



## **Rural Women Leadership Development in Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia**

– Report of the 6th ICA-Japan Training Course for  
Rural Women Leaders in Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia  
Venue : IDACA, Tokyo, Japan. October 20–November 16, 1996



RURAL WOMEN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN  
AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN ASIA  
A REPORT

{Report of the 6th ICA-Japan Training Course for  
Rural Women Leaders of Agricultural Cooperatives  
in Asia, Tokyo, Japan  
October 20-November 16 1996

Organised by:  
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

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THE INSTITUTE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL  
COOPERATION IN ASIA (IDACA), Tokyo, Japan,

*funded by:*  
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**RURAL WOMEN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN  
AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN ASIA - A REPORT  
(6th ICA-Japan Training Course for Rural Women  
Leaders in Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia)**

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## PREFACE

THIS Report represents the successful implementation of the Sixth ICA-Japan Training Course for Rural Women Leaders of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia which was held at the IDACA (the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia) in Tokyo, Japan, from 20th October to 16th November 1996. The implementation of the training course by the International Cooperative Alliance was made possible by the funding support extended by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan and with the most active collaborative support extended by the ICA's member-organisation in Japan, the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Japan (JA-Zenchu), and the IDACA. The Alliance places on record its sincere appreciation and gratitude of the financial contribution made by the Government of Japan.

The Sixth Training Course was attended by six (6) participants, two each from Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan. With the completion of this course, 36 persons have been trained in women leadership from ten countries of the ICA Asian Region i.e., Bangladesh (02), India (04), Indonesia (06), Jordan (02), Malaysia (06), Pakistan (02), the Philippines (04), Sri Lanka (04), Thailand (04) and Vietnam (02).

The ICA is grateful to its member-organisations in the Region for sponsoring candidates for participation in this training programme. This programme, I am confident, will contribute favourably to the development of rural women's organisations, and specifically in agricultural cooperatives sector. This programme, will also increase the development opportunities for women in their participation in rural and cooperative activities.

I take this opportunity of commending the efforts made and the deep involvement of my colleague in our Regional Office, Dr Daman Prakash, Project Director of the Programme; and Mr Yoshitada Nakaoka, Managing Director of IDACA in Tokyo, and his able colleagues in IDACA in organising and conducting this programme in a professional and satisfactory manner.

**Bruce Thordarson**  
Director-General

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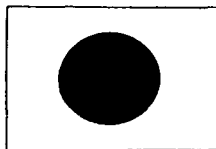
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**SIXTH (6TH) ICA-JAPAN TRAINING COURSE FOR RURAL WOMEN  
LEADERS OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN ASIA, TOKYO, JAPAN  
OCTOBER 20-NOVEMBER 16, 1996**

**REPORT**

**01 Introduction**

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), in association with its member-organisation in Japan, the JA-Zenchu and the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA); and the National Council of Women's Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives (WAAC/JA-Zen Fukyu) of Japan, organised the ICA-Japan Training Course for Rural Women Leaders of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia, the sixth in the series, in Tokyo, Japan. The Course was organised and held by the ICA at the IDACA premises from October 20 to November 16, 1996. The Course was organised by the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, New Delhi (ICA ROAP) and with the funding support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Government of Japan (MAFF) under an agreement signed between the ICA and the MAFF.

The ICA, presently based in Geneva, Switzerland, an international non-governmental organisation, established in London in 1895, was chosen by the MAFF as the most suitable international organisation to implement the Project because of its intimate knowledge and good working relations with the agricultural cooperatives in the Region. Within the United Nations, the ICA enjoys Category-I Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC). The ICA has affiliates in 101 countries with 225 national cooperative organisations and nine international organisations serving over 750 million individual members. The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ICA ROAP) operating from New Delhi, India, since 1960, serves 62 national level cooperative organisations from 26 countries and the ACCU, and represents nearly 500 million individual cooperative members.

Six participants, two each from Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan attended the Course.

The Course participants also had the opportunity of attending the ICA/JA-Zenchu/IDACA/AARRO Asian Women Farmer Leaders' Conference held in Tokyo in conjunction with the training course from October 21 to 23, 1996.

## 02 Course Objectives

The development and immediate objectives of the Project for Training of Rural Women Leaders of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia were as follows:

**Development Objective:** To facilitate improvement of living standards of farm households through women's participation in agricultural cooperative activity.

**Immediate Objectives:** To achieve the main development objective, a number of immediate objectives have been developed. These are:

- i. To provide opportunities for the development of leadership among rural women through training;
- ii. To provide encouragement for creating for them income-generating activities; and
- iii. To assist in the formulation of rural development projects for women's participation.

## 03 Programme Implementation

The training programme was implemented by the International Cooperative Alliance through its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ICA ROAP), New Delhi. The ICA ROAP, in consultation with the JA-Zenchu (the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Japan) and the IDACA, identified the countries to be invited for the Sixth Training Course.

Invitations to sponsor candidates were sent to ICA member-organisations in Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan. Selection of participants was made from out of the nominations made by the ICA member-organisations in accordance with the qualifications and norms laid down by the ICA for such training programmes. The selected candidates were then provided with appropriate facilities to travel to Japan to follow the programme at IDACA.

The IDACA identified and recruited resource persons and made arrangements for comparative field study visits. The IDACA also provided the lecture material and background material on the institutions visited by the group. The support to the group on academic and practical matters was provided by Ms Eiko Oshita, IDACA Programme Coordinator.

## 04 Course Participants

The Training Course was attended by six participants - two each from Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan. A list of participants is given in **ANNEXE-I**.

The participants in the courses were as follows:

Course-I: August-September 1991

Two each from Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand;

Course-II: August-September 1992

Two each from India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka;

Course-III: June-July 1993

Two each from Bangladesh, Thailand and Vietnam;

Course-IV: October-November 1994

Two each from India, Jordan and Sri Lanka;

Course-V: October-November 1995

Two each from Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines;

Course-VI: October-November 1996

Two each from Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan.

In all the six training courses held so far, 36 (thirty-six) women leaders from 10 countries have been trained. A consolidated list of addresses of all the 36 participants is included in the report for purposes of reference.

#### **05 Training Course at IDACA: Programme Followed**

All the six participants selected for the Sixth training course attended the programme in IDACA for its full duration i.e. from October 20th to November 16th, 1996. The IDACA had developed a Course Curriculum, in consultation with the ICA, which included class-room lectures on various aspects handled by IDACA faculty members and specially invited guest lecturers, organised field study visits and arranged direct communication with women members and leaders of agricultural cooperatives.

This year's field study visits were arranged to agricultural cooperatives and women's associations in Hyogo Prefecture of Japan. Some apex level agricultural cooperatives located in and around Tokyo were also visited by the participants. Lecture-cum-practical field study visit assignments were combined to impart necessary knowledge to the participants on the working of women's associations and the general activities of agricultural cooperatives in Japan. The participants also held group discussions and prepared brief reports on the experiences gained by them during the programme.

The Programme followed for the training course is appended as **ANNEXE-II**.

#### **06 Design and Contents of the Training Course**

##### **-Subjects Covered**

The four-week training programme at IDACA emphasised on practical studies and learning. Basic aspects of Japanese agriculture, agricultural cooperative system in Japan, detailed introductions

to organisation and functioning of agricultural cooperatives in Japan were given.

Special topics of interest to women leaders like participation of women in agricultural cooperatives, the role and functioning of women's associations in agricultural cooperatives in Japan, their role in better-living activities and improving farm households and plans for future development were presented. The following are the principal areas of subject studies that were discussed:

- Historical development and activities of women's associations in agricultural cooperatives in Japan;
- Japanese culture and society;
- Agriculture and agricultural cooperatives in Japan, Government and agricultural cooperatives, women's programmes and better-living activities;
- Better-living activities and role of better-living advisors;
- Development of Leadership among women.

During the study visits programme to agricultural cooperatives in Hyogo Prefecture and to some of the primary, secondary and apex level cooperative institutions in and around Tokyo, the participants were able to interact with women leaders and to observe their various activities as carried out by the women's associations in collaboration with agricultural cooperatives in their respective areas.

#### **-Supportive Documentation and Lecture Notes Used**

Necessary documentation supporting the topics presented and discussed were made available to the participants. Of special significance was an introduction to the development, organisation and activities of the Women's Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives (WAAC) and the role the Association and its constituents play. Besides participating in agricultural production activities, women play an important role through their associations in a variety of social and economic programmes and environmental programmes. These include use of powder soap made out of used cooking oils, improved dieting habits, production of soybean paste, improvement of social and economic life styles, organisation and management of "A-Coops", participation in programmes for the welfare of children and women world-wide, lending a helping hand to the aged persons and drafting a plan of action entitled "A Path Towards 21st Century for Women's Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives - A Long-Term Policy of the Association". (See a special note prepared by Ms Eiko Oshita, Programme Coordinator of IDACA placed as ANNEXE-III.)

The participants had the opportunity of participating and observing the proceedings of the Asian Top-Level Women Farmers Leaders' Conference held in Tokyo from 21st to 23rd October 1996. The Conference was jointly organised by the ICA, JA-Zenchu, IDACA and the Afro-Asian Rural Reconstruction Organisation (AARRO).

