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## Release of the 'Resource Guide'

The ICA 'Resource Guide for Advanced Training of Co-operatives on Entrepreneurship & Development of Women and Gender Equality' was released by the ICA President Dame Pauline Green on 10 March 2015 at a side event held by ILO-ICA in conjunction with 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW 59) on the theme 'CSW59/ Beijing+20 (2015)' from 9-20 March 2015 at United Nations Headquarters, New York.

As the ICA President released the Resource Guide at the ILO-ICA event on 'Co-operatives: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment', she said that she is very happy to release this guide developed by the Asia-Pacific office for capacity building of women entrepreneurship development to achieve gender equality in co-operatives. She further said that the ICA-AP region is very active and committed to women empowerment and financing active participation of women in co-operatives. This region is doing a lot of skill development training for women. She also commented that it took ICA 120 years to elect



*Release of the Resource Guide in Singapore at Global Board Meeting*

### *From the Editor*

Dear readers,

Welcome to the New Year issue! The first quarter was quite eventful as the "Resource Guide" has been widely released internationally as well as at regional level. The meeting of the Office Bearers has also been held to discuss the implementation plan of the activities. We also welcomed 3 new members to the committee and expecting many more. A story from women coop group in Thailand is included for inspiring reading.

Your views and suggestions are welcome to serve you better.

- Savitri Singh



*Release of the Resource Guide at UN HQ, New York*

a woman President, though the pioneers of co-operatives encouraged women's participation since beginning of the co-operative movement.

The Resource Guide was introduced to the delegates by Ms. Savitri Singh, Advisor-Gender Program and Communication of ICA-AP before the release.

The event was attended by several co-operators and officials of ILO network members and trade unions. Ms. Baasanjav Otgonjargal-State Secretary, Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection of Mongolia, H.E. Od Och-Ambassador, Mission of Mongolia to the UN, Mr. Charles Gould, Director General, Rodrigo Gouveia, Director of Policy and Hanan El-Youssef, Strategy Manager of ICA, Ms. Simel Esim-Head of the COOP Unit, ILO and Ms. María Eugenia Pérez Zea, Chairperson of the ICA Gender Equality Committee, Dr. Lisa Schincariol, Senior Research Consultant, were also present among others.

The Resource Guide is an advance version of the ICA-ILO COOPNET 'Leadership Training Manual for Women Leaders of Co-operatives' 2005 and is developed to address specific training needs of co-operative members.

Goal: 'develop a pool of master trainers and implementation of effective strategies to achieve gender equality at all levels, especially at leadership of coops through capacity building of women and men leaders and managers.'

It contains 3 Chapters :

- Co-operative Governance through Gender Equality: Social aspect of coop business makes it an unique model for women empowerment and gender equality.
- In the backdrop of Beijing-1995, MDG-2015 explains need for policy and programs for gender equality.
- Co-operative Enterprises and Management: Coops are different from other enterprises. Therefore, their management is different.

And information for women to understand about,

1. Financial management
2. Use of ICT
3. E-Commerce
4. Concern for environment, and
5. Case stories from Japan, Philippines, Thailand and India are also included.

Statement on coop identity vis-a-vis market economy perspective; explains how coop is different and it's importance and relevance as a business model in changing world economy. This is a live document which includes examples of events held in recent past, on going projects and programs for making coops builder of sustainability such as IYC-2012, ICA Blue print for a Co-operative Decade and ICA President's messages.

This document was processed at several stages before attaining it's final shape. The draft was tested in 2 trainings held in Japan and India in 2013, Pilot trainings held in Iran, 2013 and Bangladesh, 2014 and inputs collected from trainers and trainees have been incorporated to make it useful, user-friendly and relevant to present changing world economy and market.

The 'Resource Guide' can be found at:

<http://ica-ap.coop/icanews/president-dame-pauline-green-releases-ica-ap-resource-guide>

We intend to organise regular trainings using this Guide to train members. Next Training is scheduled in Mongolia for coop members in May 2015.

The Resource Guide was also released by ICA President at Regional level during the ICA Regional Board Meeting and Global Board Meetings held on 30 March 2015 in Singapore wherein Ms. Masako Shimbo, Chairperson of the ICA-AP Committee on Women introduced the document.

## Meeting of the Office Bearers of ICA-AP Committee on Women

The meeting of the Office Bearers of ICA-AP Committee on Women was held on 31st March 2015 in the Board Room of Co-operative League of Thailand (CLT) in Bangkok.

