

IN THIS EDITION

ARTICLES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS & MORE!

CO-OPERATIVES
BUILD A BETTER
WORLD

ICA-AP ACTIVITIES' MAPPING

Follow-up Guidance and Survey of Ex-participants of the ICA-JAPAN Training Courses to India

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan had chosen the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) to implement an umbrella Project on “Strengthening Capacity Building in Agriculture Sector in ASEAN Countries (CB Project)” for three years starting from 2014. The project consisted of three training courses and a follow-up guidance and survey of ex-participants.

A three-member team consisting of Mr. Toru Nakashima, Manager, Training Department of IDACA; Ms. Hiroko Tayama, Program Coordinator of IDACA; and Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, Advisor, Membership of ICA-AP visited Delhi and Bangalore (India) from February 12th-17th, for the follow-up guidance and survey of ex-participants.



The Team visiting Delhi.

The purpose of the follow-up guidance and survey of ex-participants was to assess the impact of training of the past three ICA-MAFF training courses from 2014 to 2017. In particular, to see how Action Plans drafted by the participants were being implemented upon return from the training courses to India. The follow-up study was conducted through a questionnaire, exchange of views and ideas with the participants and visits to some of the co-operatives where the participants were working.

The team members visited the following organizations: (a) National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI); (b) National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Limited; (c) Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO); (d) The Palwal Cooperative Sugar Mills Limited; (e) Regional Institute of Cooperative Management (RICM); (f) Yachenahali Primary Agriculture Credit Cooperative Society Limited; and (g) Horticultural Producers Cooperative Marketing and Processing Society Limited (HOPCOMS).



The Bangalore leg of the visit.

Seven out of eight participants who attended the training courses from 2014 to 2017 attended the joint meeting on February 12th at NCUI in Delhi and on February 15th at RICM in Bangalore. Most of the participants had implemented their action plans. The implementation of action plans for some exceeded expectation. One participant could not implement her action plan due to financial constraints. The sponsoring organizations said the training courses were very useful and should be continued as there were significant improvements in the performance of participants after they had attended the training courses.

8th Kerala Co-operative Congress

The 8th Kerala Co-operative (Sahakarana) Congress was held in Kannur, Kerala from February 10th to 12th. The Congress with the slogan, 'Onward with diversity,' was meant to look at the state of co-operatives and formulate a forward looking co-operative policy to address needs in line with changing times.

Inaugurating the Congress, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan applauded the co-operative credit sector, which holds deposits of ₹1.5 lakh crore, for excelling in its performance. The sector was able to withstand the adverse impact of demonetization, by standing united, rallying members and cutting across political lines. He said that the proposed Kerala Cooperative Bank, which will convert the existing three-tier co-operative credit sector into a two-tier one will strengthen the sector. In a unique tradition, the leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala delivered the keynote address. The opening also saw a session in which Cooperation Ministers from the Southern States were in attendance.

Minister for Cooperation Kadakampally Surendran presented the draft of the co-operative policy for discussion to the 3,000 delegates gathered. The policy recognizes the ICA Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade and its five pillars – participation, sustainability, identity, legal framework and capital. The policy also identifies with the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically on Poverty Eradication and Zero Hunger, Food Security, Gender Equality, Decent



Oath-taking at the Cooperative Congress.

Work and Economic Growth, and Combating Climate Change. In addition to the formation of the Kerala Cooperative Bank, the policy recommendations include: increasing inflow of agriculture credits from 10% to 25%; the primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) continue to function as multi-service society for members and general public; recognize PACS as the official banker of Local Self-Government (LSG) and invest all funds of LSGs with Co-operative Banks and route all banking transactions through them; reorient the functioning of co-

operative marketing societies so as to undertake value addition of local cash crops; develop initiatives for women and encourage female labor force participation through co-operatives; develop a positive attitude among children about co-operative movement; develop hospital co-operative society to provide all types of health services at affordable rate; utilize the tourism co-operatives for providing tourism amenities and services; and promote ventures under Section 14A of KCS Act and Rules for creating employment opportunities by mobilizing preferential capital from members offering returns up to 49 percent of the net profit of that venture. On the final day (February 12th) of the event, detailed discussions were held on the recommendations under 10 sub-sectors for preparing developmental proposals.