### **-Field Study Visits and Observations**

On completion of the participation in the Top-Level Women Farmers Leaders Conference the participants were taken on a study visits to agricultural cooperatives in Hyogo prefecture from 24th to 30th October 1996. During the study visits, the participants studied the working of JA-Hyogo Prefectural Union, the facilities of the Economic Federation of Hyogo Prefecture, JA-Kyoto-Chuo with emphasis to study the general working of agricultural cooperatives in Japan; JA-Sanda and JA-Kato Gun with special emphasis on participation of women in agricultural cooperative activities and the role and functions of women's associations. The participants observed the Fruits and Flower Park run by the cooperative and other facilities such as rice milling, country elevator, agricultural machinery centres, shipment centres etc.

The participants had an opportunity of discussing with women leaders and members and also received information on the WAAC's activities on the production of udon (white noodle), demonstration of scrubbing brush, production of soybean paste, home-made soap, distribution of food items among the members, preparation of balanced diet for children and the aged, and welfare and health activities of the associations. They also observed the working of "A-Coops" run by the JAs. The participants were also able to participate in the 'Home Stay Programme' with members of the women's associations in Hyogo Prefecture.

After the field study visits and on-the-spot observation of the working of agricultural cooperatives in the field, participants were exposed to theoretical knowledge on the existing situation of agricultural cooperative system in Japan, Japanese culture, economy etc., better-living activities, education activities, public relations activities, and health control activities for members etc. undertaken by the agricultural cooperatives. A case study on promotion of rural women's participation for Organisation was also presented.

As a result of field studies and interaction with lecturers in the class-room situation, the participants, in groups, produced outlines of their own national plans. These national plans contained their own impressions on the study visits and the lessons that could be derived from out of their participation in the training programme and visit to Japan which could be of relevance to their own country situations and cooperative movements and their own respective organisations.

## 07 Country Status Papers: Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan

The following is a brief summary of existing situation in the three participating countries with regard to women's involvement and participation in cooperative activities. Some of the highlights of the country reports were as follows:

### 7.1 Indonesia

Agriculture occupies an important role in the economy of Indonesia with a contribution of 17.44% to the national income and occupying a labour force of 49.61% of the total population. Though the Constitution of the country guarantees women to enjoy equal status with men they lag behind in several aspects. Illiteracy level is higher among women than men. Thirty-seven per cent of women are unable to read or write as compared to 20% among men. Women in agricultural sector do not have any separate entity than their male members due to social system and position of women in the country. Women, of course, occupy an important position in the dairy industry with more than 80-90% involvement.

Non-governmental women's organisations were established in the country to serve the cause of women and some of the major organisations and their activities are as follows:

1. The PKK (The Family Welfare Movement): It is a voluntary movement consisting mostly of women which was started in 1964 as women's group activities in selected communities in Central Java. In 1972, it became a nation-wide movement to improve family welfare. There are at present about 2 million PKK volunteers actively involved in village-level social development programmes carried out in more than 62,000 urban and rural villages throughout the country. Ten major programmes of the PKK are:

- Comprehensive application of the State Ideology
- Fostering mutual help (Gotong Royong)
- Food
- Clothing
- Housing and house arrangements
- Education and skills development
- Health
- Promotion of cooperatives
- Protection and conservation of environment
- Sound domestic planning.

2. KOWANI (The Indonesian Women's Congress) consists of 64 various nation-wide women's organisations. Founded in 1928, the Kowani represents an estimated 20 million women through its member-organisations. It covers eleven areas of priority: education, science and technology, employment, legal literacy, population development and environment, economy and cooperatives etc. It participates in the policy-making process at the national level including the formation of the Broad Guidelines of State Policy.

3. DHARMA PERTIWI was established in 1964 mainly comprising wives of armed forces personnel. The area of activities of this organisation includes education, health, nutrition and social welfare. Schools, maternity clinics and other social services run by the Dharma Pertiwi are made accessible to the general public as well.

4. DHARMA WANITA, established in 1974, is an organisation of wives of civil servants. Its membership is spread all over the country down to the smallest government administrative unit to every Indonesian Embassy or Consulate abroad. This organisation supports the social development programmes of the government and runs a variety of kindergartens, schools, and other vocational centres.

#### Women in Cooperatives

There were no women's groups separately and exclusively established in the cooperative sector till 1977. After participating in the International Conference on Emancipation of Women in Cooperative Sector organised by the ICA in Malaysia in 1975, the apex organisation of the Cooperative Movement the DEKOPIN, organised a Coordinating Body for Women's Participation in Cooperatives in 1977. In 1996, Indonesia had 9,064 village level cooperatives and 35,861 non-KUDs as primary cooperatives. The total membership was around 13 million in KUDs and 12.6 million persons in non-KUDs. About 20% of KUD members are women.

Cooperatives in Indonesia consist of KUD (Village agricultural multipurpose cooperatives), and non-KUD. KUD is an agricultural cooperative undertaking multipurpose functions.

In 1995, there were 831 primary level women's cooperatives with a membership of 302,006 persons. The main activities include savings and loans for housewives. They are organised in the national level women's cooperative (INKOPWAN) and provincial level women's cooperatives (PUSKOPWAN). However there are some primary level women's cooperatives which are still not the members of higher level organisations.

These women's cooperatives have recruited 1,277 employees, an average of 1.5 persons per cooperative. The first women's cooperative was established in Jambi province in 1971. Training opportunity is offered to members of women's cooperatives by the Ministry of Cooperatives through its training centres at the provincial level (Balatkops). 25,174 women members of cooperatives were trained in 1995.

Particulars	1994	1995
No of women cooperatives	800	831
No of women members	277,521	302,006
No of female employees	1,106	1,277
No of women members trained	22,214	25,174
No of women potential groups	5,999	7,342

Participation of women in agriculture is 47.32% out of the total number of working women in rural areas women comprise 45.58% and in the urban areas 1.73%. Self-employed women in agricultural sector was 8.96%. Participation of women in the 5,472 KUDs in 1990 was around 20.77% throughout the country, the total membership being 7,535,434 persons. The percentage of women in the boards of management in KUDs was: 1.65% as board of Audit and Supervision, 4.75% as members of boards of directors; and 23.02% as KUD staff.

The activities for women's participation in cooperatives are conducted by the Cooperative Women Coordination Committee (BKWK) which is attached to the Dewan Koperasi Indonesia (DEKOPIN). The BKWK operates through its provincial and district level branches. The programme objectives of BKWK are as follows:

- a. The establishment of the national goal of a just and prosperous society through an economic system based on the democratic principle of Panchashila;
- b. The improved involvement and participation of women in the field of cooperatives;
- c. Increased guidance towards women cooperators and leaders who can motivate other women in improving cooperative awareness and business activities; and
- d. Increased productivity of female workers and increased job opportunities for women who are trying to raise their family incomes.

The BKWK aims to achieve these objectives through a variety of programmes for promoting cooperative organisations, for developing economic activities, for providing training and education to members and staff, and for conducting research for cooperative development. Many of the educational activities centre around cooperative business and management. The focal point of all these programmes is the women's role in cooperative development. Hence gender issues are receiving greater attention in formulating the training and development activities. Recently a programme assisted by the Canadian Cooperative Association (CCA) was launched for the improvement of capability of women cooperators and for providing them income-generating activities through pilot projects and training.

Following steps are taken by BKWK while designing training programme and follow-up activity:

- i. Identify target groups - these groups are formed out of women engaged in various activities such as silk-worm breeding, savings campaigns, family planning and educational activities;
- ii. Prepare programme design keeping in mind the tasks to be performed by the members for selected projects;



- iii. Train the trainers in order to improve their capabilities for training the target group members in the respective areas; and
- iv. Make arrangements for advancing loans for selected project work at concessional rates of interest, so that the women members could increase their incomes.

#### Participation of Women in KUD Activities

Each KUD in the country has a separate unit for women's cooperative activity. A total of 16 such women's cooperative units are functioning in 30 districts. Out of 5,341 cooperatives, there were 811 village cooperative units and 108 women cooperatives which were active.

These units work in close collaboration with the business units of the KUD for conducting training programmes for rural women. Funds at concessional rate of interest are channelled through these units as they are in touch with the local cooperative bank. Credit for income-generating activities is given to the women's group in each area and through the group to the members.

In addition to providing training opportunities to women, cooperatives promote savings amongst members, and take active interest in catering, in running consumer department stores etc. Cooperatives also promote homely economic activities such as embroidery, coco-sugar products, preparation of traditional sweets and vegetable/flower, farming etc. They also encourage kitchen gardening and assist in paddy and fish farming. The social work is undertaken to promote fraternity among members, for providing medical aid and imparting training for leading a better life. Joint cooking classes are conducted and beauty-care guidance is provided. Entertainment, recreation and competition among members are encouraged in all the programmes.

Women's cooperatives and their leaders face a number of problems in Indonesia which include:

- Low level of literacy among members;
- Emphasis for training in business activities is not in accordance with members' needs;
- Lack of resources;
- Lack of awareness among women regarding cooperative activities;
- Lack of self-confidence among women to shoulder responsibilities; and
- Lack of policy directives and support for programmes for women's participation.

## 7.2 Malaysia

The Cooperative Movement in Malaysia was started in 1922. Presently there are 3,943 registered cooperatives in Malaysia with a total membership of about 4.1 million members. The total share capital in cooperatives is around M\$ 2.4 billion. The Department of Cooperative Development registers and monitors non-agricultural cooperatives including urban cooperatives.

