



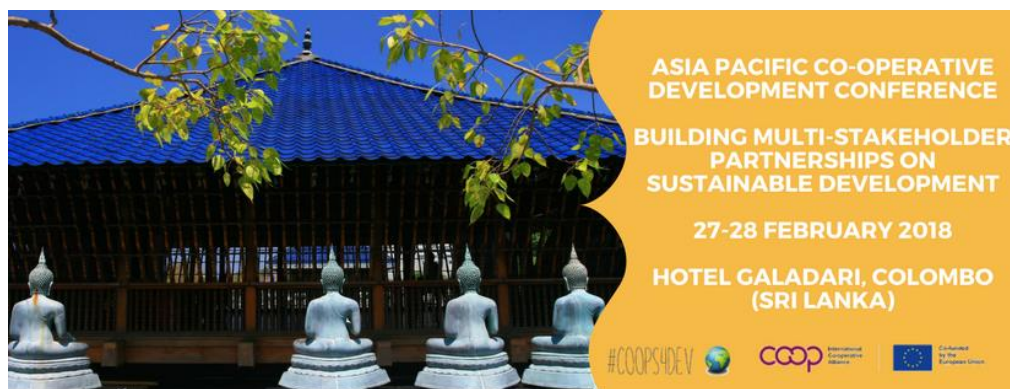
### Theme for the 2018 International Day of Co-operatives has been declared

The theme for the 2018 International Day of Co-operatives is "sustainable consumption and production of goods and services". It gives an opportunity for co-operatives to show how they run successful businesses while respecting our natural environment and the resources it offers. The theme was unveiled in the presence of the President of the International Co-operative Alliance, Ariel Guarco, at the event "Cooperatives: Developing people-focused strategies to end poverty". This was organized by the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC) in the framework of the 56th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD56) in New York.



Image courtesy: International Cooperative Alliance

### Asia-Pacific Co-operative Development Conference (APCDC): Building Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships on Sustainable Development



The Asia-Pacific Co-operative Development Conference will be organized on the theme Building Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships on Sustainable Development at Hotel Galadari, Colombo (Sri Lanka) from 27-28 Feb 2018. It is being co-organized by the International Co-operative Alliance - Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP), ICA-EU Partnership on Co-operatives in Development: People Centered Businesses in Action (#coops4dev), and the Sri Lankan co-operative movement led by the National Co-operative Council, Consumer Co-operative Federation, SANASA Federation, Kotikawatta Thrift & Credit Co-operative and National Institute of Co-operative Development.

The Conference is a strategic dialogue among stakeholders on development policy to create a structured exchange and partnerships among co-operatives and stakeholders in the pursuit of Sustainable Development. It will feature four thematic sessions on: Eradicating Poverty - Opportunity, Protection and Empowerment; Building a more Sustainable Food System - Hunger, Food Security and Livelihoods; Improving Access to Basic Goods & Services - Economic, Social and Cultural aspects; and Protecting the Environment - Concern for Community. There will be working sessions on the three Asia Pacific Strategic Development Priorities namely, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); Youth Inclusion and Exploring 'Work' and 'Ownership' Structures in Co-operatives.

The Conference promises to be a stimulating event with illustrious speakers under the four thematic sessions. Dr. Yubaraj Kathiwada, Former Chairman of Planning Commission of Nepal, and one of the three UNDP designated SDG champions for Asia and Pacific, will deliver the keynote address. Among the confirmed speakers are: Mr. Douglas Nanyakkara, Secretary of Sustainable Development and Wild Life, Sri Lanka (session on Eradicating Poverty); Mr. KDN Ranjith Asoka, Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Sri Lanka (session on Improving Access to Basic Goods & Services); Mr. Joseph Ridley, Registrar, Office of Registrar of Cooperatives and Business Development Services, Vanuatu (session on Protecting the Environment); and Mr. Willem Paulus, Business Advisor, AGRITERRA, Nepal (session on Building a more Sustainable Food System).

Additionally, the Asia Pacific Development Meeting (APDM) will be organized as part of the Conference in Sri Lanka, Colombo, in two legs on February 27 and 28, 2018. The objective of the meeting is to pull together the findings of the conference and its working sessions and provide a platform for development-stakeholders, especially ICA members from the Asia Pacific region to join efforts in building a secure, sustainable and resilient society by creating a network of like-minded representatives of organizations. The aim is to promote concerted action of co-operatives towards international development through collective action and research. The outcome expected from the APDM is to foster institutional development-partnership among ICA members and friends of the co-operative movement to identify development needs, prepare responses and implement solutions-based interventions and projects in the Asia Pacific region while complementing the global effort by the ICA on international development.