On February 11th, seven seminars on different topics including Kerala co-operative movement from a national perspective, Central government's approach to the co-operative sector, co-operative education, training and research, technology-oriented and youth-friendly co-operative sector, new ideas and ventures in the co-operative sector, and strengthening human resources were presented.

The Congress ended with a colourful procession of 100,000 cooperators on February 12th. A decision taken at the Congress was to hold it every three years, instead of existing five years, to ensure periodical review of the co-operative policy. The next congress will be held in 2021.

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](#).

I. Asia-Pacific Co-operative Development Conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka



(L-R) Jessica Soto (We Effect, The Philippines), Mohd.Abdul Farzan Razzak (ILO, Sri Lanka), Sylvia Paraguya (NATCCO, The Philippines) and Anthony Taylor (BCCM, Australia) during the Panel on Improving Access to Basic Goods and Services

The Asia-Pacific Co-operative Development Conference (APCDC) was organized on the theme Building Multi- Stakeholder Partnerships on Sustainable Development at Hotel Galadari, Colombo (Sri Lanka) from 27-28 Feb 2018. It was 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 was a strategic dialogue among stakeholders on development policy, which was aimed to create structured exchange and development partnerships among co-operatives and stakeholders in the pursuit of Sustainable Development. It featured 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; Protecting the Environment: Concern for Community along with working sessions on the three Asia Pacific Strategic Development Priorities namely, Sustainable Development Goals; Youth Inclusion and Exploring ‘Work’ and ‘Ownership’ Structures in Co-operatives.

During the opening ceremony welcome addresses were delivered by Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, Mr. Lalith Peiris, Chairman, NCCSL, and Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, Vice Chairman, ICA-AP Board. Mr. Milinda Rajapaksa, Member, Colombo Municipal Council, Sri Lanka, Ms. Shainujaa Inpanathan, Member (Batticaloa), Sri Lanka Youth Parliament, and Hon. Mr. Daniar Imanaliev, Vice Minister of Economy, Kyrgyz Republic spoke at the ceremony as well. The opening address was delivered by Hon. Mr. Abdul Rishad Bathiudeen, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Sri Lanka.

The Panels saw presentations from the ICA-AP membership, international agencies like the ILO, Agriterra, We Effect, AFA, and government bodies like the Central Environment Authority and Department of Co-operatives of Sri Lanka. We were also fortunate to have Mr. S.L.

Naseer, the Commissioner of Co-operative Development and Registrar of Co-operative societies, Sri Lanka, as a speaker on the Panel on Increasing Access to Basic Goods and Services. The round-table sessions took place on both days and followed the format of a few strategic presentations followed by a group discussion on the emerging themes. The participants were easily able to make meaningful connections between the three strategic priorities and each of the themes of the Panel discussions. This event also saw the unveiling of Coop Radio, a unique initiative of the Sri Lanka co-operative movement, as well as the launching of the website of the newly formed Japanese Co-operative Alliance. The English version of the [website](#) as well as the goals of JCA were presented by Mr. Osamu Nakano, Board Member of the Japan Worker's Co-operative Union (JWCU).



The Coop Radio logo.



From the JCA website.

The two-day Conference closed with a concluding summary of the proceedings delivered by Mr. Balu Iyer, and was followed by an inspirational address given by Ms. Malkanthi Ekanayaka, Additional Secretary (Co-operatives), Ministry of Industry, Sri Lanka.

The presentations and photographs from the Conference will soon be made available on our website www.icaap.coop.

II. First Meeting of the Asia Pacific Multi-Stakeholders' Council

The Hanoi Declaration of the 10th Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference (APCMC) on Multi-Stakeholder Partnership in Realizing the SDGs that was held in April 2017, was officially launched on the 95th International Day of Co-operatives in July 2017. Part C. of the Declaration mandated the ICA-AP to form a Stakeholders' Council with sub regional representatives from Co-operatives, governments and international development agencies, to monitor and review the progress made by the stakeholders in implementing the action items of the Declaration, until the next APCMC scheduled in 2021. The Asia Pacific Co-operative Development Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka 2018, witnessed the first meeting of the council constituted by the ICA-AP Regional Director on February 28, 2018 at the Executive Lounge of Hotel Galadari, and was attended by representatives from Australia, Bhutan, China, Nepal, Palestine, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, ACCU and the UAE, in their capacities as members and observers.