Besides the office bearers, Ms. Masako Shimbo, Chairperson of the Committee and Ms. Savitri Singh, Secretary of the Committee, following persons also attended the meeting as special invitees:

1. Mr. Phanuwat, Head of the International Affairs Department of CLT.
2. Ms. Kruewan Boonrin, Member of the ICA Committee on Women, representing AWCF.
3. Ms. Nitya, Chairperson of the Primary Agriculture Co-operative, Thailand.

Ms. Shimbo was assisted by Ms. Emi Minachi, Staff of JCCU, Japan.

Mr. Nakorn Tangavirapat, Executive Director, International Affairs of CLT met with the participants but could not stay for the meeting due to some urgent business.



*Participants of the meeting at CLT office*

Ms. Maria Elena Limcon, Vice Chair of the committee could not attend the meeting due her prior engagement in the home country.

The meeting commenced with the opening remarks by the Chairperson Ms. Shimbo. She greeted the participants warmly and welcomed them to the meeting. She also thanked CLT for hosting the meeting and for their warm hospitality.



*Office Bearers of the Women's Committee with the President of CLT at Bangplee Agricultural Co-operative Ltd.*

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Office Bearers held on 21 March 2014 in the board room of NATCCO, Manila, Philippines were circulated among the Office Bearers. Since no comments or observations received, the Minutes are approved as it is.

The committee welcomed following three new members to the committee,

1. Ms. Judith Bernaldez Salcedo  
Gender Board, VICTO National, Cebu, Philippines
2. Mr. Jacinto Abalon Tibe  
Gender Focal Person, VICTO National Co-operative Federation & Development Center, Lahug, Cebu City, Philippines
3. Daw Khin Khin (Ms.)  
Deputy General Manager, Central Co-operative Society Ltd (CCS) Myanmar

After welcoming the 3 new members, the secretary initiated discussion on increasing the membership of the committee. She proposed that CLT should nominate at least two members as there are large number of women engaged with the CLT network. Mr Phanuwat said that a large number of women are working in the network of agricultural co-operatives in the country and the CLT will consult with the Agricultural Co-operative Federation of Thailand for nomination of suitable person and at this point he introduced Ms Nitya, a co-operative leader from Agricultural Co-operative Federation of CLT.

Some other countries like Mongolia, Sri Lanka, China and Iran should also be approached for sending members to the committee.

The current membership position of the Committee is 14 members from 10 countries.

Ms. Savitri Singh informed that all the activities of Work Plan 2014 as approved by the Committee have been completed.

She further explained the following implementation plan of the Work Plan-2015 as approved by the committee in its meeting held on 16th September 2014 in Bali Indonesia,

- The Meeting of the Office Bearers of ICA AP Committee on Women held in the office of CLT in Bangkok on 31 March 2015.
- Resource Guide for Advanced Training of Co-operatives on Entrepreneurship Development of Women and Gender Equality has been printed and released at the Global Level in New York and at the Regional level in Singapore. The Secretary presented the copies of the Resource Guide to the participants of the meeting.
- The Training of Trainers on 'Management Capacity Building of Women for Gender Integration and Co-operative Development' will be held from 11 to 15th May 2015 in Mongolia for the co-operative members of Mongolia in collaboration with the Mongolian Agricultural Co-operative (NAMAC).
- The Workshop on Enhancing the Role of Women in Co-operative Business will be held in Sep 2015 in Palestine in collaboration with ICA member The Economic and Social Development Centre of Palestine (ESDC).
- The Newsletter of the Committee is being published regularly.

She also informed that besides the above approved work activities, the following new activity has been added as suggested by the Regional Director of ICA,

- Collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data in co-operatives

Collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data in co-operatives is crucial for monitoring, evaluation and implementation of project for women empowerment and gender equality in co-operatives. Most of the members of the ICA-AP do not have system/practice of maintaining sex disaggregated data of their members. At this point Mr. Phanuwat informed that even in Thailand it is not in practice to count men and women members separately. ICA-AP had commissioned 'Engendering database in co-operatives' for the first time in 2005-2006. The study came out with interesting information on lower to negligible number of women participation at all levels such as membership, management as well as at leadership. The purpose of this project was to assess the progress or lack thereof after the Tagaytay-1997 and the result of the study was presented at the Tagaytay-2006 Regional Conference.

Therefore, it was discussed in the ICA-AP office that after almost a decade of the first study and Tagaytay Conference 2006, it is logical to commission the study again to review the progress or lack thereof.

Ms. Masaka Shimbo observed that ICA Global Office together with ILO has launched similar study of data in the beginning of this year. It is advisable to first see the study report of ICA Data Project and then share the finding of the study with other members to compare how other countries are ahead/doing better on the issue.

