western power turning Asia into the battlefield; (b) Women's liberation by 'post-war democratization policy of the occupation forces; (c) Democratization of agriculture and rural area; and (d) Improvement of rural life and women's social status by Government (life improvement section set up by the MAFF, technical guidance for kitchen, fostering life improvement groups); Agricultural cooperatives (promotion of purchasing business of daily necessities, establishment and fostering of women's associations of agricultural cooperatives; joint delivery of daily necessities; rationalization of daily life and promotion of savings; and women's associations (enhancement of organization, and activities for culture and welfare).

How to Start Women's Business – Case Studies in Thailand and Japan

by Ms. Tetsu Takahashi, Director, JA Iwate Hanamaki.

Under this topic, the resource person covered the following: (a) The Way to Establish Direct Sales Shop by JA Women's Association (present situation of JA Iwate Hanamaki; activities of JA Hanamaki women's association; details of establishment of direct sales shop; introduction of main direct sales shops; and achievements brought to farmers by direct sales business); and (b) Case Study of Women's Entrepreneurial Activities by Rural Women in Thailand (Community leader development project for agricultural cooperatives; better living activities; marketing support for vocational group; and introduction of different groups - food processing, textile dyeing, handicrafts and herbal products). She also made a brief presentation about the great earthquake and tsunami that hit Iwate Prefecture on 11th March 2011 and the relief activities undertaken by JAs and the Women Associations in Japan.

Employment Creation via Women's Entrepreneurial Activities and Livelihood Improvement

by Ms. Kazuko Kano, Former President, Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association

The resource person explained about the definition of Rural Women's Entrepreneurial Activities – Rural women are mainly engaged in entrepreneurial activities in the fields of agriculture, fisheries and forestry by using local materials and responsible for its management and additional income generation. She explained about six patterns of entrepreneurial activities (agricultural production including school lunch; food processing; non-food processing; distribution, sales; exchange between rural and urban areas green tourism, agricultural experience; and services). She covered about the brief history of livelihood improvement; establishment of Home Life Improvement Extension Service (HLIES); and development of HLIES through the period of high economic growth. She also explained in detail about the road side stations, farmers market and value addition. She further explained that the Ministry of Agriculture is pursuing the diversification of the management of agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors by promoting the integration of production, processing and marketing – 6th industries (rokuji-ka). She also explained through case studies about the rural community empowerment by making use of local resources.

SECTION-VI

Field Study Visits in Japan

During Part-II of the Training Course in Japan, study visits were arranged in Hiroshima Prefecture. The participants visited Hiroshima Prefecture from 1st to 3rd December to get themselves acquainted with the organizational structure and business activities of prefectural and primary level agricultural cooperatives, and also to observe the organization and functioning of women's associations. The participants were briefed about the outline of Hiroshima Prefecture and they visited the following institutions during their study visits.

Hiroshima Prefecture

Hiroshima is a prefecture of Japan located in the Chugoku region of the island of Honshu. The capital of the Prefecture is Hiroshima. The total area of the Prefecture is 8,476.95 square kilometers (11th rank). The total population as of 2011 was 2.858 million (12th rank) and the density is 337 persons per square kilometer. It has got 5 districts and 23 municipalities.

The area around Hiroshima was formerly divided into Bingo Province and Aki Province. This location has been a center of trade and culture since the beginning of Japan's recorded history. Hiroshima is a traditional center of the Chugoku region and was the seat of the Mori clan until the Battle of Sekigahara.

Hiroshima Prefecture lies in the middle of Chugoku. Most of the prefecture consists of mountains leading towards Shimane Prefecture and rivers with rich plains near the coast. The province faces Shikoku across the Seto Inland Sea. Hiroshima Bay opens on the Inland Sea and also includes many small islands. The sheltered nature of the Inland Sea makes Hiroshima's climate very mild. 14 cities are located in Hiroshima Prefecture.

Hiroshima's main industries include automobiles (Mazda is headquartered there) and ship building (Kure was one of the main naval bases of the Imperial Japanese Navy and remains a major commercial yard).

Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives in Hiroshima Prefecture

JA Group in Hiroshima consists of primary agricultural cooperatives organized by JA members living in Hiroshima Prefecture, prefectural level federations of national level JA organizations.

About 70% of commercial farms in Hiroshima are operated as a side business. About 73% of core persons mainly engaged in farming are above 65 years age, showing the aging of such persons. A great portion of cultivated land in Hiroshima consists of paddy fields in steep terrain. The average cultivated land area per farm household is only 79 ares. Farms are undergoing a transition from individual farms to farming organizations. As of February 2009, there were 175 community-based agricultural production legal persons.