Participants at the Stakeholder's Council meeting.

The main points of discussions were the nature and role of the council, recognition for co-operatives in the Voluntary National Reviews for the SDGs, advocacy for the co-operative model in regional groupings like ASEAN, GCC, SAARC and MSG countries. The council is being coordinated by Drs. Robby Tulus, Former RD, ICA-AP (1996-2002).

III. Informal Stakeholders Meeting on Worker Co-operative Network during the #APCDC2018, Colombo



Representational image. Photograph credit: Creative Commons

Taking forward the ICA-AP and CICOPA initiative to create a regional network of worker co-operatives, stakeholders representing labour, industrial and service co-operatives met for the first time on the side lines of the Asia Pacific Co-operative Development meeting on 28th February 2018. The meeting was attended by representatives of Union of Labour Service Co-operatives (The Philippines), Uralungul Labour Contract Co-operative Society (India), Japanese Worker Co-operative Union, BCCM (Australia), Mr. Hyungsik Eum (CICOPA) and Mr. Balu Iyer (ICA-AP). The main discussion points were to identify the need, scope of work and the potential for the worker co-operative network in the region. The meeting also discussed the upcoming Asia Pacific thematic research on 'Work and Ownership' that is being planned in collaboration with CICOPA, under the ICA-EU Partnership on Co-operatives in Development

and the upcoming Multi-Stakeholder conference on the Changing World of Work in Kerala in April 2018 (www.worldofwork.coop)

IV. ILO Officers Participate at the #APCD2018



The International Labour Organization was represented at the Asia Pacific Co-operative Development Conference by its officers from the Sri Lanka country office and Palestine. Read a piece published by the ILO here

http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/news/WCMS_618849/lang--en/index.html

Strengthening linkages with our members: Visit to IFFCO

As part of its ongoing engagement with co-operatives and development actors in the region, the Asia Pacific Unit of the ICA-EU Partnership met with Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd. (IFFCO) in New Delhi on 8-Jan to learn more about the organisation and its recent developments.

Mr. Tarun Bhargava [Dy. General Manger, Cooperative Relations] led the IFFCO delegation for the meeting. It was heartening to learn that IFFCO, the world's largest fertiliser cooperative, retained the seat of the Director on Global Board of the Alliance for the second time in a row, with the highest tally of 627 out of 696 votes. Expressing his delight over the win, Mr. Bhargava said, "We are extremely proud that IFFCO retains the coveted seat at ICA for the second time in a row. It is an honour that India's contribution towards strengthening the cooperative movement and farmer service has been recognised in the global market. We look forward to the future and helping the Alliance in serving co-operatives worldwide."

The AP-Unit of the ICA-EU Partnership was apprised on IFFCO YUVA; a joint venture of IFFCO eBazaar and Youth4work for the empowerment of rural Youth. IFFCO YUVA app is helping Youth to assess and identify their skills through online tests. The App aims to empower the Youth across India to develop skills through online and offline courses to make them employable and discoverable by Top Companies for Career Opportunities.

Recently, IFFCO also hosted a youth delegation of National Agricultural Co-operative Federation, Republic of Korea. The delegation visited Dhaula (Haryana, India) which is working towards becoming a smart village under a Government of India scheme. IFFCO has also ventured into providing e-commerce services to villages through its digital initiative, Indian Cooperative Digital Platform (ICDP). IFFCO has also moved up to 105th place from 155th in World Cooperative Monitor, which ranks global top-300 cooperatives. It was interesting to note how IFFCO's success has been credited to its adept use of the youth-women-technology nexus for co-operative development.

The Unit looks forward to work closely with IFFCO and its development arms to improve, among others, social inclusion and economic empowerment, areas in which co-operatives play a fundamental role.