Mr. Phanuwat and Ms. Kruewan volunteered to share information of their respective organisations and made presentations on the activities of CLT and it's endeavour for empowerment of women and Women Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming activities of CULT respectively.

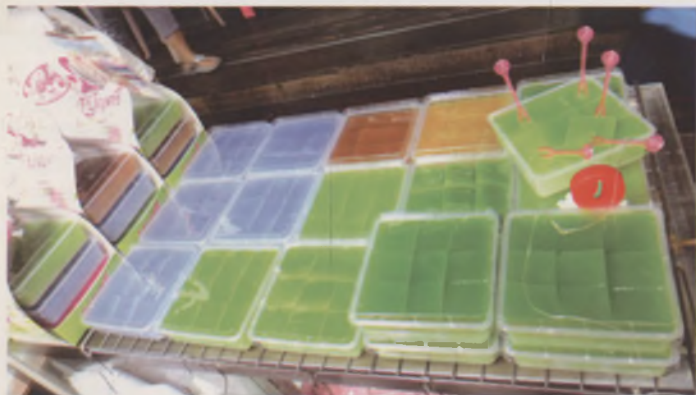
# Boonsri's Thai Sweets Occupation Women Group of the Bangplee Agricultural Co-operative Ltd.

There are a total of 6 Amphur (districts) and Bangplee is one of the districts in Smutprakarn Province located around 30 kms from Bangkok City. The main International Airport, Suvarnbhumi International Airport is also located in this province. The total land areas is 1,004 sq. kms; one side is opened to the Gulf of Thailand and other side is connected to Bangkok Capital City as well as industrial zones.

Bangplee Agricultural Co-operative Ltd. is an agricultural primary district level coop, covered two districts namely Bangplee and Bang Sao Thong Districts. It was established under co-operative act on 15 November 1971 and on 3 January 1978, the co-operative has amalgamated with Bang Chalong Rice Trading Co-operative Ltd.

## Important features of Bangplee Agricultural Co-operative Ltd.

Number of Individual members	634
Group Member	
- Male : 1 (Group Leader)	
- Female: 22 group- 64 Occupation Group	
Number of Board of Directors : 9 Internal Auditor:3	12
- Male 7	
- Female 5	
Number of Staff (permanent staff)	5
- Male: 3	
- Female: 2	
Main Business activities; Rice Trading and marketing of member product	
- Share Capital: 8,252,000 Baht	US\$ 275,067
- Business Turnover, as of 30 October 2014: 33,199,000 Baht	US\$1,106,334
- Provided Loan to member: 25,000,000 Baht	US\$ 833,334



Product of the group



Ms. Boonsri (seated in the center) with group members and visitors

## Boonsri's Thai Sweets Occupation Group

Boonsri's Thai Sweet Occupation Group is one of the most outstanding woman groups of Bangplee Agricultural Co-operative Ltd. The group was formed in 2006 by Mrs. Boonsri Bhummalee, the group leader of co-operative member. The location of the group is Bangplee Old Town Market. The group has been supported by both local government office and by the co-operative.

## Location of the group

103 Moo 10, Bangplee Yai Old Town Market,  
Amphur Bangplee, Samutprakarn Province

## Important Features of Boonsri's Thai Sweet Occupation Group

Established : 2006  
Number of Members : 13  
Main Products : Thai Sweet Branded Boonsri's Thai Sweet

## Contact address:

Bangplee Agricultural Co-operative Ltd.,  
87/1 Moo 8 Tambon Bangplee Yai  
Amphur Bangplee  
Samutprakarm Province 10500

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## Management Capacity Building of Women for Co-operative Development



Training in progress

### From the Editor

*The co-operatives need to focus on gender equality to achieve sustainable development as ICA is positioning co-operatives as builder of sustainability. Skill development is vital for equality and ICA and member network is paying attention on trainings. At the same time, finance is also crucial to materialise initiatives. Therefore, gender budgeting should be practiced and integrated in the planning to achieve gender equality. A TOT was conducted for Mongolian co-operators to build management capacity of women with specific focus on financial management of a co-operative business as it is important for women leaders to understand the technical aspects of business development. ICA-AP is stimulating thought process of women to take up challenges through such programs. We encourage our readers to share their initiatives/programs for boosting women empowerment. You may enjoy reading about Mongolian coops and status of women participation in this issue!*

— Savitri Singh

The ICA-AP Training of Trainers for "Management Capacity Building of Women for Co-operative Development" was held on 11-15th May 2015 in Ulaanbaatar city of Mongolia co-hosted by the National Association of Agricultural Co-operatives of Mongolia (NAMAC). 29 participants including three men from different part of Mongolia attended a week long program. Ms. Gerelzaya, Senior Specialist from the Small and Medium Enterprises Department of Ministry of Industry from Mongolia and Mr. Balu Iyer Regional Director, ICA Asia and Pacific delivered opening addresses.