## 8th Kerala Co-operative Congress



Logo of the Co-operative Congress.

The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Kerala Co-operative Congress will be held in Kannur (Kerala, India) from February 10 to 12, 2018. The Co-operative Congress which takes place every five years will attract an impressive 3,000 delegates from different co-operative sectors. The Congress will be inaugurated on February 10 by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan, and Presided over by Hon'ble Minister for Co-operation Sri. Kadakampally Surendran.

A variety of academic and cultural events have been lined up as part of the Congress. The draft Kerala Co-operative Policy will also be presented. There will be eight paper presentations made during the National Seminar along with ten different sectoral seminars which will touch upon themes like Short-Term Credit, Long-Term Credit, Women's issues, Health and Education, Consumer and Marketing, Dairy, Industrial Co-operatives, Fisheries, Tourism and issues of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. A video prepared about co-operatives in Kerala will be launched, and there will be a colourful procession of 1,00,000 co-operators! The closing ceremony will be presided over by the Hon'ble Union Minister for Agriculture Shri. Radha Mohan Singh.

### ACTIVITIES' MAPPING OF ICA-AP

#### **Meeting with SEWA Cooperative Federation: Nurturing heritage crafts at SEWA-ni-Haveli**

The SEWA Cooperative Federation was promoted by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in 1992. The Federation envisages a business environment where women-run social businesses can efficiently compete with the traditional companies. Its vision is to continue facilitating the development of women artisans from rural and backward areas through marketing outlets, strategies and programs that will showcase their talent for creating vibrant arts and crafts to the world.



SEWA ni-Haveli

Sewa ni Haveli - a heritage house located at Dhalni Pol in Ahmedabad, India was restored a few years ago, and is now a center that helps preserve, nurture and promote heritage art forms and crafts. The Abodana cooperative, an all women-artisan's member of the SEWA Cooperative Federation, engages here in a variety of crafts such as block printing, patchwork and appliqué, tie and dye, jewellery making, beadwork, *badla* work, puppet making, crochet and hand embroidery, etc.



Women tailors at work creating beautiful garments.

They recently tied up with the National Institute of Design (NID), India to develop a Khadi Collection – choosing Khadi for its connection to Gandhian values, the backbone of SEWA's ideology, and also since it further empowers weavers along the value chain. The women artisans of Abodana worked with 12 NID students to create a collection of 25 designs. Each student chose a design theme, from the magnificent indigo of Kutchh to the intricate designs of the Taj. The designs have contemporary styles with embellishments of traditional crafts including block-printing, applique-work, *ajrakh*-printing, *mukesh*, embroidery and *aari*-work. With guidance from the NID students and master tailors, the women artisans realized the designs into beautiful garments over a period of three months.



NID students with the SEWA staff.

During this period, both the students and the artisans learnt about the history and the importance of the Khadi fabric in its true sense. The students on one hand learnt to work with

practical constraints such as the artisans' family responsibilities, variations in shade and texture of handwoven cloth, and the translation of contemporary designs in the hands of traditional artisans. This helped them become more classic in terms of the designs created, more realistic in planning timelines. The artisans also gained technical expertise and exposure from this experience. They learnt new techniques of stitching, contemporary styles, and a professional focus. From a design point of view, they learnt various technicalities in terms of shades and weaves of fabric, design nomenclature, etc.

This collection thus weds youthful and contemporary design to traditional crafts, in a fabric that lives & breathes 'India'. The collection is available for sale in Kalakruti, Federation's outlet in Ahmedabad, and can be ordered upon request at [info@sewafederation.org](mailto:info@sewafederation.org).

## **NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS**

### **Co-operative Insurance in Japan Fact book 2017**



The [fact book](#) published by the Japan Co-operative Insurance Association (JCIA) provides a picture of the business climate of co-operative insurers in Japan, as well as the developmental activities undertaken by JCIA's members. The fact book begins by describing Co-operative insurance as, 'a mutual aid system where the members share their premium to establish mutual assets, and the funds are paid out at times of unexpected contingencies, to compensate for the financial deficit and stabilize the lives of the members and their family in preparation for various risks that jeopardize our daily life such as death, hospitalization, house damage or traffic accidents.' Co-operative insurers provide a wide range of coverage to satisfy the needs of their members. Among them, the five typical products are; Fire insurance, Life insurance, Personal Accident Insurance, Automobile Insurance and Annuity Insurance.