With its variety of weather, Hiroshima is home to a wide range of farming with core sectors being rice, vegetable and fruits cultivation. Taking advantage of a wide ranging natural environment, Hiroshima produces fruits of many varieties, including apples and mandarins. Ranging from the cold northern upland to the coastal areas and the islands, a wide variety of crops are being grown in Hiroshima using various methods. Blessed with diverse weather, Hiroshima offers rice of many

varieties. Vegetables are grown in a variety of methods such as in plastic green houses and other indoor facilities to meet diversifying and year-round needs of consumers.

As of 31st March 2013, it has got a total of 414,718 members (161,039 regular members and 253,679 associate members). The regular members are individuals or corporate bodies that engage in farming. There are 13 multipurpose JAs in Hiroshima Prefecture. It has got a total of 32,649 farmer households in 2010 (69% full time farmers, 21% part-time farmers and 10% others).

JAs offer various types of farm guidance on technical matters and farm management to farm households engaged in rice and other vegetable production or livestock breeding. JAs are playing a central role in development of local agriculture in terms of drawing up regional agriculture plan, fostering local farming groups, supporting development of producers' groups, etc. JAs also offer better living guidance including dietary habit improvement, health care activities, better life and cultural activities aiming to improve livelihood of members and maintain their secured and affluent lives.

JAs market farm products are produced by member farmers. The fundamental concept of JA's marketing business is "joint marketing system". Through this system, certain amount of farm products can be procured easily and their quality can be uniformed at certain level, which leads to advantageous sales on the market. Recently various marketing channels have been established by JAs including direct marketing to supermarkets, mass-retailers, food industries and selling at direct sales shops (farmers markets) and other outlets established by JA.

JAs stock up production materials such as fertilizers, agro-chemicals, feeds and agricultural equipment and also daily necessities such as food stuffs, miscellaneous goods and durable consumer goods and supply them to members. JAs purchasing business is basically conducted on receiving advance orders placed by members. By employing economy of scale gained through this scheme, JA can supply quality goods as cheap as possible in stable manner.

JAs receive deposits from members and use them as capital for loans extended to members and for other purposes. Financial services offered by JAs encompass various types of loans such as housing loans, automobile loans, etc. which correspond to the needs of members. In addition, JAs offer consultation on matters such as asset management. Banking group consists of JAs, JA prefectural credit federations and the Norinchukin Bank called "JA Bank" which has the largest branch network in Japan.

Mutual insurance business is conducted by JAs and JA Kyousairen (National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives). Unlike private insurance companies which provide insurance for unspecified large number of people, JA's mutual insurance is targeted to JA members and has both functions to protect human life and property damage based on mutual aid spirit. Each JA gives mutual insurance service over their counters to contractors including farm members and specialized staffs called Life Advisors who have broad knowledge of mutual insurance and are capable of catering various needs of contractors stationed at each JA.

JAs are also engaged in other businesses such as utilization business (establish joint-use facilities for JA members such as drying plant, processing facilities, etc. aiming to increase efficacy of production); processing business harnessing local specialty production; and welfare service for the elderly in order to meet the different needs of local communities.

Hiroshima Prefectural Council of JA Women's Associations

The establishment of women's associations started since 1948 in Japan. Its main objective during 1960-1970 was to improve the living standard of rural women. It can be said that the relationship between the JA and the Women's Association is complementary to each other.

The Hiroshima Prefectural Council of JA Women's Association was established in 1956 with roughly 100,000 members from 400 JAs based on connection and cooperation of each woman's association with the purpose of protecting women's rights, improving their social and economic status, and creating a comfortable local community with good rapport and mutual aid through cooperative activities. It is a prefectural level organization consisting of 13 JA women's associations in the prefecture with 25,821 members as on 2014.

Members of each woman's association consist of housewives of JA member households and residents in the community. The main roles of the organization are enlightenment and consultation for solidarity and interchange among JA women's associations. On top of this, it plays a very important role in reinvigorating the business and operation of JAs.

Each woman's association implements various group activities such as education on food and agriculture; agricultural products processing; direct sales shop; joint purchasing and cultural activities.

The activities conducted by the association include training session for leaders of JA women's association; agro processing; food and agriculture education for kids; passing-down values of traditional cuisines; welfare activities; environmental conservation activities; and participation and engagement of women in JA's management.

One of the greatest concerns for the Association is the progress of aging of its members. Therefore, it has established a special group (fresh Ms. Group) or young wives groups to attract new members below 45 years.

Direct Sales Shop (Kinsai-Kan)

With the age of farmers increasing in the area, they have difficulty in engaging fully in joint marketing business requiring bulk products demanded in the wholesale market, JA embarked on operation of the direct sales shop (farmers' market) intended for the elderly farmers and farming women to facilitate sale of even small volume of the products and meet a wide variety. They bring the products and can determine the prices by themselves, which is totally different from wholesale market-oriented business which adopts an auction system.