Ms. Ts Altantuya, Vice President of NAMC delivered welcome address and Mrs. Savitri Singh, Adviser, ICA-AP made a brief introduction of the program.

Mr. L Temuujin, Chief Executive Officer of NAMAC presented the status paper on the status of Mongolian Co-operatives Business. Mr. Purevsuren Bolormaa, the Expert from ILO, Mongolia was invited as a special guest to talk about ILO gender perspective and projects in Mongolia.

Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-AP also participated fully in training process and delivered a lecture on 'Monitoring and Evaluation of Co-operative Development Projects' and 'Co-operative Identity and Market Economy Perspective; various aspects of management of a co-operative'.



*Group photo*

In the Global Gender Gap Index (2014) - Mongolia stands at 42nd position among all the nations. This is much ahead of many developed and bigger, advancing countries like Japan, India and China. Mongolian women have Highest Labour Participation rate in Asia (non-agricultural sector) and also high education and high completion rate.

In spite of various indicators reflecting positive socio-economic-political environment for gender equality, the notion of superiority of men persists. This was evident during the training. Out of the 29 participants 3 were men. During the 'group formation and selection of group leader exercise the trainer asked the participants to form groups and then each group was asked to select a group leader. There was one man each in three groups. All the women in the groups automatically pointed out at the man to be the leader. When asked, they mentioned that this is a habit to consider a man superior.

A brief 'feedback' exercise was conducted at the end of the training. The participants found the teaching interesting, useful, precise and easy to learn. Most of the participants observed that they have always faced gender issues in the course of their family, social and working life. But this the first time they have learnt about specific details on and about the issue.

Some of the participants felt that duration of the training is long for women as they have to leave behind their families and work.

The following topics were covered under the program by the experts from various fields;

1. ILO Gender Perspective and Projects in Mongolia by Mr. Purevsuren Bolormaa, ILO Expert from Mongolia
2. ICA Gender Initiative and Leadership Development of Women in Co-operatives – Global Perspective by Mrs. Savitri Singh, ICA-AP

3. i. Leadership Skills and Personal Management  
ii. Financial Management for women leaders by Ms. Daisybelle M Cabal, Education, Training and Consultancy Head of NATCCO
4. i. Monitoring and Evaluation of Co-operative Development Projects  
ii. Coop Identity and Market Economy Perspective : Various aspects of Management of Co-operative by Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP



*Participants making group presentation*

5. Financial Management of Co-operatives by Ms. M. Delgermaa, Expert in financial management of MOCCU and Ms. G Uyanga, Member of MOCCU Cooperation Sub Committee.

### **Visit to Uvur-orgioch Urban Area Co-operative**

As part of the 'exposure to a co-operative Business' exercise to learn from the real situation, the participant visited to the Uvur-orgioch Urban Area Co-operative near Ulaanbaatar City.



*Participants at the coop in the backdrop of a coop green house*

The co-operative was started in 2008 with 9 members. Minimum share per member is 100,000 Mongolian Tugrak (MT) and one time membership fee is 25,000 MT. At present, the co-operative has 36 members and 17 application for membership is pending for consideration. The main business of the coop is dairy and turnover is 120 million MT. The co-operative also has green house for vegetable production and a milk processing unit to manufacture yogurt and ice cream. The co-operative provides various skill developments training to members to increase production. The training is mainly in the field of milk processing, vegetable growing and handicraft making. The co-operative is marketing their products locally as well as in the Ulaanbaatar city. The dairy supplies items in bulk to local traders in Ulaanbaatar city and to the schools. The schools have schemes to provide meals to children and the products of the dairy co-operatives are used for this purpose by the schools.



*Handicrafts produced by the coop*

The Chairperson of the co-operative who was also the participant of the training, informed that the members worked very closely and hard to establish the co-operative business. Each of the members donated 1cattle to co-operative to earn revenue for the co-operative. The Co-operative Milk Processing Unit is also built by their own contribution and labour. The members contributed for purchase of the construction material and put their labour in constructing the building. Initially, 8-9 persons came together in 2008 and formed an informal group. Gradually more people joined in and the group was converted into a co-operative to formalise the association/group.

Following is the constitution of the Co-operative

1. Chairperson (female)
2. Four Board of Directors (including the chairperson- female) - 3 men and 1 woman
3. Auditing Committee- three members' 2 women and 1 man. Besides the office bearers, the co-operative has employed a full time manager and 8 full time staff in the dairy production unit.

The Co-operative is getting training from NAMAC from time to time.