JCIA was set up to 'promote sound development of the co-operative insurance businesses operated by co-operatives, thereby contributing to stabilizing the lives and improving the welfare of people engaged in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries as well as other employees and workers in local communities or small and medium-sized business owners.' The main activities of JCIA include research and studies, HRD and training, PR and publications, promotion of mutual exchange, international activities and consultations.

#### **Overview of the Cooperative Insurance Business**

The following table is a snapshot of the current fiscal situation of JCIA.

	FY2015	FY2016	Growth
Number of Member Societies	6,464	6,448	– 0.2%
Number of Members (in thousands)	77,821	78,810	1.3%
Number of Policies (in thousands)	145,927	145,634	– 0.2%
Amount Insured (in billions of Yen)	1,053,852	1,042,612	– 1.1%
Premium Income (in billions of Yen)	8,257	8,242	– 0.2%
Claims Paid (in billions of Yen)	4,412	4,432	0.4%
Total Assets (in billions of Yen)	63,940	66,094	3.4%

Image: from the JCIA Fact book 2017

## Fonterra releases its first Sustainability Report



Cover Page of the Report

Fonterra released its first Sustainability Report to share its environmental, social and economic performance. The report is compiled to global best practice using the Group Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework and has also been independently assured. Around one third of New Zealand's Top 100 companies use a framework like GRI but a smaller number than that have it independently assured. The result is an objective view of how Fonterra operates.

Sustainability is core to Fonterra's strategy and over the last year they have extended their strategic planning horizons considering longer-term global trends and prioritising the areas where they can contribute to the communities.

The report shows their success till now, and areas where they can do better, set out against their commitments and targets. Some findings include:

- New Zealand has among the lowest greenhouse gas emissions per litre of milk collected in the world (0.85 per kgCO<sub>2</sub>/kgFPCM).
- 95% of supplying farms in New Zealand are participating in nutrient management reporting and benchmarking.
- 98.4% of waterways on supplying farms in New Zealand are fenced to keep cows out of waterways.

- Fonterra's global Food and Nutrition Guidelines were endorsed by the New Zealand Nutrition Foundation.
- More than 140,000 Kiwi kids get a free 200ml serving of milk each school day. One university study published in 2017 showed significantly improved bone health in children who were part of the Milk for Schools programme compared to students who were not.

The link to their full report is [here](#).

### **Visit to the Sharjah Cooperative Society**

Submitted by Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur, Chairperson, ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation

The Sharjah Cooperative Society (SCS) was established in 1977, upholding the tradition of its citizens and cooperative mutualism in Sharjah. SCS is the first cooperative Institution established in the region according to the Khaleej Times, it is one of the first and oldest Cooperatives in the UAE.

Matters on promoting youth participation in co-operatives were discussed with the Honourable Mr. Majid Salim Al Jenaid, the General Manager of SCS, who agreed to help push for development of youth in co-operatives in Sharjah, and other parts of UAE, Asia etc.

Later I was given a tour of 2 branches of SCS which are located in Sharjah. Each branch was running under the standardized format provided by SCS. Each branch had its own unique selling point and its own branch name. Meeting with the branch managers was splendid, it helped me learn about how the markets work, and how consumer cooperatives are playing a role in the economic development of Sharjah.

### **KFUC holds its General Assembly and elects its new President**

Korea Federation of University Cooperatives (KFUC) held its General Assembly on December 19, 2017. The theme for the General assembly was "Building Cooperative Society with members, and through members."

The Student Committee's annual project, "what we want to do with University cooperative" was presented along with its Report. This is the result of Focus Group Interviews and a Survey where more than 1,000 students participated, from about 10 universities. The report contains students' opinions on business operations, and activities in six categories with 28 detailed action plans.

Among the six agenda items, KFUC held its presidential election as well. For the first time in the history of the Federation, a student president has been elected. Ms. Jin-ah Kim, in the past, has served as a Board member and as an auditor of Soongsil University; one of KFUC's members. She has also completed an internship program with KFUC. For KFUC, Ms. Kim's appointment is an opportunity to broaden students' involvement not only in programs but also in policy and decision-making processes. They believe that through her leadership, they

can build nationwide student networks and resolve issues of commercialization in universities.



Voting for the new President in process.



Ms. Jin-ah Kim, new President of KFUC

We, at ICA-AP, welcome this development and look forward to Ms. Kim paving the way for youth leadership in co-operatives.