The direct sales shop (Kinsai-Kan) under JA Miyoshi was established in 2001. Although 1,300 farmers are registered with the farmers' market, only 130 farmers bring their produce on average daily.

The farmer members bring their products in the early morning on their own and put stickers with bar code on them. With the help of bar code the JA can easily find out who produced the commodity. Around 400 customers visit the market daily on week days and around 500 on week-ends. It has got a total of 9 part-time employees and 2 full-time employees of JA Miyoshi. Since the farmers are very old, the JA staff visits their houses to collect the products every day. The annual sales turnover is 200 million yen. The JA charges 25% of the sales as commission for using the facilities of the farmers' market and bringing their produce to the shop. The market operates from 09:00 hours to 18:00 hours.

When some products remain unsold, the farmers have to take them back. As mentioned above, the prices are to be decided by the member farmers. They are responsible for ensuring the quality and safety of the products. The details regarding the relevant information of all members are registered with JA. The sales proceeds are instantly credited to farmers' account which they keep with their JA.

This kind of farmers market is now gaining its popularity in Japan from both consumers and producers as an emerging new sales outlet different from sales by conventional wholesale market system. There were 20,000 farmers' markets in Japan as of 2014 and all is linked directly with the prevalent concept of "local consumption from local production", a concept being promoted by MAFF. The main problem faced by the farmers' market is that all members are not using its facility.

Hiroshima Miyoshi Winery

Hiroshima Miyoshi Winery Company Limited was founded in July 1994 with the purpose of vitalization of agriculture and industry of the Miyoshi district. It is a joint venture between JA Miyoshi and Miyoshi city municipality and run by a third party. The capital investment was 254 million yen. 20 years have passed since it started its business operations as a winemaker and tourist facilities, striving to create a serene place of recreation and relaxation.

It developed a private vineyard and farm so that it can grow grapes for its wine. It tackles to supply safe and reliable products with pride and joy in order to please the palates of its consumers not only in Miyoshi district but also in all parts of Japan.

Its mission is to produce distinctive wines while cherishing the natural environment of Miyoshi district. It also continue to endeavor by offering services and other facilities such as tourist facility, commercial museum, barbeque restaurant where people can taste famous high quality Hiroshima beef and café "Vine" where they can savor the cuisine full of local vegetables.

After making the wine, it is stored for 3-4 years in barrels. It has got a storing capacity of 70 barrels. The time required for fermentation is 3 to 12 months depending on the quality of wine. 30 to 40 per cent of the grapes are brought from farmers of JA Miyoshi and the balance 60% from their own vineyard.

JA Miyoshi

The population in the area of operation of JA was 54,840 (male 26,056 and female 28,784). The number of members of JA is 13,816 (female regular members-5,583). The number of general representatives is 544 (female-69).

JA Miyoshi was established in April 1991 through amalgamation of 7 agricultural cooperatives from a wide area of one city, three towns and three villages. The JA Miyoshi's operational area is located in the central part of the Chugoku district. In the northern part of the operational area, there are mountains ranges over 700 meters high, forming the Chugoku Mountains, facing Sera Plateau in the south and Kibi highland in the east.

The total land area under operation of JA Miyoshi is 71,000 ha which accounts for 8.4% of the total land area of Hiroshima Prefecture. However, the population in the area under operation is about 56,000 which accounts for only 2% of the total population of the Prefecture and thus the depopulation and aging have advanced in the area.

The JA Miyoshi has got a total of 20,282 members (12,826 regular members and 7,456 associate members) as of 31st March 2014. It has got a total of 344 employees (178 regular, 145 part-time and

21 specialized employees). The JA Miyoshi has got 23 Board of Directors (out of which 3 are women) and 6 auditors (out of which one is woman).

Its main business turnover as of 31st March 2014 are as follows: share capital-1.970 billion yen; savings-109.845 billion yen; loans-23.863 billion yen; marketing-3.692 billion yen; purchasing-1.730 billion yen; and mutual insurance-514.455 billion yen.

The subsidiaries and associated companies of JA Miyoshi are: Miyoshi Kumiai Fuel Company Limited; JA Ask Company Limited (funeral service); JA Farm Machinery Hiroshima Service Company Limited (sales of farm machinery and implements, repair service); and A-Coop West Japan Company Limited (A-Coop Stores).

JA Miyoshi is engaged in various activities and businesses to develop the local agriculture and create affluent local society that contributes to the community and agriculture. It is also making efforts in fiscal consolidation, economic business restructuring, and promotion of local agriculture and establishment of sound business system. On the other hand, the JA Miyoshi is the frontrunner in taking initiative to increase female regular membership through JA Member Expansion Campaign to promote female participation in JA management.