Ms. Byambasuren, Chairperson of the Uvur Orgioch Co-operative informed that she will organise training course for members of the co-operatives to learn and understand gender issues and financial management.

Mr. Balu Iyer thanked the chairperson for inviting and hosting the participants to her co-operative. He said that "we have to take decision to change, nobody will change for us". He was very much impressed by the managerial skills of the chairper-



*Chairperson, Byambasuren, Uvur Orgioch Co-operative with ICA-AP team at the coop*

son and said that she may not have attended business school but her management skills are no less than the business school graduates. She has adopted technology, brand and value addition to products and she talks about what work and what does not for her co-operative business. These are the skills taught in the business schools.

During information sharing session at the coop, some of the visitor trainees observed that there are only a few members are active and other members of the coop are either not present or not participating in the meeting. The members' participation is important for success of the co-operative business.

Next day, discussion on the observation made during the study visit was held followed by experience sharing by other participants who are running co-operative business.

The resource persons moderated the discussions and gave their inputs/ observations from time to time.

All the participants actively participated. They made number of observations on the cooperative so visited such as, more active participation by all members and placing a 'display board' indicating members name and their participation in various activities including the services availed by them such as loans etc. to bring transparency in the dealings of the coop.

The participants also discussed how to adopt technology, exploring better market and value addition, failure and successes etc. They also exchanged tips on how to handle various issues and develop their business.

A brief concluding session was held wherein Mr. Balu Iyer and Ms. Altantuya made closing remarks and a Certificate of Participation was handed over by Mr. Balu Iyer.



*Awarding of Certificate*

**UPCOMING EVENT:** ICA-AP Workshop on 'Enhancing Role of Women in Co-operative Business' will be held in September 2015 in Palestine.

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## Enhancing Role of Women in Co-operative Business



A group photo of the participants

### From the Editor

*In our quest to achieve gender equality in co-operatives, we wish to engage with all our members and arrived in Palestine to organise the workshop. This is a significant event and more so because the very first ICA program in Palestine was held for enhancing the role of women in coops.*

*Our members from Africa were also invited to participate and share experience. Women in Palestine are active and hopeful. Their zest for life is commendable. The report and article on the program will make an interesting and informative reading!*

– Savitri Singh

A three days workshop on 'Enhancing the role of women in co-operative business', co-hosted by ICA-AP and Economic and Social Development Centre of Palestine (ESDC) was held in Ramallah attended by 35 participants while 87 persons were present at the opening ceremony including Deputy Minister of Co-operatives of Palestine and representatives of various national and international organisations, co-operators and government officials representing 5 countries including Palestine.

Mr. Mahmoud Hussain the Chairman of ESDC welcomed the participants as host of the workshop. Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director of International Co-operative Alliance-Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) also extended a warm welcome to all in his introductory speech and he talked about the activity and role of Alliance in promoting participation of women in the co-operative business. Mr. Naser Qatami, Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Labour of Palestine delivered inaugural speech. Mr. Mohammed Khalid, Country Director, WE Effect in Palestine, and Mr. Mounir Kleibo, ILO Representative in Palestine also made speeches at the opening and talked about the work of their respective organisation in advancement of women in the country.

Mrs. Savitri Singh, Advisor, Gender Programs and Communications, ICA-AP opened the business session by her presentation on "Gender Integration and Situation of Women in Co-operatives in Asia and Pacific". She shared information on ICA initiatives on gender main streaming, providing input to create

enabling environment for inclusion of women and enhancing their participation for social cohesion.

Mr. Abed Yassien, Programme Director of ESDC made a presentation on the theme of the workshop focused on "Women's Co-operatives Impacting Livelihoods in Palestine". Mr. Abed also facilitated the workshop discussion.

Ms. Hanan El Youseff, the Strategy Manger in ICA, presented the international perspective about ICA Blueprint and Gender Equality in Co-operatives. Mr. Mounir Kleibo presented ILO initiatives and program in Palestine to achieve gender equality.

The workshop witnessed active participation and discussion among participants. They were curious to know more and gain much with business activities of the participating co-operatives and intensive discussions took place on the presentations made at the information sharing session. The participants asked questions and expressed opinions after each business session.

The three international participants from Philippines and Kenya shared information about business of their respective organizations. Ms. Veejay Literal talked about progress on gender and

These learning experience and recommendation are summarized in the following points:

- The local participants were impressed with the progress made by co-operatives in Philippines and in Kenya in terms of women empowerment and providing enabling environment for enhancing their participation.
- In Palestine, women's participation in co-operatives is negligible due to absence of enabling legal and policy environment as well as struggle for credit, training and skill development.
- Women have lot of potential to run successful co-operative business and the three co-operatives are the live examples. The government and co-operative development organisations have to take notice and take the process to next level.
- The participants realized the importance of exchange of experience and exposure to good business practices in other countries and recommended for facilities to visit other coops to learn from their work such as the experience from Kenyan credit co-operative union (KUSCCO) and coop college of



*Discussion in progress at the closing session*

development and the Philippine experience of gender equality as practiced in NATCCO Network.