The agricultural cooperatives numbering 470 with a membership of 938,062 members and with a share capital of RM 45 million and a total business turnover of M\$ 427 million are registered and monitored by the Farmers' Organisation Authority (FOA). Women cooperatives are engaged in credit and banking (40%), consumer products (20%), food processing (8%), other activities including rentals, tailor shops, child nurseries, plant nurseries, and transportation services (24%). As per the policy of the Government of Malaysia, participation of women in cooperatives is encouraged and more opportunities for women are offered to improve their social, economic and political participation.

A National Women's Policy (NWP) was formulated in 1989 signifying the overall objective of ensuring a fair share for women in the acquisition of opportunities and benefits from development, and to integrate the women folk in all sectors of national development in line with their ability and need, to improve their quality of life, eradication of poverty, ignorance and illiteracy and to make the country safe and prosperous.

A few institutions have been created to integrate women into mainstream of the nation's development. The main ones include the National Advisory Council for the Integration of Women in Development (NACIWAD), established in 1976 to provide advisory services and guidance to women's organisations; the Women's Affairs Division (HAWA) formed in 1983 under the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, to oversee, monitor and evaluate the services offered by the public and private sectors for the benefit of women. HAWA was transferred to the Prime Minister's Department to ensure effective supervision on programmes for women development.

The Ministry of Rural Development has several agencies such as RISDA, FELCRA, FELDA, KEMAS etc., which carry out activities related to women. The ANGKASA (the National Cooperative Organisation of Malaysia), conducts several courses to give training on different aspects of Cooperation. Many of these courses are specially tailored to the needs of women. Women are now being encouraged to become members of cooperative supermarkets, retail shops, handicraft workshops etc. With rapid economic development in the country, women now find it easy to get employment in factories located in rural areas.

Agencies like RISDA and FELDA encourage women members to form small-holders' organisations through training and education activities, training in crafts such as artificial flower-making, bamboo products, mengkuang leaves and Ratan, food industries such

as sauce, banana and potato chip preparations, jams, cakes, etc.; training in tailoring and dressmaking, patchwork, school uniforms, and embroidery work, poultry-rearing including use of waste products as organic manure, cash cropping such as banana, potato, vegetables and fruits and their marketing. The RISDA has established a special fund to help women small-holders' organisations in these economic activities.

Women in Malaysia face the following problems relating to their participation in cooperative activities:

- a. Dual responsibilities towards family and job limit their mobility and participation in labour market;
- b. Streaming of educational disciplines according to gender differentiates women in both types of jobs and their assimilation and participation in the labour market;
- c. Social norms limit their involvement in economic and social development;
- d. Women are normally considered secondary income-earners and their jobs are considered unimportant;
- e. Lack of skilled training;
- f. Lack of credit facilities and lack of market information; and
- g. Unhealthy working environments.

### 7.3 Pakistan

Agriculture is the mainstay of Pakistan employing about 50% of the labour force and accounting for 70% of export earnings. Major crops grown include wheat, rice, cotton, sugarcane and maize. Grams, other pulses, oilseeds and fodder crops are also grown in some areas. Involvement of women in agriculture is marginal and have no say in decision-making process in terms of marketing etc. Women play a dominant role in small-scale livestock and dairy farming.

There were 59,221 cooperative societies registered in Pakistan as of 30th July 1996. For details, see the details given below:

Total Population of the Country	128.010 million
-Male Population	67.200 million
-Female Population	60.810 million
Total Land Area (in sq.km)	796,095 sq km
Total Number of Coops (all types)	59,221
Total Cooperative Membership	3,366,755
Total No. of Agricultural Cooperatives	37,476
Total Membership of Agri Cooperatives	1,369,217
Total Population Engaged in Agriculture	64.050 million
Share of Agriculture in GDP	24%

Out of this, 37,476 are agricultural credit societies. There were 1,198 registered women's cooperatives carrying out different activities in Pakistan. Out of these 1,022 were functioning in Punjab Province alone. The women cooperatives in other Provinces of Pakistan are not quite impressive. Although women cooperatives have same duties and privileges and they are equally eligible for getting finance, technical guidance in running business etc., the social set-up in the country restricts women to come forward in organising and running cooperative business independently. Due to male domination, majority of female population is illiterate, financially unsound, and are unaware of their rights. The high birth rate prevailing in the country also restricts women from participation in any economic activity.

The banking structure in Pakistan is three tiered with the Federal Bank for Cooperatives (FBC) at the apex level with constituents in provinces and district branches. The Unions help in development, extension, and guidance activities.

The provincial cooperative banks act only as disbursing agencies and all credit operations are handled by cooperative officials. The Federal Bank for Cooperatives, established by the government in December 1976, is the principal financial institution for meeting the credit needs of PCBs and MCBs. The Federal Bank does not lend directly to the cooperative societies but only through the provincial cooperative banks. The Federal Bank also provides training facilities to the staff working in the PCBs, and in 1987, has set up a National Centre for Cooperative Training. The National Cooperative Union of Pakistan is the national level apex umbrella organisation of the Movement.

The FBC has plans to set up a development project for the establishment of model cooperative societies. An Endowment Fund amounting to Rs. 2,400 million will be created to finance cooperative development projects through the National Cooperative Union of Pakistan and its Provincial Cooperative Unions. This, it is hoped, will improve the overall working of the cooperative system and increase the magnitude of finance-related activities.

## **08 Observations and Recommendations Made by the Participants**

The six participants representing Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan, after having participated in the 6th Training Programme for a duration of four weeks and having studied the activities of women's associations of agricultural cooperatives in Japan during field visits devoted two full days to summarise their own observations and also made some general suggestions for the Japanese Agricultural Cooperative Movement.

### **8.1 Observations**

#### **-General Observations**

Some general observations made by the participants were as follows:

- i. Though Japan is one of the leading industrialised countries in the world, agriculture plays its own important role in the economy in sustaining its food production and supply to the nation.
- ii. A corporate uniform identity called 'JA' (Japan Agriculture) has been adopted by the Agricultural Cooperative Movement in Japan and is now better known as the "JA-Movement" or the "JA-Group".
- iii. The Agricultural Cooperative Movement in Japan is three-tiered and is well integrated from primary to prefectural to national level organisations. The cooperatives take care of every needs of the members from 'cradle to the grave'. The services rendered by the cooperatives range from orientation and education to high-tech production techniques yielding high economic results. The main aim is to give a quality of life to its members.
- iv. Integration of services is the key word of agricultural cooperatives in Japan with special emphasis on 'agro-processing' for 'value addition' resulting in higher incomes to the farmer-members.
- v. The organisational structure of the Movement is three tiered now. As of 1996, there were around 2,200 multipurpose agricultural cooperatives in the country working in 47 prefectures of Japan. The primaries are federated into prefectural unions/federations which, in turn, federate into national apex level specialised organisations like the Zen Noh, Insurance Federation, Norinchukin Bank etc. All these prefectural unions/federations and national organisations are members of the JA-Zenchu (the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Japan), which is the national apex organisation of all agricultural cooperatives in the country.
- vi. The agricultural cooperatives are gradually moving towards a two-tier structure. By the end of the 20th century it is expected that the total number of primaries would be around 564. It is hoped that the two-tier organisational structure will strengthen the economic bonds between the primaries and their national apex organisations and also will achieve economies of scales in their operations to meet the competition from the private sector effectively.
- vii. Amalgamation is an important achievement of the agricultural cooperatives. This has been achieved through proper consultations, mutual discussions and agreements. These amalgamations have made the cooperatives more viable and stronger. The process which is voluntary has the backing of the government. This process also helps to rationalise the business

operations of the cooperatives and helps the member-farmers to produce high quality products, with less costs and high incomes. Cooperatives are expected to have a stronger bargaining power and better access to the market.

- viii. Farming in Japan is facing reduction in the number of full-time farmers and increase in part-time farmers whose main occupation is not farming. Younger generation is not interested in pursuing farming as a profession resulting in shortage of successors. Their preference remains to work in cities.
- ix. This has resulted in aging of farmers. More and more women are engaged in farming operations and the number of farmers of 65 years of age and above is increasing rapidly.
- x. A strong net-work has been developed by the Agricultural Cooperative Movement especially in the fields of marketing and purchasing of inputs. Farm machinery, farm inputs, guidance, credit, insurance, and information are provided by the primaries, prefectural federations and the national apex organisations to the best advantage of the farmers.
- xi. Due to strong yen, imports have become cheaper for procuring inputs from abroad and these are passed on to the farmer-members by the federations and primaries.
- xii. Communication between the members and the cooperatives is very strong. Every farmer-member keeps in constant touch with his cooperative through phone, fax etc. to keep himself updated with latest trends in the market.
- xiii. As more and more women are involved in farming, multiple membership in cooperatives have been introduced in many societies. Women play a very crucial role in the development of farming and in the management of agricultural cooperatives. They contribute immensely to agricultural production and to the total welfare and upliftment of the family through their own imaginative work. The participants felt strongly that women should be given full membership and more role to play in the management of cooperatives.
- xiv. Women's associations exist almost in all the agricultural cooperatives and they play a very vital role. These women's associations are patronised by the wives and close relations of the farmer-members. Cooperatives contribute liberally for the promotion and development of these associations.