JA Miyoshi Women's Association

The number of members of JA Women's Association (JAWA) is 1,448 (19 branches) and number of officials is 19. JAWA is going to campaign against TPP till the last to protect "food, living and lives in Japan" in cooperation with JA. In addition, it continuously supported the disaster-stricken area of the Great East Japan Earthquake because there were still many areas which had not been reconstructed yet to its former state.

Under the circumstances, as the first year of the three-year plan of JA Miyoshi Women's Association, it conducted a lot of activities rooted in the area, such as local production for local consumption, food and agriculture education, conservation of environment, and health care activities, based on the slogan of "JA women, let's become united, live together and hand over to next generation".

Moreover, it started "women's seminar" as a place for women in the area to study in order to promote better understanding about JA movement and activities of JAWA.

As for JA Miyoshi Chagrin Kids Club, it implemented agriculture on-site training, cooking classes (local food, traditional cuisine) to deepen their understanding of importance on food and agriculture and also to foster regionalism in cooperation with JA and community.

The activities of JAWA includes (a) organization and educational activities (seminar, enrolment campaign, revitalization of organization and participation in management of JA); (b) farm guidance and production activities (food and agricultural education for fostering next generation, and local production for local consumption); and (c) life improvement activities (environmental conservation, health care, reviewing livelihood and dietary habits, and joint purchasing).

Kimita-Nishiirigimi Mame-Mame Club

Rural women are main persons who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities in the fields of agriculture, fisheries and forestry using mainly local materials and responsible for management. The six patterns of entrepreneurial activities are: (a) agricultural production (including school lunch); (b) food processing; (c) non-food processing; (d) sales and distribution; (e) exchange between rural and urban areas (green tourism); and (f) services.

The Kimita-Nishiirigimi Mame-Mame Club (Tofu Production Group) was established in 1998 with 8 women who attended the "heartwarming-village women seminar". This group is supported by JA Miyoshi. The capital investment was 160,000 yen (20,000 yen each member). At that time members were divided into 3 units and worked in shifts. Due to aging phenomenon, only 2 women are continuing tofu production as of 2014. The premises of the present processing facility belong to the local community.

Processing dates are 3 days in a week (Wednesday, Friday and Sunday). They work from 03:30 to 09:00 hours. The processing fee of 1 pot is 1,000 yen. They produce 300 pieces on Wednesdays and Sundays and 180 pieces on Fridays. Annual production volume was 40,000 pieces. Now they produce only 20,000 pieces in a year. Only domestic soybeans are used. The normal sales price is 183 yen and the sales commission is 30%.

The marketing channels are: (a) Advanced order from individual customers/direct sales; (b) Direct sales shop for tourist; (c) Mori-no-Izumi Restaurant at Kimita Hot Spring Spa; (d) Direct sales market of JA; and (e) Local elementary school and junior high school (for student's lunch).

The annual sales turnover for last year was 3.4 million yen and the profit was 1.13 million yen.

Agricultural Producers' Cooperative Corporation "Kokufu Yasai Honpo" (Kokufu Vegetable Shop)

The participants also visited the Agricultural Producers' Cooperative Corporation "Kokufu Yasai Honpo" (Kokufu Vegetable Shop) in Takasaki city in Gunma prefecture on 5th December. In 2003, processing facility and direct sales shop "Kokufu Yasai Honpo" were established and started producing pickled vegetables and daily side dishes as well as selling farm products at the shop. The motto for establishment was "homemade taste by using local products without preservatives".

Joining the worker's compensation insurance was considered for members to prepare for a possible accident while working. However, it was not allowed to join individually. Therefore, processing study group changed over to an Agricultural Producers' Cooperative Corporation in 2004 to create a good environment for members and workers to join this activity with peace of mind as well as to work with confidence and pride.

In 2008, a Café Area (resting space) was set up inside the direct sales shop and members had close relationship with local residents.

In April 2010, farmer's restaurant "Saika" was opened inside the Gunma prefectural museum of literature in commemoration of Bunmei-Tsuchiya. It operates from 11:00 to 15:00 hours on weekdays and 11:00 to 17:00 hours on week-ends and national holidays.

With the objective of creating a good environment for people who join entrepreneurial activity to work with peace of mind, the processing group grew into an Agricultural Producers' Cooperative Corporation in a brief period of few years and now it is engaged in stable business as a socially recognized corporation. The corporation is receiving many visitors and volunteer groups very frequently. The business with the local funeral company since incorporation is a new form of business for women entrepreneurs and this has led to the expansion of business.