Ms. Easther N. Gicheru introduced the Kenyan Co-operative movement, Co-operative University College of Kenya and women's participation in co-operatives. Ms. Jacqueline introduced her organisation, the Kenya Union of Saving and Credit Co-operatives and how women are benefitted by easy availability of credit.

A 'feed-back'/evaluation session was held on the last day after the visits to three co-operatives in different parts of Palestine. The participants were encouraged to express their observations and suggestions. They were asked to write the key learning experiences in coloured cards, as well as the recommendations for enhancing role of women in co-operative business.

Kenya. They expected more collaboration and engagement with ICA in this regard.

There is also need for research and studies on co-operatives to identify problems and find out solutions. The participants also strongly recommended that the concerned government departments in Palestine should focus on raising awareness about co-operatives among youth through educational institutions, opening of coop training centers/college and most importantly, establishing a coop bank to facilitate credit to women entrepreneurs.

Mr. Abed Yassien moderated the closing session. Mrs. Savitri Singh made a brief report on 3 days program and talked about the co-operative movement in Asia-Pacific as well as in Palestine. The workshop was closed with her concluding remarks.

# Against all odds – Women Co-operatives in Palestine

by Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP

There was muted excitement in the group as we set out to visit women co-operatives in the West Bank of Palestine. The previous day at the workshop on Enhancing Role of Women in Co-operative Business organized by the International Co-operative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP), We Effect and the Economic and Social Development Center of Palestine (ESDC), we were given statistics on women that were not wholly optimistic. While women comprised 49.2% of total population in Palestine their number in the labor force was just 19.4%. The unemployment among women was 38.9% and that among women with 13 years of education or more was 48.7%. Further the socio-economic impact study of co-operatives in the West Bank did not also give much to go with, "Still much more is to be done, since women share in co-operatives general assemblies is merely 15%, much less in administrative committees, and only 16% of co-operatives are women co-operatives. Despite the fact that 60% of the productive and reproductive activities are carried out by women, especially in rural areas."

The Supermarket run by Bezaria Co-operative earned a profit of \$133,030 last year, provided regular employment to 22 women and benefited 427 families. The origin of the co-operative was in its central location to three cities, Nablus, Jenin and Tulkrum. While they started as an unorganized group in 2005, through support from the government and ESDC, they organized their business, merged shops and grew their business. The co-operative now has 110 members, paid-up capital of \$62,900 and equity of \$192,000. It has been paying regular dividend to members and patronage benefits to the users.

According to Morhaffa, the Chairperson of the co-operative, who is also a board member of ESDC, "the co-operative provides women their own space outside of their homes. This is much needed given the situation in which we are. We hope to our own building in the near future to expand not only our business but also the psycho-social services, care for people with disabilities and rent the space for community activities." Women from the neighboring towns visit Bezaria to learn and



*Meeting with members at Beita Co-operative*

The actual visit to women run co-operatives proved the numbers otherwise. Morhaffa from Bezaria Co-operative, Khetam Suleiman from Beita Co-operative and Fatima Awatlah from the Al Noemeh Co-operative showed the difference co-operatives were making in providing not only income and employment opportunities but also addressing social needs and providing leadership.

start their own co-operatives. A reflection of cooperation among co-operatives!

The entrepreneurial spirit of the women of Beita co-operative was evident as we entered their office. The members were busy packing olive oil soaps and proudly putting stickers with their brand name Palastinia.



*Products of Beita Co-operative*

According to Khetam Suleiman, "making soap was a less risky proposition. It is a traditional product, the soap making process is familiar and it gives more work opportunity for women." The other women in the group added, "the soap making in the initial days was in a traditional way – big size soap, without added ingredients and no packaging. We realized that in order to grow we needed to be more skilled, experiment with



*Building of the Al Noemeh Co-operative*

ingredients, focus on quality and make the packaging attractive. Brand Palastina was thus born." The co-operative in addition to direct selling also makes soaps for private sellers. They realize that selling directly in foreign markets will give them more profits and have started this in earnest – investing in new equipment, adding to the workforce, investing in attractive packaging and reaching out to newer markets.