- xv. Women's associations have developed their own parallel network under the banner of National Federation of Women's Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives. This Federation provides a variety of services to the local and prefectural level women's associations e.g., national priorities, relationship with cooperatives, marketing strategies, social activities covering family welfare, balanced food, joint purchasing and distribution of food supplies, cooking, dress-making, harmony among mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and others. The Associations have, therefore, emerged as a strong segment of Agricultural Cooperative Movement in Japan. Though informal in character, a strong sense of purpose and pride has been developed by these cooperatives.
- xvi. Interesting activities undertaken by the women's associations in Japan include: home maintenance, educating young girls and brides in using traditional dresses and appreciating traditional folk songs and dances, physical exercises, domestic and international travels, flower arrangements, joint purchasing through 'han' groups, traditional tea ceremony etc.
- xvii. These women's associations have achieved overall development and contributed to the welfare of the Japanese farmer-families. They have also promoted the development of younger generation making them to realise that farming is an important and equally remunerative profession.
- xviii. These associations have developed, and, are operating effective and efficient programmes for helping the aged in the society. They look after the aged by taking care of their food requirements, health needs, and entertainment for the aged on a voluntary basis. (See the example of such services provided by an agricultural cooperative, JA-Saku-Shi, placed as ANNEXE-IV).

The participants felt that the decision-makers in their respective countries would be benefited by closely studying the experience of Japanese agricultural cooperatives and their women's associations in the following fields:

- i. High quality production,
- ii. Systematic planning of agricultural produce,
- iii. Organisational and managerial capabilities,
- iv. Participation of women in agri coop activities,
- v. Setting-up of effective research and development facilities,
- vi. Strengthening a strong communication/information system,
- vii. Provision of safety and security to the farmers and their families,
- viii. Joint-purchasing and marketing system, and

ix. Better-living and farm guidance activities.

**-Better-Living Activities in  
Agricultural Cooperatives in Japan**

Farming guidance and better-living activities are the two important pillars on which the Agricultural Cooperative Movement have developed in the past. While farm guidance focuses on increasing productivity, better-living activities aim at enriching the life-styles and environment of members' lives through services and programmes. Better-living activities help the members of farmers' families to lead a 'healthier and richer life'

The fast-moving agricultural scene in Japan has brought about significant changes in the farmers' lives within a short period. Though agricultural income has increased over the years, the migration to urban areas has not stopped resulting in weakening of inter-relationship within the family. There is limited involvement in farming in most of the farm households. As the migration to urban areas either for residence or employment has increased unabated, the burden of agricultural labour has consequently fallen on women remaining behind in the villages.

Better-living activities are widespread in all the agricultural cooperatives in the country based on the strategy adopted in October 1985 by the 17th National Congress of Agricultural Cooperatives called 'the Basic Principles of Agricultural Cooperatives - Better-Living Activities'

The overall aim of the better-living activities is to overcome the shortcomings in rural living conditions for better livelihood among farm households, and preserving the character of the rural society, its culture, traditions and the environment simultaneously. Hence the emphasis is on education, traditional festivals, health programmes, family welfare programmes and activities aimed at providing quality goods and services at the most reasonable prices.

**-Role of "HAN" Groups**

Primary cooperatives organise better-living activities through its interest groups called 'han' groups. They differ from cooperative to cooperative. Han groups at the hamlet level take leading part in conducting better-living activities. Each Han group consist of five to ten farm households. Four per cent of cooperatives in Japan have active han groups. Most activities are handled by the women's associations, youth associations, the hamlet-level farming groups and other interest groups. At the prefectural level, the prefectural welfare federations, prefectural unions, economic federations and credit federations of agricultural cooperatives provide technical and policy support to the primaries while the JA-Zenchu arranges educational activities and provides facilities for the training of better-living advisers.



The funding of better-living activities is mainly met by the primary cooperatives. Some of the welfare and health-control activities are conducted in line with the linkages with the mutual insurance activities of primary and higher level federations.

#### **-Better-Living Advisors**

Better-living programmes are conducted by the better-living departments encompassing both welfare and economic activities. In some smaller cooperatives, general staff looks after better-living activities. The better-living advisers are responsible for coordinating and conducting these activities.

Though the scope of activities is unlimited, the main group of activities undertaken are as follows:

- Activities for good health,
- Consumer activities,
- Consultancy services,
- Cultural programmes,
- Programmes for senior citizens,
- Environment protection,
- Measures for supplementary income, and
- Better-living for mutual advantages.

#### **-Women's Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives (WAAC)**

Women's associations have been established in almost 85% of all agricultural cooperatives in Japan with a total membership of 1,810,934 members in 47 prefectures and having 2,274 chapters throughout the country. The membership is presently stagnant due to decreasing interest of the younger generation in the farm households.

WAAC is the second largest network in Japan in terms of membership and the largest in rural community. Main principles of women's associations are: (a) promotion of Agricultural Cooperative Movement; (b) membership open to women only; (c) self-governing management; (d) solidarity; and (e) political neutrality. In addition to better-living activities, the associations take interest in farm management and improvement of women's status in the society.

While credit, marketing and purchasing are carried out by the women's association members, processing is not undertaken. The WAAC also helps its members in insurance business. The WAAC covers better-living activities adequately. The WAAC members are assisted in book-keeping, dressing, upkeep of houses, introduction of new kitchen utensils, safe and healthy environment, in inculcating civic sense and in improving behaviour pattern of members within the society. Encouragement by WAAC to develop kitchen gardens in almost every farmer's house, it has helped the home economy. Health-care of the family members is yet another important contribution of WAAC. Better-

living activities like joint cooking, common bath, piggy bank, laundry place, group saving, water supply, group activities and joint purchasing activities were the other factors.

Study meetings of group farming and means to find jobs other than seasonal work was another important activity of WAAC. The exchange with overseas women's associations made the WAAC members more informative. The WAAC is financially independent and has autonomous management. It motivates young married women to take up farming and in maintaining the culture and traditions of Japan. Music classes, cooking classes, kitchen gardens, dressing, English language classes are held to sustain the interests of young ladies. Looking after the aged and the young is another important activity in which WAAC lends its helping hand.

The National Congress of Agricultural Cooperatives has resolved 'to promote participation of farm successors and women as regular members by setting-up targets to expand and rejuvenate the organisation and business bases' and 'to promote selection of representative members' and directors from among youth associations and women's associations.

#### **-The National Association of Women's Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA-ZEN FUKYO)**

The National Association of Women's Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA-Zen Fukyo), is the national organisation of all women's associations in Japan. It has 47 member councils in the 47 prefectures divided into 2,274 chapters with an individual membership of 1,810,934 members. The national organisation has established a plan entitled 'the Path towards 21st Century for WAAC'. Under this three year plan of action, the Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives (San Plan) has been adopted. The following major activities are adopted under this plan:

- Securing safety in dieting habits to protect health of family members, of family members;
- Support to and care of aged people of the society;
- Care and protection of environment through the protection of immediate living environment;
- Uplifting the status of women.

The programme of WAAC has been built on three principal pillars e.g. 'Let us Create', 'Let us Protect', and 'Let us Get'. These are:

#### **Let us Create:**

- Let us create and produce healthy and high quality food,
- Let us create local environment where it is comfortable to live and to participate in the activities of WAAC,

- Let us establish vigorous and active associations.

Let us Protect:

- Let us protect domestic agricultural products and healthy foods to eat,
- Let us protect local and global environment,
- Let us protect weaker sections of the society such as children and aged persons.

Let us Get:

- Let us get a place where women participate in farm management, agricultural cooperatives and local administration,
- Let us get the way of life by our own hands,
- Let us get a cordial life.

These tasks are sought to be promoted at three levels - at the level of individual members, at the level of WAAC and at the level of local community. It has been envisaged that all JA Women Associations shall cover the following subjects besides their regular subjects:

- Safety of foods - (production and distribution of safe and high quality foods)
- Campaign against harmful and chemical additives, dangerous food colours, imported foods containing residues of agricultural chemicals and other questionable foods, preparation of locally-grown foods, chemical free food items, and improvement of farm products.
- Support to and care of aged people of the society - It is important to create a local community where human rights of the aged is respected and provide them with cordial, bright and worthy lives.
- Care and protection of environment through the protection of immediate living environments - promotion of recycling of waste resources, curtailment of wastes, energy conservation, enhancing interest in global environment protection issues.
- Enhancement of status of women - Organisation of promotional groups to provide special knowledge, technology and systems necessary for agriculture and renovation of agricultural management, enriching social life and to create conditions for leisure and recreation for women. Also to work for the safety of women against 'overwork', less evaluation in management and few opportunities to speak or express.

Women's associations are available right from the primary level to the national level as autonomous organisations supplementing and complementing the work and activities of cooperatives. Women's associations are voluntary in character and composed of farm women and housewives. These associations aim at improving the family living conditions through programmes of better-living ably supported by agricultural cooperatives.

At primary level they encourage women to participate in better-living activities and invigorate to realise 'cordial life with rich communication' by: (a) centring on younger generation; (b) strengthening social activities among the young ladies' groups; (c) organising cooking classes, English language classes and introducing Western dancing etc.

At prefectural level, they provide the networking for all women associations within the area. Some of the principal functions at the prefectural level include:

- Help and support in the preparation of business plans, through surveys, home visits and consultations;
- Help in the process of amalgamation and restructuring of agricultural Cooperative;
- Enhancing personal exchange of experiences between the primaries and Prefectural level cooperative organisations and federations;
- Networking of computerisation;
- Developing public relationship;
- Establishing and furthering environment-friendly agriculture;
- Creation of cordial life with effective communication;
- Setting-up and operating distribution centres;
- Food processing centres;
- Rice milling;
- Laundry machine centres;
- Food ingredients centres;
- Self-supply systems;
- Kitchen gardening promotion and advisory services; and
- Establishing legislative activities to establish fundamental agricultural policies.