The lunch boxes are supplied to day care centers on a regular basis. The JA also orders lunch boxes from this corporation during festivals.

At present 20 women members (average age 57) and 3 male staff (2 in gelato production and 1 accountant) are working for the corporation. There is no retirement age for the staff. However, the salary is reduced after 60 years. The annual sales turnover of the corporation is 50 million yen.

Kokufu Yasai Honpo is actively engaged in cultural exchange with people from cities by implementing a hands-on-tour of making pickled Chinese cabbage by using "Kokufu Chinese Cabbage". It also promotes "Kokubu carrot" which is a local traditional vegetable on a decreasing trend and implements a hand-on-tour of digging carrots.

The challenge for the future is to foster new leaders who can manage the corporation. In 2014 the Corporation has got the award for "the women's challenge for revitalization of agriculture and rural area".





Closing of the Training Course at IDACA, Japan



SECTION-VII

Concluding Session of the Training Course in Japan and Award of Certificates of Participation

The concluding session of the Training Course was held at IDACA in the afternoon of 9th December. The session was attended by Mr. Masahito Iwahana, Deputy Director, International Cooperation Division, International Affairs Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan; Mr. Masahiro Konno, Executive Director of IDACA; Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, Advisor-Planning & Membership, ICA - Asia and Pacific; and other senior officers of IDACA.

In his address, Mr. Sethu Madhavan congratulated the participants for their cooperation and IDACA for the successful completion of the Training Course. He also expressed the gratitude and appreciation of the ICA to the Japanese Government, especially MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) for the financial support extended in the conduct of this Training Course. He hoped that the MAFF will continue to support this training course in the future also since this course was very relevant for the women leaders of agricultural cooperatives in Asia. He requested the participants to make use of the experiences gained in Thailand and Japan and implement their action plans. He wished the participants a safe journey back home and a happy re-union with their families.

Addressing the session, Mr. Masahito Iwahana expressed hearty congratulations to the participants on successful completion of the training course. He expressed his gratitude on behalf of MAFF to ICA-AP and IDACA for conducting the course successfully. He was happy to find the participants hale and hearty in spite of different climate. He hoped that the experiences gained by the participants while in Thailand and Japan would be useful upon their return to their home countries.

He further said "The objective of this training course is to assist fostering women coordinators who play important roles to activate women in agricultural sector and rural community which will contribute in income-generation and poverty reduction. I hope you will help rural women who live under difficult conditions to build peaceful and socially cohesive communities by the knowledge and experience you got from this training course.

When you visited Japan it was autumn of the crop. Most of the Japanese like the bloom of flowers but love the coloured leaves too. The trees and plants make it bloom and soak a fruit. I believe that this training course can make a bloom in every respective country. Nowadays most of towns are giving glory to illuminations in Japan. Christmas and New Year holidays will come soon. Please remember Japan sometimes with your family".

Mr. Konno congratulated the participants on successful completion of the training course. He further said "The characteristic feature of this training course is that you can visit two countries and observe activities of different types of women's groups in Thailand and Japan. I think the situation of each country is different and things you gained during the training course might not be relevant for your work. However, you can realize the difference and get some hints or future vision from your observation.

You have made action plans based on your knowledge and experience gained during the training course, but making action plan is not the final objective. The most important thing is to take action after your return to your home country. I sincerely hope that you will work hard for improving capacity of rural women in your respective countries by implementing your action plans finalized here.

In closing, I would like to tell you that even if the training is over, but both you, your fellow participants and IDACA will ever remain good friend in the future. So please feel free to stop by to say hello, whenever you have a chance to visit our country”.

The ‘Certificate of Participation’ was awarded to the participants at the end of the concluding session by the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA).

Ms. Kavita Khobragade (India) spoke on behalf of all the participants. She expressed the participants’ gratitude to the ICA and IDACA for organizing the training course from 12th November to 10th December 2014 in Thailand and Japan. She specially thanked Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan of ICA-AP and Ms. Eiko Oshita of IDACA for excellently handling the course. The participants felt that the training course was very relevant for the women leaders of agricultural cooperatives in Asia and hence it should be continued. She also expressed the greatest appreciation of the participants to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan for providing financial support for this Training Course. She hoped that the MAFF would continue to support this training program in the future also for the development of rural women in the developing countries.