The first thing one notices as one enters the Al Noemeh Co-operative for Rural Development are the rows of computers

lined against the wall. The co-operative provides training to women to become computer literate. This co-operative which started in 2000 also had a learning curve, investing in many activities before settling in on the co-operative shop. A unique service the co-operative provides its members is the opportunity to pay and load their electricity cards. The co-operative negotiates with the department to set up a card reader in their shop. Community members can come to the co-operative shop and reload their card rather than go to the city. 416 families benefit from this service and the co-operative estimates it has saved \$31,405 in terms of money and 3,744 hours in terms of time! According to the Fatima, the Chair, "we are the only co-operative that provides this service to its members and community. While the member waits for their card to reload they also purchase goods from the store. Our business has increased!"

According to UN Women, "women experience particular disadvantage in the occupied territories, where already-protective traditional attitudes are intensified by other daily restrictions. Male education is commonly prioritized, much of the limited paid work goes to men, and women are largely expected to live in the private sphere, focused on unpaid domestic tasks. Although the female literacy rate has improved in recent years, Palestine still lags on the global scale, with the numbers of illiterate women four times higher than those of men." In their report, Building Ties: Towards Integrated Strategic & Policies for Empowering Palestinian Women, they recommend strengthening co-operatives and women run collective ventures. Collective economic ventures, co-operatives and credit co-operatives are important ways to enable women to overcome the trap of the informal sector and small business competition. These co-operatives can provide male and female participants with the capabilities to improve their skills through combining experiences and providing training and markets for marketing activities. In addition, young producers and manufacturers can exert pressure on decision-makers through joint efforts. These recommendations also resonate with those in the ICA-ILO report, Advancing gender equality: The co-operative way. The recommendations include developing and implementing gender equality strategies, tools and resources more broadly to facilitate the equal participation of women throughout the co-operative movement; providing women in emerging and marginalized co-operatives with financial and technical support through co-operation among co-operatives; working with government and other partners to overcome cultural and structural barriers for women; gathering and sharing more information about best practices and lessons learned; and tracking equality indicators such as women's participation in governance, management, membership, asset ownership and income parity on an on-going basis to ensure accountability.

The workshop focused on Enhancing Role of Women in Co-operative business was to bring the spotlight on women run co-operatives in Palestine. It brought together the Ministry, International Development agencies and co-operatives from Palestine and outside together to discuss the issues and share experiences.

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## Capacity Building of Women Coop Members in India



*Dr. Batish, Mr. Miglani, Ms. Savitri Singh and Ms. Nisha Rana at the opening of the training program*

### **From the Editor**

*Greetings and best wishes for happiness and sustainability through co-operatives in the new year 2016!*

*With active co-operation of our members and stakeholders, we have been able to complete all our projects for taking ahead the mission of gender equality in cooperatives. Last year have been special as the "Resource Guide" was published and shared with members. The membership of the Women's Committee also increased and we have two male members as well.*

*The Tagaytay+20 will be held in February 2016, adding another feather to the cap of gender equality. Please join us with full strength to make it a success. See you in Philippines in February!*

*- Savitri Singh*

The Punjab Institute of Co-operative Training Ltd., (PICT) had organised a "Training Program Women Empowerment – a Co-operative Corridor" on 20th October 2015 at PICT training hall in Chandigarh, India. The participants of the training were women assistant registrars, co-operative inspectors and members/beneficiaries of co-operatives and self help groups. The objective of the program was:

- to orient and help the participants to have a good understanding of gender issues and self help concept to enable them to promote, nurture and facilitate self help groups.
- To enable the participants to improve the capacity and competence of stakeholders to organise sustainable self help groups in the state.

The training program started with a brief inaugural session.

Dr. S.K. Batish, Managing Director of PICT delivered a welcome address and gave introduction of the Institute and the programs conducted by the Institute. Mrs. Nisha Rana, Additional Registrar of Co-operative Societies gave an overview of Women Empowerment through co-operatives and self help groups in the state of Punjab. Mr. Arunjit Singh Miglani, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies of Punjab state was the Chief Guest at the inaugural ceremony. He inaugurated the program and delivered the keynote address. Mrs. Savitri Singh, Advisor Gender Program and Communication of International Co-operative Alliance, Asia Pacific (ICA-AP) was invited a special guest and resource person to



*Mr. Bhullar (top left) and Dr. Batish with the group of Coop Registrars and Inspectors*



*The ICA COOP brand*

conduct the training. She, in her address at the inaugural ceremony, gave an introduction of the ICA and its work for sustainable co-operative development in the Asia Pacific Region focussing on Indian Co-operative Movement.

The overall program was coordinated by Mr. APS Bhullar the faculty of PICT. He facilitated in overall implementation of the program including registration of the participants and setting the learning climate.