POLICY WATCH

‘Trans’itioning Cooperative Binaries

Historically the roots of co-operatives in India can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, when farmers decided to ‘pool in their meagre resources for solving common problems related to credit, supplies of inputs and marketing of agricultural produce.’ Since then India has seen a flourish of co-operative societies in various sectors and they have formed part of government policies and Plans as concrete solutions for poverty alleviation. Additionally, it is now an established fact, that millions of women who are part of co-operatives now lead more dignified lives. They have a say in individual and household decision-making, they are financially independent and are also active catalysts in the growth and prosperity of their own families. Co-operatives are not silver bullets when it comes to women’s empowerment, but they are a step in the right direction.

However, for a long time as we celebrated the power of co-operatives to transform lives, we have overlooked the most obvious question, ‘Are co-operatives only helping gender binaries?’ The answer, unfortunately, is yes. Men and women form the success stories of co-operatives, but what about those who fall out of this gender division? The transgender population in India, according to the 2011 Census is approximately 4.9 lakhs. It is a well-known fact that trans people face prejudice, discrimination and violence, and therefore their actual presence in our population is understated. Their access to education is replete with barriers and ultimately most of them have to resort to begging, dancing at events like weddings and sex work to earn their livelihood.



Representational image of the transgender population. Photograph credit: Creative Commons

Fortunately this scenario is slowly changing. The Government of Kerala (India) during the 8th Kerala co-operative Congress, [announced](#) that it will be setting up co-operative societies for trans people. State Minister for Tourism and Co-operation Kadakampally Surendran said “financial assistance, including grants, would be given through these societies, which would help transgenders become self-sufficient.” This historic decision is in continuance of the Transgender Policy set up by the Kerala Government (incidentally the first in India), to end social stigma and facilitate a life of dignity for them.

Incidentally, aren't these the founding principles of any co-operative? A common socio-economic goal achieved by the help of peers through mutual trust and effort. Co-operatives that are run by transgenders have the potential to alleviate them from poverty, make them financially independent and radically transform the life choices they usually have. Currently there are independent initiatives across the country that seek to impart skills to the transgender community in order for them to find jobs. This includes training them in computer literacy, communicating in English as well as beautician courses etc. The reach of these initiatives is limited and therefore they impact only a small number of people. [Demonetisation](#) had crippled the livelihood avenues for this community. Crash crunch coupled with harassment while standing in long queues in front of banks and ATMs had forced many back into the circle of poverty they had struggled out of. Through co-operatives transgenders will be able to withstand the vagaries of the economy and safeguard their incomes, not to mention lead the lives they aspired for.

COMMUNICATIONS WATCH

A Tête-à-tête with Sébastien Chaillou, Chairperson Global Youth Network, ICA



Sébastien Chaillou

The ICA Global Assembly in Kuala Lumpur in 2017 (#KL2017) was a landmark global confluence of cooperators, that also marked the reconstitution of the Executive Committee of the Global Youth Network of the ICA. Sébastien Chaillou, former president of the French Multi-Stakeholder Co-operative, Solidarité Etudiante, that has its roots in the student mutual movement of France whose members (& former members) continue to explore novel ways of engaging youth in the French Co-operative movement. Sébastien, who recently turned 30, took over the ICA youth leadership from Ms. Gaby Buffa (Cooperar, Argentina) and will serve as a co-opted member of the ICA Board until 2021. Last month, ICA Asia and Pacific had a Tête-à-tête with this militant cooperativist in an attempt to understand the French student co-operative movement and his vision for the global integration of young people involved with the co-operative model!

ICA-AP: Bonjour, Sébastien! Thanks for having us here and agreeing to speak on a host of issues of importance to the youth movement in the ICA.

Sébastien Chaillou (SC): The pleasure is mine. I always look forward to engaging with young co-operators and 'am always eager to learn new stories, especially outside Europe. I miss the time I spent with Asia Pacific youth during the AP Co-operative Youth Summit in 2016 in Bali, Indonesia. It was a very interesting to note cases like Happy Green Co-operatives (Bhutan), Red Roots Artists Co-operative (The Philippines), Loomio Co-operative (New Zealand) and KOPINDO (Indonesia) among others.