She further said “I do not have words to express our gratitude to IDACA for hosting 2nd part of this training program at IDACA and making us acquainted with Japanese culture. We not only learnt about the cooperative movement in Japan, but also learned and tried to adopt their manners, politeness, food habits and punctuality, this will definitely going to help us in our day to day activity. During our training in IDACA we learnt Women’s association, past and present situation of women – they were treated like a cattle and labors but now time has changed and they became entrepreneurs. Cooperatives in Japan are very strong and this is because the involvement of women in cooperative movement. This change has occurred because of the support of male; gradually they understood that agriculture cannot be possible without women. Here we learnt about cooperative movement, 6th industry, different activities of JAWA including welfare activities for old people and medical facility under cooperatives. We will definitely propose this idea in our respective organizations. We also learnt about the most difficult but important aspect of life, how to say no politely, i.e. Assertiveness”.

The participants left Japan for their home countries on 10th December 2014, after completion of the Training Course.

SECTION-VIII

Evaluation Summary

10 participants attending the training course had participated in the evaluation exercise and returned the Evaluation Forms, duly filled in. The Program Coordinator of ICA-AP compiled the results of the End of the Course Evaluation. Given below is a brief summary of the Evaluation.

Rating Pattern

5=Excellent, 4=Very Good, 3=Good, 2=Satisfactory, 1=Poor.

01	To what extent the Course meets the Objectives?	6	4	-	-	-
02	Relevance of this Program in your job.	6	1	3	-	-
03	Usefulness of this training in your future work.	8	1	1	-	-
04	Your overall impression about this program.	7	3	-	-	-
05	Your grading of the faculty of this program. 5	5	-	-	-	-
06	Your rating of the study visits in Thailand.	4	6	-	-	-
07	Your rating of the study visits in Japan.	5	4	1	-	-
08	Your rating of the administrative arrangements (boarding, lodging, etc.).	7	3	-	-	-
09	Are you satisfied with the leadership provided and the technical inputs made by the IDACA faculty members? (Explain briefly). <i>All participants said "YES" – they are fully satisfied with the leadership provided and the technical inputs made by the IDACA faculty members and everything was perfect.</i>					
10	Please suggest changes/improvements, if any, desired in future programs. (Please give your free and frank suggestions). <i>Most of the participants said that NO changes/improvements required. Four participants have not said anything.</i>					
11	Please suggest which topics should be added to this Program in future. <i>Six participants have not said anything. Others have expressed different opinions.</i>					
12	Please suggest which topics should be deleted from future Program. <i>Nine participants said that all topics covered are interesting and nothing should be deleted. One participant suggested that supplementary lecture was not very effective.</i>					
13	Please list below your major gains from this Program. <i>Japanese agricultural cooperative (JA) system Women's Associations' activities in Japan Mutual help among community</i>					

Education, planning and Team work
Concept of direct sales shops and roadside stations
Integrity, discipline, honesty, loyalty and punctuality of Japanese people
Local production for local consumption
Rural women enterprises and marketing of their products
Value addition through processing
Learnt how to prepare the Action Plan
Assertive training for smooth communication

14 Your general suggestions, opinions (on any aspect) and recommendations, if any.

Breakfast menu is good but may be changed occasionally (same menu every day).
At least one entertainment channel may be provided on television.
All staffs of IDACA are very good and helping mentality
IDACA facilities are very good
Networking among the participants
This is a very good program for women

SECTION-IX

Program of the Training Course

12 th Nov.		Arrival of participants in Bangkok
13 th Nov.	FN	Orientation/Opening Ceremony/Presentation on Cooperative Movement of Thailand and CLT.
	AN	Visit to Cooperative Promotion Department (CPD)
14 th Nov.	FN	Visit to Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Thailand Limited (ACFT)
	AN	Visit to Credit Union League of Thailand (CULT)
15 th Nov.	FN	Saturday: Travel to Pattaya
	AN	Visit to Floating Market – 4 Regions Products
16 th Nov.	FN	Sunday: Sight-seeing in Pattaya
	AN	Travel to Bangkok
17 th Nov.	FN	Visit to Doem Bang Nang Buat Agricultural Cooperative Limited & Baan Huay Wai Women’s Group
	AN	Visit to Women Coop Group Bang Chao Cha Community Enterprise
18 th Nov.	FN	Visit to Occupation Women Coop Group Samunphir Ayuwatthana
	AN	Free (Preparation for departure)
19 th Nov.		Departure for Tokyo Arrival of participants at IDACA
20 th Nov.	FN	Orientation and Opening Ceremony
	AN	Japanese Society, Economy and Culture by Ms. Eiko Oshita, Program Coordinator, IDACA.
21 st Nov.		Japanese Experience of Agricultural Cooperative Development by Mr. Hiroshi Terunuma, Coop Development Consultant, IDACA.
22 nd Nov.		Saturday: Sight-seeing in Tokyo
23 rd Nov.		Sunday – Free
24 th Nov.		Presentation of draft Action Plan by participants
25 th Nov.		Assertive Training for Smooth Human Communication by Ms. Shiom Morita, Executive Director, Specified Non-profit Organization.
26 th Nov.	FN	Organization and Activities of JA Women’s Association by Ms. Ariko Hotta, Better Living Promotion Department of JA-ZENCHU