In general, women's associations cover almost all aspects of human life and try to correlate them with the working of their agricultural cooperatives. Of special mention are the environment-related activities, e.g., emphasis on recycling of waste resources i.e., collection and systematic handling of glass bottles, waste paper, empty cans, use of left-over cooking oil for making washing soap, general cleanliness, waste water disposal, care of plants and trees, discouraging use of high-salt contents in food items, reduction of sugar consumption in food articles, avoiding high-fat contents, regular exercises etc. Great attention is being paid by these associations in encouraging younger generation to take part in cooperative activities through contests, music, social service, and also enhancing interest in national culture and traditions e.g., traditional dresses, traditional foods, traditional music and arts etc.

## 8.2 Recommendations

Based on their learning by way of listening to lectures, study of lecture notes and observing the role and activities of agricultural cooperatives and women's associations in agricultural cooperatives and holding discussions with leaders and basic members, the participants were able to form their own views and opinions on the work that needs to be done in their own respective organisations and countries. The participants recommended the following for the consideration of their own organisations:

### [01] Indonesia

The two participants from Indonesia, one representing GKSI and the other, a KUD, felt that the experiences gained in Japan by participating in the training programme and study visits are of relevance to their own Cooperative Movement. They felt that:

- i. The Japanese experience should be replicated by the Union of Dairy Cooperatives of Indonesia (GKSI) as a national cooperative policy with emphasis on proper coordination with members through meetings and ties, careful business planning, increasing group efforts within the membership and increasing their awareness;
- ii. Women's associations role and activities are very useful to agricultural cooperatives and these kinds of associations should be introduced within the Indonesian Cooperative Movement;
- iii. National workshops on better-living activities could be conducted for a wider dissemination of Japanese experience;
- iv. Primary cooperatives should:
  - a. Form women's groups with adequate funding;

- b. Dairy cooperatives at the primary level should support these groups with a realisation that women are the main promoters of dairy business; and
- c. Women's advisory groups may be set up within the primaries to provide information and suggestions on farm management, better-living and family welfare activities like the WAAC of Japan.

### [02] Malaysia

The participants representing RISDA and FELDA from Malaysia made the following observations:

- i. Participation in the Conference and the training course was very useful because not only they were able to pick up new ideas but were also able to exchange experiences with others. More opportunities be provided to women to attend similar international training courses;
- ii. RISDA and FELDA should start women's associations focusing on better-living activities by employing trained better-living advisors;
- iii. More national training programmes would help disseminate more information to more number of persons;
- iv. Pilot projects on involvement of women/women-related activities within the area of operation of RISDA and FELDA would be useful;
- v. Women's groups should organise women according to their age groups and start activities for various groups in collaboration with RISDA and FELDA officials.

### [03] Pakistan

The two participants representing the Federal Bank for Cooperatives of Pakistan made the following recommendations:

- i. Multipurpose type cooperatives based on "one village one society" concept should be adopted in Pakistan to serve the membership in a better way.
- ii. Cooperatives should undertake educational and training activities.
- iii. Women's groups should be formed and encouraged to participate in the cooperative activities, especially in the field of better-living activities to improve the life style in villages.
- iv. Credit facilities should be linked with education and social welfare activities.
- v. Member education system should be vigorously pursued.

- vi. Reservation be made for employment of women in the cooperative sector and should be followed.
- vii. More women should be encouraged to take up leadership positions in cooperatives, at the primary, secondary and national levels. More women directors/board members should be elected to represent the population.

### 8.3 Some General Recommendations

Based on their class-room studies, study of cooperatives on the spot through study visits, field observations and discussions with members, women leaders and leaders of agricultural cooperatives the participants made the following general observations and recommendations:

- i. The training course has been very useful and beneficial and should continue in the future to benefit more women leaders from the developing countries about the Japanese experience;
- ii. Members of women's associations in Japan should enjoy full and regular membership within their cooperatives for effective economic participation;
- iii. Senior members of women's associations should be invited to act as resource persons to handle teaching sessions in the training programme;
- iv. ICA should consider increasing the number of trainees per training programme to benefit more number of women leaders from the developing countries. The present number of six participants is too inadequate for the needs of the movements in the Region;
- v. Follow-up training programmes for former participants be organised periodically to provide them with the latest information on developments in Japan and in the Region;
- vi. Follow-up national workshops could be held making use of the participants already trained in IDACA for dissemination of knowledge among those who are unable to attend the programme in Japan;
- vii. Final report of the training programme be sent to the sponsoring/nominating organisations with a request to initiate follow-up action on the recommendations and suggestions of the training course, where feasible.

### 09 Concluding Session

The concluding session of the Sixth ICA Japan Training Programme for Rural Women Leaders of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia organised by the International Cooperative Alliance in close collaboration with the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA-Zenchu) was held at the IDACA on 15th November 1996.

On the successful completion of the training programme, the participants were awarded Certificates of Participation by the Managing Director of the IDACA. The concluding session was addressed by the representatives of MAFF, JA-Zenchu and IDACA.

The participants expressed their deep appreciation to the International Cooperative Alliance, the MAFF, the JA-Zenchu and the IDACA authorities for the opportunity given to them to participate in the training programme, study the organisation and activities of the women's association in agricultural cooperatives in Japan. They expressed their gratitude to IDACA and the programme coordinator, Ms Eiko Oshita, for all the assistance and care given to them during the training course period.

The participants requested the IDACA to convey their appreciation and thanks to the cooperative organisations visited by them during the study visits in Hyogo Prefecture.

They also expressed their grateful appreciation to the ICA for the opportunity given to them for participating in the Asian Women Farmer Leaders Conference held in Tokyo from October 21 to 23, 1996.

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**Course Participants**

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6th ICA/Japan Training Course for Rural Women Leaders  
of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia  
(Oct. 20 ~ Nov. 16, 1996)

PROGRAMME

As of Nov. 1, 1996

Date	Forenoon Session (9:30 ~ 12:00)	Afternoon Session (13:30 ~ 16:00)	Place of stay
Oct. 20(Sun)		Arrival of Participants	Hotel in Tokyo
21(Mon)	Participate in the Asian Women Farmer Leaders Conference		"
22(Tue)	Introduction of Case Study	Group discussion	"
23(Wed)	Summary of Discussion/Adoption of Appeal	Move to Kyoto	Kyoto
24(Thu)	Visit to JA Kyoto-Chuo/Observation of Facilities	Visit to Farmer's House	"
25(Fri)	Sight Seeing in Kyoto	Move to Osaka	Osaka
26(Sat)	Free	Move to Hyogo Pref.	Kobe
27(Sun)	Sight Seeing in Kobe		"
28(Mon)	Visit to JA Hyogo Pref. Union	Visit to JA Sanda	"
29(Tue)	Exchange Meeting with Members of JA Sanda Women's Associations		Home stay
30(Wed)	Visit to JA Kato-Gun	Move to Tokyo	IDACA
31(Thu)	Orientation	Country Report	"
Nov. 1(Fri)	Agricultural Cooperative System in Japan (Mr. S. Futagami, IDACA)		"
2(Sat)	Free (Exchange Meeting with Hachioji International Friendship Club-if you want to attend)		"
3(Sun)	Sightseeing in Tokyo		"
4(Mon)	National Holiday		"
5(Tue)	Japanese Agriculture and International Activities of Agri. Coops (Mr. Y. Nakaoka, IDACA)		"
6(Wed)	Group Discussion (Summary of Study Visit and Conference)	Enhancement of Rural Women's Life & Status and Roles of Government	"
7(Thu)	Public Relations Activities of JA and Members Communication(Mr. Y. Ogane, Ie-No-Hikari Assoc.)		"
8(Fri)	Better Living Activities of JA (Mr. K. Kageyama, Central Coop. College)	<IDACA-Party>	"
9(Sat)	Free		"
10(Sun)	Free		"
11(Mon)	Case Study:Promotion of Rural Women's Participation for Organization(Mr. T. Tanaka, JA Zenchu)		"
12(Tue)	Education Activities of JA (Mr. M. Kimura, JA Zenchu)		"
13(Wed)	Health Control Activities for Members (Ms. Takako Yokoyama, JA Nagano Welfare Feds.)		"
14(Thu)	Drafting of Final Report		"
15(Fri)	Report Presentation/Evaluation/Closing Ceremony		"
16(Sat)	Departure of Participants for Home Countries		"

# Agricultural Co-operatives in Japan and JA Women's Associations

Ms. Eiko Oshita

*Programme Coordinator, IDACA, Japan*

## I. The Structure of Agricultural Co-operatives

### 1) *Primary Agricultural Co-operatives*

In Japan, primary agricultural co-operatives are organized on the village, town and city level, with farmers as regular members, and non-farmers as associate members. At present, almost all farmers are members of agricultural co-operatives.

There are two types of primary agricultural co-operatives, multi-purpose and single purpose. Multi-purpose co-operatives provide members with a wide range of services such as marketing, supply, credit, mutual insurance, and the use of available facilities; with guidance at all levels on farming and living conditions. Such multi-purpose activities are geared to the actual needs of Japanese farmers, who are often engaged in mixed farming. Thus, multi-purpose co-operatives play a central role in Japan's agricultural co-operative movement.

Single purpose agricultural co-operatives, which concentrate on marketing, are active in specific areas of production, such as fruits, vegetables, sericulture, and livestock. Almost all members of single purpose agricultural co-operatives are concurrently members of multi-purpose agricultural co-operatives.