### **ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ON CO-OPERATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT: PEOPLE CENTRED BUSINESSES IN ACTION**



International  
Co-operative  
Alliance



Co-funded  
by the  
European Union

The ICA-EU partnership, running from March 2016 to August 2020, will measure, evaluate and highlight the role of co-operatives and co-operative networks in development, and build institutional capacities of the Alliance and its members. The Partnership is officially titled "Co-operatives in Development: People Centred Businesses in Action", translated into the social media hashtag #Coops4Dev. The Partnership has 8 Result Areas and 33 Activity Streams for delivery by 5 units, one housed in each regional office and one at the coordination level in Brussels. You may read more about the Partnership [here](#).

### **ICA-EU Program Managers Meet in Brussels**



ICA-EU Program Managers at ICA HQ in Brussels, Belgium



Following their meeting in November during the ICA General Assembly, the three program managers representing Asia-Pacific, Americas and Africa met together with the International Development Director of the ICA, at the ICA HQ in Brussels on January 25 and 26, 2018. The meeting was organized to reflect on the report of external auditors who undertook the Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) of the project implementation of all regional offices in December and to explore possibilities of joint activities and harmonized implementation of work streams.

The project that was signed in March 2016 with the European Union is programmed until August 2020 and aims to strengthen the International Co-operative Alliance and its members with works focused on research, capacity building, networking, while positioning co-operatives as an important stakeholder in the international development process. The project will pilot its initiatives on Mapping co-operatives actors and Legal Framework Analysis, shortly, and will witness the Asia Pacific Co-operative Development Conference and Meeting in Colombo as immediate activities. The Asia Pacific Unit of the project would like to extend its deepest gratitude to its partners - the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), Nepal Agricultural Coop Central Federation (NACCF), National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Coops (NAMAC), National Confederation of Coops Inc. (NATCCO), Sri Lanka Consumer Cooperative Societies Federation (COOPFED), Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA) and Economic & Social Development Center of Palestine (ESDC) for having given their time to the ROM auditor to help them monitor and review the progress of the partnership. Year 3 of the partnership will begin from March 1, 2018.

## **COMMUNICATIONS WATCH**

### **SPEAKING WITH DHUNDI CO-OPERATIVE: a tête-à-tête on co-ops**



Farmers who have benefitted from Dhundi.

Anand, the Gujarat town that gave India its dairy cooperative movement, has now spawned in village Dhundi, the world's first solar cooperative that produces Solar Power as a Remunerative Crop (SPaRC). When compared to other models promoting solar irrigation in India, the SPaRC model, which has successfully completed two years in operation, offers multiple benefits: control groundwater overexploitation, reduce the subsidy burden on

power distribution company (or DISCOM), curtail carbon footprint of agriculture, and help double farmer incomes! Below is an excerpt from our interview with Pravin Parmar, a founding member of the cooperative:

*Dhundi is now a global brand! What's the story behind the Sahkari Mandali (Co-operative)?*  
Dhundi Saur Urja Utpadak Sahakari Mandali (DSUUSM) was formed in June 2015 with 6 farmer members, supported by International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) to acquire solar irrigation pumps. These pumps were formed into a micro-grid which the cooperative was created to manage on behalf of members. Madhya Gujarat Vij Company Limited (MGVCL), the local power utility, connected this microgrid to its 11-kV line at a single metered point and offered the cooperative a 25-year solar power purchase contract. In return, the cooperative members surrendered, in writing, their right to apply for subsidized grid power for 25 years!

*That's an exceptional phenomenon! Was there evident need?*

Dhundi is a rare village in this part of the country, all 50 irrigation wells — except 1 — are mounted with diesel pumps. Land holdings here have up to 30 owners, living or dead, all of whom have to affix signatures to apply for electricity connections. Since this is not possible, we have given up on grid electricity for irrigation costing ₹0.60/unit and are resigned to using diesel pumps that deliver power at up to ₹16-20/unit, depending upon pumping head and efficiency. For us, therefore, solar pumps offering free daytime energy were Godsend!

*Indeed. But, how did the villagers react? Wasn't it difficult to get the founding members?*

Of course, it was! Since no one in Dhundi had any prior experience with solar irrigation pumps, we were initially quite apprehensive about solar pumps – would they work as well as diesel/electric pumps; how would the discharge differ at different times of the day and in different months of the year; how much time would the solar pumps need to irrigate a bigha of land; what would it take to keep the pumps in running condition; what would happen in case of a breakdown; will MGVCL actually pay us for the power we evacuate etc. As a result, we were not willing to contribute more than ₹5,000/kWp to capital investment.