- AN Historical Background of Establishment of JA Women's Association by Mr. Yoshiaki Ogane, Former Editor, Ie-No-Hikari Association.
- 27th Nov. How to Start Women's Business – Case Studies in Thailand and Japan by Ms. Tetsu Takahashi, Director, JA Iwate Hanamaki.
- 28th Nov. Employment Creation via Women's Entrepreneurial Activities and Livelihood Improvement by Ms. Kazuko Kano, President of Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association.
- 29th Nov. Saturday – Free
- 30th Nov. Sunday – Move to Hiroshima Prefecture
- 1st Dec. FN Visit to JA Hiroshima Prefectural Union and Briefing on Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives in Hiroshima Prefecture
Briefing on Activities of Hiroshima Prefectural Council of JA Women's Association (JAWA)
- AN Observation of Direct Sales Shop (Kinsai-Kan) run by JA Miyoshi
Visit to Hiroshima Miyoshi Winery Company Limited
- 2nd Dec. FN Visit to JA Miyoshi and Briefing on its business activities.
Exchange meeting with JA Miyoshi Women's Association
- AN Visit to Kimita-Nishiirigimi Mame-Mame Club
- 3rd Dec. FN Sight-seeing in Hiroshima
- AN Move to Tokyo
- 4th Dec. FN Group Discussion on Study Visits to Hiroshima Prefecture
- AN Presentation of Group Reports
- 5th Dec. Visit to Agricultural Producers' Cooperative Corporation "Kokufu Yasai Honpo" (Rural Women's Entrepreneurship)
- 6th Dec. Modification of action plan
- 7th Dec. Free
- 8th Dec. FN Individual consultation with the participants regarding their Action Plans
- AN Presentation of Action Plan by the Participants
- 9th Dec. AN Presentation of Action Plan by the Participants
- AN Evaluation and Closing Ceremony
- 10th Dec. Departure of Participants from Japan

FN Session : 09:30~12:00
AN Session : 13:30~16:00

SECTION-X

List of Participants

- Bhutan 01 **Ms. Sherab Chozom**
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- Vietnam 10 **Ms. Tran Thi Ngan**
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SECTION - XI

Action Plans Proposed by the Participants

In view of the experience gained by the participants through class room lectures, field study visits in Thailand and Japan, interaction among themselves and based upon their own work environment, the participants were able to develop detailed Action Plans which they would recommend to their organisations after their return to their home countries. The brief description of the Action Plans prepared by the participants is given below.

Name of Country	:	Bhutan
Name of the Participant	:	Ms. Sherab Chozom
Position	:	Agriculture Marketing Officer Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives (DAMC)
Name of Organization	:	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MAF).
Title of the Proposal	:	Developing Business of Women Farmers through Agriculture Cooperatives in Thimphu District
Target Group	:	50 potential farmers in agriculture sector under Thimphu District (preferably women farmers).
Implementing Agency	:	Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives (DAMC); and District Agriculture and Livestock Sector of Thimphu.
Duration of the Plan	:	2 years (1 st January 2015 to 31 st December 2016)
Name of Country	:	Cambodia
Name of the Participant	:	Ms. Seng Koem Song
Position	:	Officer of Human Resource Development Office Department of Agricultural Extension General Directorate of Agriculture
Name of Organization	:	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
Title of the Proposal	:	Women's Entrepreneurship for Mats Manufacturing and Marketing of Farm Products in Svay Chrum District.
Target Group	:	50 small women farming families in Svay Chrum District of Svay Rieng Province
Implementing Agency	:	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF); and Wathnapheap Organization.
Duration of the Plan	:	2 years (1 st May 2015 to 30 th April 2017)

Name of Country : **India**
 Name of the Participant : Ms. Kavita Khobragade
 Position : Assistant Manager
 Name of Organization : Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)
 Title of the Proposal : Women Empowerment through Creating Women Self-Help Group in IFFCO Adopted Village.
 Target Group : Women Self-Help Group or near about 20 farm women of IFFCO adopted village.
 Implementing Agency : Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)
 Duration of the Plan : 1 year (1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016)

Name of Country : **India**
 Name of the Participant : Ms. Sasmita Mahapatra
 Position : Program Officer
 Name of Organization : National Federation of Fishermen's Cooperatives Limited (FISHCOPFED)
 Title of the Proposal : Organization, Training and Skill Development of Fisherwomen of Chilika
 Target Group : 200 Fisherwomen Members of Chilika lake (which is the biggest brackish water lake in Asia) of Odisha State drawn from Primary Fisherwomen Cooperative Societies.
 Implementing Agency : Government of India; National Fisheries Development Board; and National Federation of Fishermen's Cooperatives Limited (FISHCOPFED).
 Duration of the Plan : 2 years (1st April 2015 to 31st March 2017)

Name of Country : **Laos**
 Name of the Participant : Ms. Phetsamone Soulivong
 Position : Technician, Training and Information Division
 Department of Agriculture Extension & Cooperative (DAEC)
 Name of Organization : Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)
 Title of the Proposal : Capacity Building of Vegetable Production Women Group in Bounghao Village

Target Group : 24 members from three Vegetable Producers Women Group in Boungphao Village, Thoulakhom District, Vientiane Province.