### 2) *Prefectural Unions and Federations*

Primary agricultural co-operatives have corresponding federations at the prefectural level. Organized by function, federations are classified into two categories: those mainly composed of -

- \* multi-purpose agricultural co-operatives such as prefectural economic (marketing and supply), credit, and mutual insurance federations, and
- \* single purpose agricultural co-operatives such as dairy, sericultural and horticultural co-operative federations.

Each of the 47 prefectures in Japan has a prefectural union of agricultural co-operatives, whose members are primary co-operatives and prefectural federations. The prefectural unions do not engage in business, but guide, coordinate, research, survey, educate, inform and perform audits on behalf of primary agricultural co-operatives and prefectural federations. In addition, they represent the interests and objectives of the agricultural co-operative movement in each prefecture.

### **3) National Organisations**

Each prefectural federation has a national counterpart. National federations are also classified into two categories, those related to multi-purpose agricultural co-operatives, including National Federations of agricultural Co-operative Associations, National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives, National Press and Information Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives, National Welfare Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives; and those related to single purpose agricultural co-operatives, including National Federation of Livestock Co-operatives, National Federation of Dairy Co-operatives, National Federation of Sericultural Co-operatives, and National Federation of Horticultural Co-operatives.

Related institutions include the Norinchukin Bank (Central Co-operative Bank for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries), the National Association of (Prefectural) Credit Federations of Agricultural Co-operatives, IE-NO-HIKARI Association (engaged in publishing), and UNICOOP JAPAN (engaged in foreign trade), but they are not national federations as defined by the agricultural Co-operative Society Law.

Membershp in Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives, a nationwide organization, is basically held by primary agricultural co-operatives, prefectural unions and federations, and various national federations. Central Union does not only provide guidance, coordination, research, education, information and audit services, but also represents the interests and objectives of Japan's agricultural co-operative movement.

## **II. Women's Association of Agricultural Co-operatives**

Women are not only responsible for taking care of household budgets, but are very active in actual farm operations. They join agricultural co-operative women's associations to improve health care, standard of living, and buying power. Currently 1.76 million (as of December, 1995) women are members of more than 2,000 women's associations in Japan. There are Prefectural Councils of Agricultural Co-operative Women's Associations and the National Council of Agricultural Co-operative Women's Associations.

At present, because agricultural co-operatives have few women members, they tend to be run primarily by men. However, women and men must participate equally in the agricultural co-operative movement.

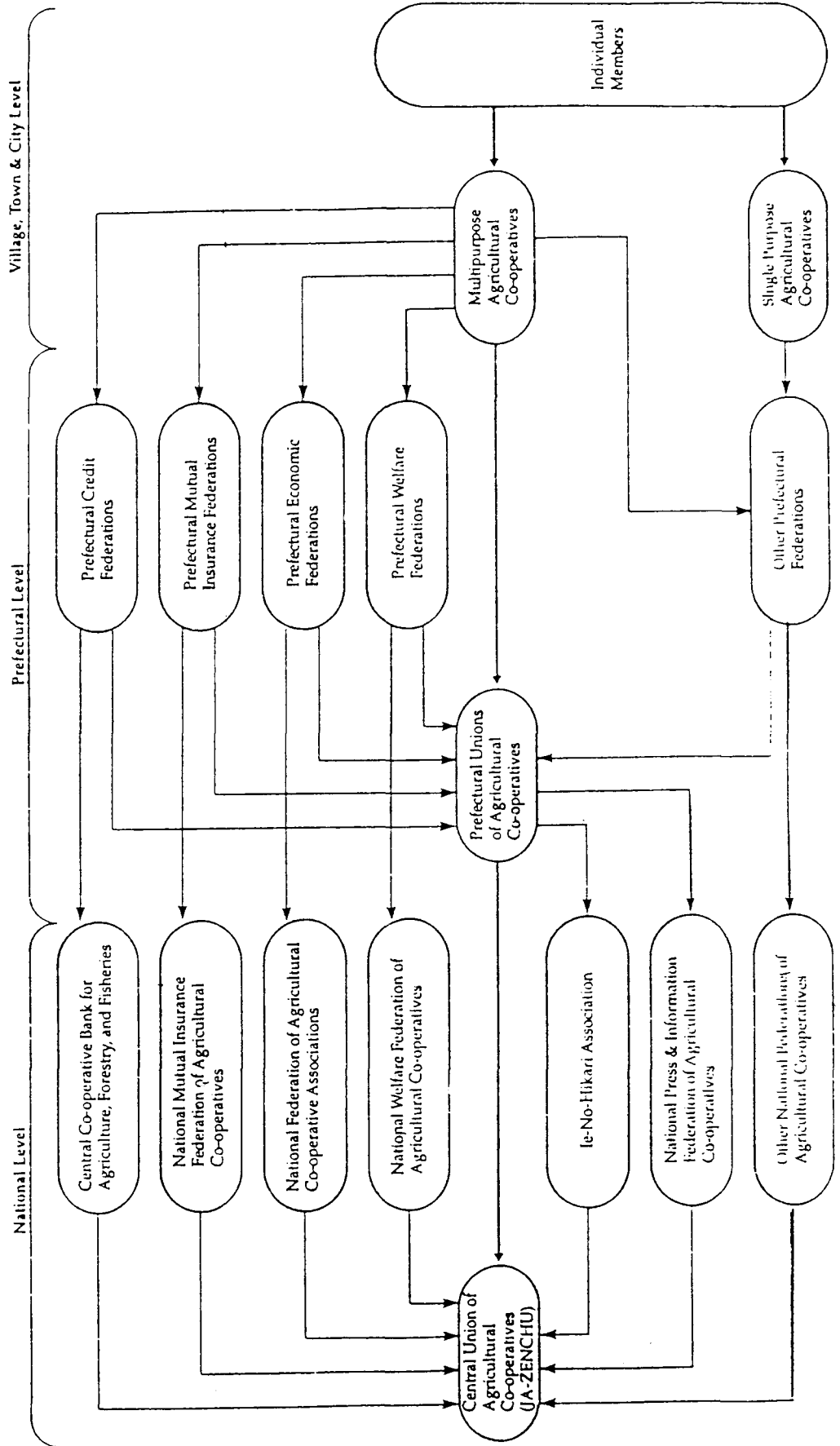
In this connection, women's associations need to present their views to agricultural co-operatives, and board members must ensure their decisions reflect the ideas of women.

### **1) The Organization of JA Women's Association**

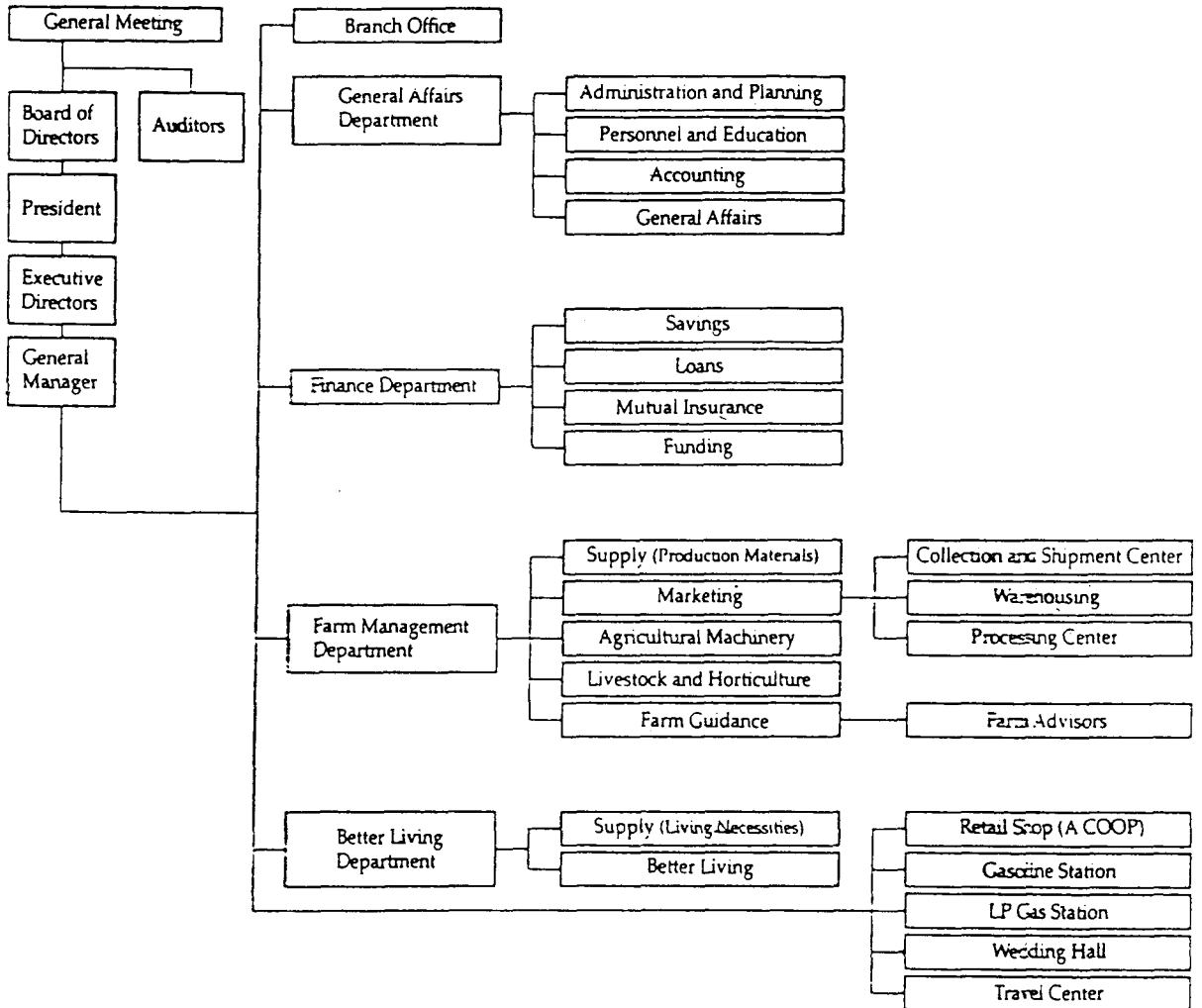
JA Women's Associations were organized primarily among women living in agricultural areas with the purpose of improving their social and economic status. They participate in JA activities and work in broad areas ranging from agriculture to the general improvement of regional life-style in closely-knit co-operative societies.