ICA-AP: Thanks! It was nice to participate at the Summit in 2016. We fondly remember your call to young people to #STARTDOWN with their business ideas, instead of #STARTUP! For the sake of our readers, could you tell us a little bit about Solidarité Etudiante?

SC: Of course! It is France's first national level student owned and led co-operative that develops services for students on French campuses and creates an enabling environment for co-operative entrepreneurship. We find our presence in many universities across France and promote an economy Human service by encouraging young people to organize collectives to improve their lives by addressing their student needs and creates new solidarity spaces in universities to welcome new students and make them feel comfortable in the challenging years of higher education. The breakaway thinking from traditional consumerism and individualism lies at the core of this co-operative.

ICA-AP: Wow! Does that mean that students in France are well versed with the idea of co-operation? When did you start your tryst with co-operatives?

SC: You cannot say that yet. Though we can say that university students have been integrated in the co-operative movement and do not have to start from scratch in terms of understanding the co-operative model. Let me give you how I got involved with co-operatives. I think it was in 2010 that I discovered the co-operative movement at the Paris-Sorbonne University where I was studying to become a geographer. The student union, of which I was a part of, worked closely with the mutual healthcare co-operative that is owned and run by students. This student led health care mutual has its roots in the fragile times right after the second world war, when students were among the most vulnerable lots of the society. Securing healthcare & delivering mutual insurance, and creating a space for students of France to come together and feel as one, were some of the chief objectives of the this movement.

ICA-AP: So, did you actively engage in the working of Student health care and mutual cooperative? Could you share more on how the student co-operative movement evolved in 21st century France?

SC: Yes, I was very much involved in the student co-operative and retired a couple of years ago as the national President. A post that is now held by Romain Boix, whom you met at the ICA GA last year. In order to answer your question on the evolution of the young cooperators' movement for the new century: A few years back we started thinking why can't we use the co-operative model to address the common issues and challenges of students during their life at school, besides healthcare insurance, and we came up with the idea of establishing tiny spots and kiosks to sell sandwiches and coffee but wanted to operate it as a true co-operative with deepest commitment to the co-operative principles and ethics. Now of course I am out of that space as I have retired, but the group continues to experiment with co-operatives and gets up every time it fails. One such (successful) experiment has been the multi-stakeholder co-working space called ESS'PACE which is run, owned, managed by young people with history in the student health care and mutual movement, is established in support of the local government.

ICA-AP: Why do you want to experiment with new ideas when the student healthcare and mutual society is working fine?

SC: When I was studying, I was exposed to a quote by the famous Victor Hugo who said "you close a jail every time you open a school". We are young people educating to run, own and develop France, and the potential and the scope of the co-operative model needs to be fully understood and realized by the students so as to contribute to France's development in the future. Our main reasoning behind these experiments is that why should the students leave their needs to profiteering enterprise models to make billions of Euros out of the student's basic needs? It should be the students who should own their enterprises. Moreover, co-operatives teach young people the benefits of self-organization and 'am sure the developing young people's co-operative ecosystem in France will address the needs of students in and out of the campuses in the near future as well as take the French co-operative movement to the next level with new ideas and ownership structures.

ICA-AP: What are your immediate plans as Global Youth Representative of the ICA?

SC: Well, I would like to remain approachable to young people around the world, prepare a joint youth strategy with inputs from the young, collaborate with all regions to organize a relevant and effective global youth summit and of course, continue to agitate against ideas and opinions that refuse to change with time!

ICA-AP: Sébastien! It was a pleasure talking to you! Look forward to working with you!

SC: Thank you!

To Read our previous Tête-a-Tete, please click [here](#).



UPCOMING EVENTS!

March 2018

- ICA-EU Partnership – Annual Coordination Meeting of Teams, March 12-16, 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 Conference on Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work: Call for Papers + Expert Panels + Co-operative Hackathon, Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode, Kerala (India) April 29 – May 1, 2018. www.worldofwork.coop

July 2018

- International Day of Co-operatives, July 7, 2018

November 2018

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