However, what we knew pretty well, was about the merits of collective action! We were not about making big profits, but rather circulating the benefits back to member-owners, and these benefits rippling out to the broader community. Six of us, backed by the sense of cooperation and initial assistance from the research organisations, hence piloted this idea. Now that other farmers have seen that our solar pumps deliver 50 percent more water than diesel pumps of similar capacity, and that we get paid for surplus power sold to the grid, ten new members have come forward to join DSUUSM and contributed ₹25,000/kWp towards capital investment.



At the Dhundi office

*Incredible! Is there some kind of downside to this, what's the catch?*

(Laughs) Not really; DSUUSM has proved to be a boon for us! If not for it, the collapse of the tomato market would have left us much poorer. The major advantage diesel pump owners enjoyed was the ability to grow tomato which requires frequent watering. For a few years until 2014-15 winter, our farm incomes were dominated by the winter tomato crop which fetched very good prices for export to Pakistan. However, due to rising tensions, vegetable exports to Pakistan stopped all of a sudden; and tomato prices in Gujarat crashed in 2015-16 winter. Having suffered heavy losses, Dhundi farmers gave up on tomato and turned to rabi wheat in 2016-17, which fetched far lower income.

Thanks to the sale of irrigation and solar energy, and saving of diesel cost, members of our coop earned 46 percent higher net income in 2016-17 compared to 2015-16; and more than half of the members' farm income is derived from irrigation and energy sales. We have also benefited nearly 100 water buyers who would have paid ₹475,000 more for the irrigation we provided them, had they bought it from diesel pump owners. Researchers cite that our cooperative has made irrigation “environmentally benign”, saving some 21,000 kg of CO2 emissions. If that's not Concern for Community, what is?!

*So, has the pilot been successful?*

A cooperative is formed by joining together to accomplish a goal that cannot be done as well individually. Our cooperative is the only model of its kind with a fully working pilot in Dhundi. It is farmer-centric. It has no duality of ownership and management: farmers own solar panels, and our cooperative owns and manages the microgrid. Since farmers are full residual claimants, we have a stake in efficient management of solar generation and its use. Since power theft will directly reduce our incomes, we will control theft because being members of the same community, we are better placed to keep vigilance. To my understanding, that's a success story of democracy in action.

*Amazing! Finally, where do you see the cooperative heading from here?*

Being an innovative experiment, our cooperative has had over 500 visitors till date. These have included farmers and their groups from far away villages in Gujarat and other states like Maharashtra and Kerala. Secretaries from state and central government, dignitaries from foreign countries and international aid agencies have visited Dhundi to understand the benefits of our coop and how to replicate this model. Attending to visitors takes a lot of our time; but it is a matter of great pride for us members and the entire village community that our village is receiving so much attention. Several newspaper and magazine articles and television reports have also given much visibility to our cooperative. We are grateful to MGVCL, IWMI-Tata Program and the CCAFS program for making our cooperative a reality.

The cooperative has made our village 'climate smart'. Many such solar cooperatives can contribute greatly to our Prime Minister's vision of doubling farmer incomes by 2022. Twelve villagers of Manjhkuva village, also of Anand district, have agreed to form a co-operative. Solar panels will be installed next week and they are waiting for a green nod for the power purchase. When cooperatives are the means, the future is green!



### **February 2018**

- ICA-MAFF Training Follow-up visits to India and Lao PDR, February 11 to 13, 2018
- ICA-MAFF, JAPAN Training Course on “Fostering and Improving Management of Agricultural Cooperatives in Africa in FY-2017,” Malaysia and Japan: February 12 to March 29, 2018
- Asia Pacific Co-operative Development Conference & Meeting on Building Multi-stakeholder Partnerships on Sustainable Development, Sri Lanka, February 27-28, 2018

### **April 2018**

- Regional Board meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal; April 7 and 8, 2018
- Re-work, Re-imagine, Re-shape: Advancing women CEOs in co-operatives- Guiyang, Guizhou Province, China; April 17 to 19, 2018
- International Seminar on Worker Co-operatives and Hackathon - at international conference on Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work, Kozhikode (Kerala, India); April 29 to May 1, 2018

### **November 2018**

- 13th ICA-AP Regional Assembly and 10th Cooperative Forum, Tehran, Iran; November 26 to 30, 2018. Theme: Co-operatives Help Economies Become More Resilient and Sustainable.