Currently the organization counts more than 2,000 chapters and 1.76 million members. These are led by a national council and lower councils in 47 urban and rural prefectures, bodies which collectively work to administer activities nationwide.

# The Organization of Japan's Agricultural Co-operatives



## A Typical Example of the Structure of Multi-purpose Agricultural Co-operatives

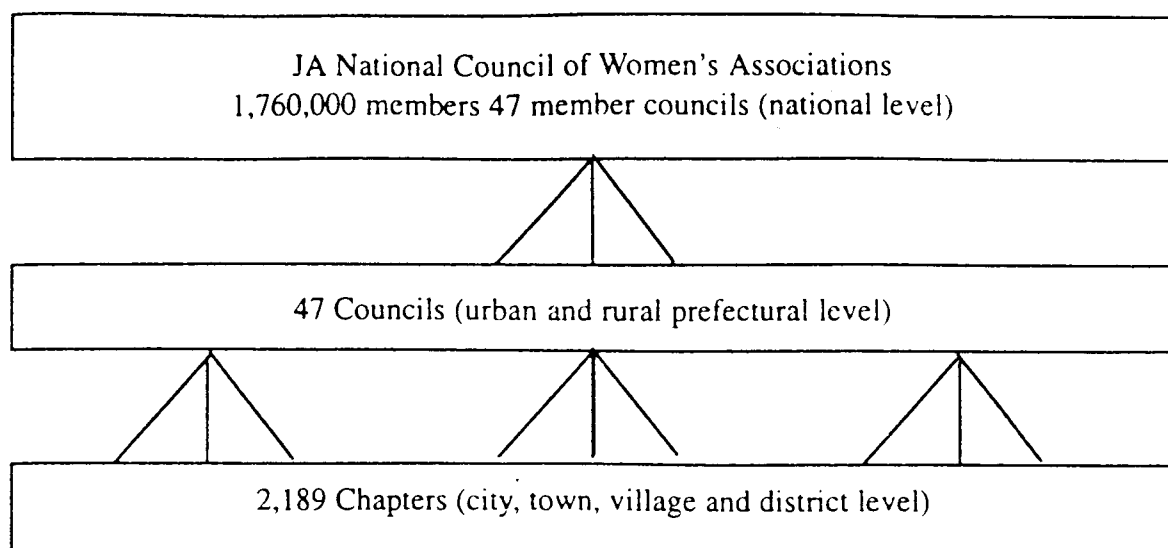


**Producers' Groups:** Flower, Dairy, Pig-raising, Vegetable and Rice-farming Groups

**Agricultural Co-operative Business Groups:** Farmers' Pension and Mutual Insurance Promotion Groups.

**Youth and Women's Groups:** Young Wives, Women's, and Youth Associations.

## *Organizational Structure of JA Women's Association*



### *2. Development of JA Women's Associations*

The period following World War II saw the implementation in Japan of policies aimed at democratization, spurring reform of agricultural land holding, recognition of women's rights and increasing organization of women in their own groups. Agricultural Co-operative Women's Associations started to appear around 1948 and a national administration was formed in 1951.

While the early stages were difficult for the agricultural co-operative association, the JA Women's Associations became a force in its rise by undertaking efforts to increase investment and encourage savings.

To improve poor living conditions, the JA Women's Associations actively mounted a campaign to share purchase costs of daily necessities, for example matches and sugar, and improve kitchen conditions by setting up small water supply systems, providing improved kitchen ranges and controlling vermin. Other programs to aid people focused on birth control, teaching management of family finances and cooking for better nutrition at a time when food fell short of satisfying the needs of people who had to perform hard work. The benefits of these efforts soon became apparent.

Together with its activities, the organization's management grew stronger. An official song and band were adopted, membership reached a peak of 3.44 million people in 1958.

A movie was independently produced with funds generated by 10 yen contributions from members. Called 'Niguruma No Uta' (Song of a Cart), it tells the story of a woman who gets married, deals with her children's illnesses, husband's infidelity, mother-in-law's abuse and the deprivations of war-time before finally finding happiness in her later years.

The film was released and drew a very positive response among theatre-goers.

### 3) *Activities of JA Women's Associations*

- \* Let's join agricultural co-operative associations as formal union members and work to become officials of the associations.

At present, more than 60% of people who are engaged in farming in Japan are women; however, women regular members of agricultural co-operatives are less than 12%. Percentage of women directors in agricultural co-operatives is slightly over 0.2%.

We are seeking to overcome the role concept providing that "women are for working and policy making is for men". We need joint management of agricultural co-operatives.

- \* Let's rebuild Japan's agriculture and produce safe and good quality food.

Outcomes of the GATT Uruguay Round of Talks undermined import controls even on rice, our principle food. Here in Japan, the world's leading importer of food, we are building regional agriculture and improving co-operation with consumers.

Objectives include raising Japan's self-sufficiency in food production, positioning food as a 'source of life' and encouraging healthy eating habits suited to the Japanese lifestyle.

- \* Let's build a pleasant homeland where the elderly can live without worry.

There are many women today who find it difficult to support themselves when they become aged, because of inadequate social security and the fact that they worked without salary when they were young.

To avoid such a fate, people advancing in years must be cared for with a better system. They must also carefully plan their lives with the intention of maintaining economic independence in later years.

We take measures readily at hand to make life in our regions agreeable to elderly people. We mount campaign to promote communication with them, and provide meal services and care programmes for their benefit.

- \* Let's protect regional and global environment

We constantly urge people to switch to environment-friendly detergents, stop the waste of resources and co-operate with recycling programmes.

Further, as producers, we pursue agriculture that is gentle to nature and we seek to perpetuate cultivation through better soil and less use of agricultural chemicals.

### 4) *Three Steps to Take*

In promoting activities, it is necessary to always consciously think in terms of three steps; "myself", "my peers", and "my region". It is important to conceptualize the meanings of "myself", "my peers", and "my region" and arrange things in terms of each according to which steps are possible and which steps are one's duty.

*Myself - 1.* The member's own level.

Each women will make efforts and progress according to her own consciousness and eagerness. At the level of "myself", it is necessary that each member first think about what is



possible in her own family and agricultural operation and then take those steps.

*My Peers-2.* The peer level (JA Women's Associations)

What you cannot do by yourself may be accomplished with the aid of your peers.

It is important to achieve results by utilizing the strengths of a group or entire JA Women's Associations.

*My Region- 3.* The regional level (administration, various organizations)

Organizations that differ in terms of purpose may still benefit from co-operation and some activities will need administration.

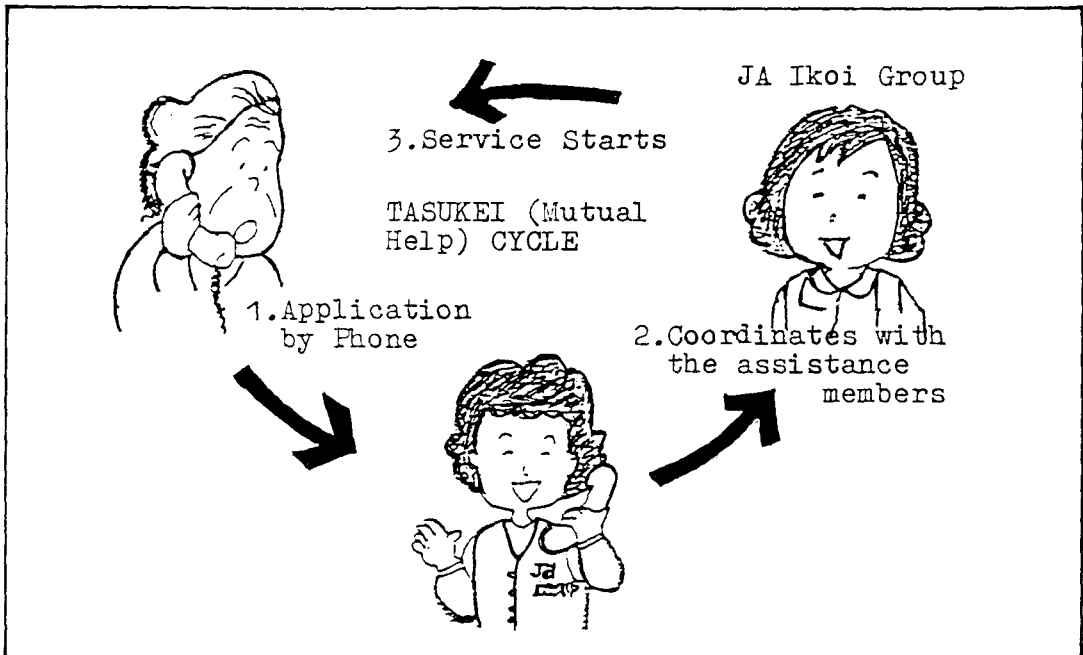
This requires building friendly relations at all times to expand knowledge and create networks.