Implementing Agency : Department of Agriculture Extension and Cooperative (DAEC); Vientiane Province Agriculture Extension and Cooperative (PAFES); and Thoulakhom District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO).

Duration of the Plan : 2 years (1st April 2015 to 31st March 2017)

Name of Country : **Malaysia**

Name of the Participant : Ms. Norsyeirawani bt Shari

Position : Training Officer

Name of Organization : Cooperative College of Malaysia (CCM)

Title of the Proposal : Improvement of Women's Cooperative Management to provide better services to the members in Johor.

Target Group : 50 women members in Muar and Johor (Southern Peninsular Malaysia)

Implementing Agency : Cooperative College of Malaysia (CCM) and Malaysia Cooperative Societies Commission

Duration of the Plan : 1.5 years (1st January 2015 to 30th June 2016)

Name of Country : **Myanmar**

Name of the Participants : Ms. Poe Ei Zar

Position : Manager

Name of Organization : Shwe Pin Shwe Kyay Agriculture and General Trading Cooperative Society Limited (SPSK).

Title of the Proposal : Fostering Women Groups for Securing their Income

Target Group : Selected 10 women members in Shwe Taung Mhaw Village (one of the biggest villages in our Division)

Implementing Agency : Shwe Pin Shwe Kyay Agriculture and General Trading Cooperative Society Limited (SPSK).

Duration of the Plan : 1.6 year (1st June 2015 to 31st December 2016)

Name of Country : **Nepal**
 Name of the Participant : **Ms. Sarita Timsina Bhattarai**
 Position : **Board of Director**
 Name of Organization : **National Cooperative Bank Limited**
 Title of the Proposal : **Upliftment of Rural Women through Agricultural Entrepreneurship**
 Target Group : **(Marginalized community, ethnic, minorities and Others) – 90 rural women (9 groups) of Sindhukot Village Development Committee under Sindhukot Saving and Credit Cooperative Society Limited.**
 Implementing Agency : **National Cooperative Bank Limited and Department Of Cooperatives, Ministry of Agriculture and Consumer Federation.**
 Duration of the Plan : **3 years (1st February 2015 to 31st December 2017)**

Name of Country : **Thailand**
 Name of the Participants : **Ms. Nannapat Kraithong**
 Position : **Executive Secretary**
 Name of Organization : **Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT)**
 Title of the Proposal : **Improve Income of Thai local sweet maker members Women Group**
 Target Group : **10 women members of Thai local sweet makers in Wat Pet Samut Village, Meaklong, Meoung District, Samutsongkhram province.**
 Implementing Agency : **The Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT)**
 Duration of the Plan : **2 years (1st June 2015 to 31st May 2017)**

Name of Country : **Vietnam**
 Name of the Participant : **Ms. Tran Thi Ngan**
 Position : **Program Officer, International Cooperation Department.**
 Name of Organization : **Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA)**
 Title of the Proposal : **Management and Business Capacity Building for Women Members of Agricultural Cooperatives in Son La Province.**

Target Group : Managerial staff and members, especially women members of 10 agricultural cooperatives in Son La Province (total 50 members).

Implementing Agency : Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) in coordination with Son La Cooperative Alliance and Related Specializing Units under VCA.

Duration of the Plan : 1 year (1st June 2015 to 31st May 2016)

ICA Co-operative Identity Statement

DEFINITION

A Co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

VALUES

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, Co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

PRINCIPLES

The Principles of Co-operation are guidelines by which Co-operatives put their values into practice.

First Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership: Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

Second Principle: Democratic Member Control: Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women, serving as elected representatives, are accountable to the membership. In primary Co-operatives, members have equal voting rights [one member one vote], and Co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

Third Principle: Member Economic Participation: Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their Co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the Co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their Co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the Co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Fourth Principle: Autonomy and Independence: Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their Co-operative autonomy.

Fifth Principle: Education, Training and Information: Co-operative provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees, so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their Co-operatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of Co-operation.

Sixth Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives: Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Seventh Principle: Concern for the Community: Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

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