Mrs. Savitri Singh was the Master Trainer and Resource person to conduct a one day training program for the women participants. She conducted the training broadly covering socio-economic status of women in the world as well as in India and in Punjab in comparison to other Indian States, gender and gender issues and why coop business for women.

Since all the participants were involved into economic activities of production and selling, she focused the deliberation on

entrepreneurship development and income generation. She talked about the product cycle and the importance of branding, packaging and value addition to the products to compete in the open market.

While talking about the branding, she talked about the COOP brand and showed the example of ICA brand COOP and displayed a T-shirt bearing the mark COOP.

The women were very much keen to know about access to newer and bigger markets for their products.

Punjab is one of the agriculturally successful states of India and women are known to be strong and hard working. In spite of economic well being, the gender discrimination is rampant that limits women's mobility to explore new areas of livelihood or expand their existing business. However, the co-operative department is very much supportive toward women's economic endeavours.



*Participants with their food products and handicrafts*

Mrs. Savitri Singh shared stories from other coops in different countries and encouraged the participants to share their own stories with others since they have come from different parts of the state and were having this opportunity to meet and share with other fellow co-operators.

The women entrepreneurs are producing handicrafts and food

items and they have a stabilised local market but they need to venture out for sustainability and state is playing an important role of hand holding.

A couple of participants have access to markets in Delhi and they regularly participate in International Trade Fairs.

## Pakistan: Celebration of International Women's Day-2015



*Ms. Errum with Awarded rural women co-operators at the celebration*

The Karachi Co-operative Housing Societies Union Ltd of Pakistan is an active member of ICA. This Union has created a women wing to deal with overall participation of women in co-operatives and their capacity building to enable them to contribute in sustainable development of society at large. The women wing headed by Mrs Erum Shariff Bhajji, who is also a member, of ICA-AP Committee on Women, is very actively involved in empowerment of women and gender equality in cooperatives in Pakistan.

The Women Wing celebrated the International Women's Day on 8th March 2015 at the Union Co-operative Club to mark the solidarity among women and showcase their achievements. The main objective of this year's celebration was to acknowledge and recognise the contribution of women

belonging to two different strata of the society, the rural women from grassroots as well as the educated urban women. To have equilibrium among all the women belonging to cooperative family. The youth wing of the union was also involved in event planning and made good logistics arrangements for the celebration.

The program was inaugurated by women co-operators who are the farmers. Mrs Erum Shariff Bhajji delivered opening speech and awarded memento to these women participants in acknowledgement of their work in co-operative development. An exhibition of products made by the women co-operators was also held at this occasion. The others who were felicitated at the celebration were writers, educationist, judge of high court and poetess.

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## Upcoming Event

### **TAGAYTAY+20: Third Regional Conference on Status of Women in Co-operatives in Asia-Pacific**

The ICA-AP in collaboration with Co-operative movement of Philippines is organising the "Tagaytay +20" the third Regional Conference on Status of Women in Co-operatives in Asia-Pacific in Philippines from 9-11 February 2016.

The event will be held to review the situation 10 years after the second conference in 2006 and look ahead to see how gender mainstreaming can be further consolidated in co-operatives. The conference will also make recommendations to the 10th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference to be held in later part of the year 2016.

#### **VENUE OF THE CONFERENCE AND ACCOMODATION**

WIDUS, Hotel & Casino, Clark

#### **AIR PORT:**

Diosdado Macapagal Airport, Clark, Pampanga, Philippines

#### **Address:**

5400 Manuel A. Roxas Highway, Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga, Philippines 2023

Telephone Number : (+63 45) 499 1000

Trunkline : (+632) 584 409

#### **Special Room Rates on Single / Twin Occupancy**

**TARIFF:** Deluxe Room (Single/Twin) Php 4,500 or 100USD per night

Inclusions:

- Daily Buffet Breakfast
- Others (wifi access, bottled water, free use of gym and swimming pool)

**BOOKING:** It is advisable to have all booking reservations thru NATCCO so we may avail this Special Rate rather than the published rate which amounts to Php 9,000 per night. NATCCO has already reserved 40 rooms for the ICA-AP event for Feb. 8-12, 2015.

#### **NATCCO CONTACT FOR BOOKING:**

**Ms. Emelina M. Santos**

Membership Relation and Networking Head  
NATCCO

**Email:** [emsantos@natcco.coop](mailto:emsantos@natcco.coop)

# TAGAYTAY+20



International  
Co-operative  
Alliance  
Asia and Pacific

## Third Regional Conference

### on

## Status of Women in Cooperatives

### in Asia-Pacific

### 9-11, February 2016

### Philippines



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