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Reproduced from : Report of the ICA Regional Consultation Meeting on "Gender Integration in Cooperatives" held at Bangkok, Thailand, September 1996. ICA ROAP Publication, April 1997  
- ISBN : 92-9054-041-9.

**AN EXAMPLE OF "AT-HOME NURSING AND HOUSE-KEEPING ASSISTANCE" SERVICES PROVIDED BY IKOI (OASIS) GROUP OF JA-SAKU-SHI  
- JA CARE WORKER TO HELP AT HOME.**

{IKOI Group of JA-Saku-Shi is an organisation which offers paid-services of at-home nursing and house-keeping assistance on a membership basis for the purpose of creation of lively rural community without any concern and with mutual help.}



**Who Needs the Help?**

- The elderly living alone
- The elderly couple without any other family members
- The family with bed-ridden elderly
- The disabled
- The single parent family and those having difficulty in care or house-keeping before or after delivery of baby.

**Membership Fee and Annual Fee:**

- Entrance fee : 1,000 Yen
- Annual fee : 1,000 Yen

**Charge for the Service:**

- 800 Yen per hour
- Transportation expenses should be added

**Service Hours:**

- Monday-Saturday
- 0830-1700 hrs
- Not available on Sundays, National Holidays, August 13-16, December 30-January 03; except for special reasons.

### How to Get Membership?

-Those who need assistance and will extend assistance are required to pay 1,000 Yen as membership fee and 1,000 Yen as annual fee. (Note: Annual fee is used to make up for premium of insurance in case of accidents and communication expenses for members)

### Application:

To Better-Living Guidance Department, Better-Living Division, JA-Saku-Shi (Tel:81-1112 Ext:133.134)

### Who Extends Assistance?

[\*]-JA Care Worker (Home Helper). Membership basis Registered as care and assistance member to visit a member in need of assistance to provide services such as physical care and house-keeping assistance, Conversation partner, guard etc.

-Two Types of Members: (i) Care-Worker member for physical care and house-keeping assistance; and (ii) Cooperation member mainly for house-keeping assistance.

[\*]-Supporting Member (Financial Support). Not available for field assistance, but for financial support by paying entrance fee and membership fee with understanding and support of the activities.

### Service Starts by:

(i) Call Better-Living Guidance Department of JA-Saku-Shi by phone; (ii) Staff of the Secretariat visits the applicant to have consultation, makes arrangements necessary for membership and others, and coordinates with organisations concerned; (iii) The staff and JA Care Worker in-charge visits the applicant to make confirmation of service hours and programmes to be offered.

### Services:

-House-keeping Assistance: Cleaning, washing, shopping, aid to outing, aid to hospital, conversation partner, Substitute writing, Weeding etc.

-Physical Care/Aid: Diaper change, Excretion, Bathing, Body washing, Changing clothes, Having meals, Moving etc. etc.

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*Reproduced from: Health Care Activities for Members of Agricultural Cooperatives by Ms Takako Yokoyama of Saku General Hospital, JA-Nagano Prefectural Welfare Federation. IDACA, Tokyo, November 1996.*

Countrywise Participation in ICA-Japan Training Courses for Rural Women  
 Leaders of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia held at IDACA Tokyo, Japan  
 TRAINING COURSES I-VI

Participating Countries	Course-I Aug 21- Sep 14 1991	Course-II Aug 25- Sep 19 1992	Course-III June 12- Jly 08 1993	Course-IV Oct 17- Nov 12 1994	Course-V Oct 29- Nov 24 1995	Course-VI Oct 20- Nov 16 1996	Total Participants
01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
01 Bangladesh	-	-	02	-	-	-	02
02 India	-	02	-	02	-	-	04
03 Indonesia	02	-	-	-	02	02	06
04 Jordan	-	-	-	02	-	-	02
05 Malaysia	-	02	-	-	02	02	06
06 Pakistan	-	-	-	-	-	02	02
07 Philippines	02	-	-	-	02	-	04
08 Sri Lanka	-	02	-	02	-	-	04
09 Thailand	02	-	02	-	-	-	04
10 Vietnam	-	-	02	-	-	-	02
Total	06	06	06	06	06	06	36

**ICA-JAPAN TRAINING COURSES FOR RURAL WOMEN LEADERS  
OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN ASIA**

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS - COUNTRY-WISE  
(TRAINING COURSES 1-6 : 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996)

**01 BANGLADESH**

- C.3 01 Mrs Anjaman Ara Bhuya Begam, Director  
Bangladesh National Women's Coop Society Ltd.  
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- C.3 02 Mrs Seheli Hoque, Chairperson  
Ramna Thana Central Women's Coop Society Ltd  
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**02 INDIA**

- C.2 03 Mrs S.K.Nagarathna Rao, Lady Coop Education Officer  
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- C.2 04 Mrs Khrimey Tongchen Jomba, Chairman  
Women Welfare Cooperative Society Ltd., Rupa  
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- C.4 05 Mrs Hitendra Kumari, Chairperson  
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- C.1 08 Ms Prihat Ismawati, Manager, Savings and Loans Dept  
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- C.5 09 Ms Tri Widharetna, Expert Staff/Board  
Union of Indonesian Dairy Cooperatives (GKSI)  
Jl Prof Supomo No.178, Jakarta-12870 Indonesia
- C.5 10 Ms Tirin Purwanti, GKSI Regional KORDA-Jawa Barat  
Union of Indonesian Dairy Cooperatives (GKSI)  
Jl RS Gedebage No. 7&8  
Ujungburung, Bandung Indonesia
- C.6 11 Ms Mutiah Faridah, Coordinator  
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- C.6 12 Ms Tuty Sudartati  
KUD Jabung. Kecamatan Jabung Malang  
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- C.4 13 Ms Nahida Y. A.El Saies, Manager  
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- C.4 14 Ms Feryal E.N.Yousef, Chief, Admin Development Unit  
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- 05 MALAYSIA**
- C.2 15 Mrs Noorsiah Kamaruzzaman  
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- C.2 16 Mrs Ramleh bt Long, Secretary, Women's Group  
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- C.5 17 Ms Rahmah bt Md Ali, General Manager  
Malacca Rubber Smallholders' Cooperative Society  
Bangunan RISDA Negeri  
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- C.5 18 Ms Husniah Ismail, District RISDA Officer  
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- C.6 19 Ms Khairiah bt Haji Hassan  
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- C.6 21 Ms Yasmin Shaukat, Deputy Manager  
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- C.5 25 Ms Arilda Faelmoca, Manager  
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- C.5 26 Ms Lourdes Purgatorio, Manager  
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## 08 SRI LANKA

- C.2 27 Mrs P.M. Somawathie  
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- C.2 28 Mrs Subhashini Vardan, President  
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Trincomalee Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd.  
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- C.4 29 Mrs Sushila Palihakkara, Deputy General Secretary  
National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka  
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- C.4 30 Mrs Morathenna D.S. Gunasekara, President  
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-





INTERNATIONAL  
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## THE COOPERATIVE IDENTITY

*[The ICA General Assembly held on 23rd September 1995 in Manchester, adopted the new Principles of Cooperation recommended by the ICA Board of Directors and the ICA Congress after global study and review by a committee headed by Prof Ian McPherson from Canada. The process started with a paper presented by Lars Marcus the then President of the ICA at the Congress held in 1988 at Stockholm. Sven Ake Book, a cooperative specialist from Sweden was detailed to undertake a research into Cooperative Values and Principles in the context of modern global environment of cooperatives who presented his report to the ICA Congress held in Tokyo in 1992. The General Assembly appointed a committee, headed by Prof Ian McPherson for a review of the Cooperative Principles.]*

### DEFINITION

A cooperative 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

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

### THE PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION

The Cooperative Principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

#### First Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives 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**

Cooperatives 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 cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member-one vote), and cooperatives 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 cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. 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 cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

## **Fourth Principle: Autonomy and Independence**

Cooperatives 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 cooperative autonomy.

## **Fifth Principle: Education, Training and Information**

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees, so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

## **Sixth Principle: Cooperation among Cooperatives**

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Cooperative Movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

## **Seventh Principle: Concern for Community**

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

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## **The International Cooperative Alliance**

is one of the oldest international non-governmental organisations representing world-wide the cooperative organisations of all types. Founded in London on 18th August 1895, it now has affiliates from 94 countries, 213 national and 7 international level cooperative organisations covering 754 million individual members all over the world. The ICA enjoys the right of participation in meetings and development work of the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies such as the ILO, FAO, UNESCO and holds Consultative Status of Category-I in the UN Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC).

Besides the Head Office of the ICA, which is in Geneva, there are four Regional Offices. The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ICA ROAP) was established on 14th November 1960 in New Delhi. 59 national level organisations from 26 countries and one international organisation representing nearly 500 million individual cooperators are presently in the membership of the ICA from the Region. These countries are: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Kyrgysten, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

The activities of the ICA ROAP include: coordination and implementation of the ICA cooperative development programmes within the Region; representation of members' policy concerns to governmental bodies and the public; and promotion and defence of cooperative values and principles.

