

## ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

News from members, ICA-AP activities,  
ICA-EU Partnership update & more!

### 13th ICA-AP Regional Assembly, 10<sup>th</sup> Co-operative Forum, Tehran, Iran, November 26-30



During the 13<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly, 10<sup>th</sup> Co-operative Forum and related events were held from November 26-30, 2018 in Tehran, Iran. More than 300 delegates from across 18 countries attend the events. The Assembly approved/adopted several resolutions which included a declaration from the 10<sup>th</sup> Co-operative Forum, amendment to the change in name of Campus/University Committee to ICA-AP Committee on Educational Institutions and to the rules regarding co-option of Chair of ICA-AP Women Committee to the Regional Board.

The opening ceremony was attended by over 500 delegates from Iran and the region. Dr. Ali Larijani, Speaker of Parliament and Mr. Mohammad Shariatmadari, Minister of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare graced the Opening Ceremony. Mr. Farhad Dezhpasand, Minister of Economy, addressed the closing ceremony.

The theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Forum was, “Co-operatives Help Economies become more Resilient and Sustainable.” The role of co-operatives in building a resilient and sustainable society across the Asia-Pacific region was brought out through presentations and discussions. The Resolution adopted by the Regional Assembly acknowledges the diversity of experience and approaches in the Asia-Pacific region and calls on co-operatives to enhance efforts to collect and disseminate data, work with governments to collectively build an enabling environment, promote inclusive development, embrace technology and new emerging areas, strengthen capacities of co-operatives, and build mutually beneficial and sustainable partnership with State-actors, especially in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We would like to thank Mr. Bahman Abdollahi, President Iran Chamber of Cooperatives and his team and members from Iran for the wonderful arrangements made and their warm and generous hospitality!

More details to follow in the next newsletter.

## **ICA-AP's ACTIVITIES MAPPING**

### **Upcoming Workshop on Data Collection & Monitoring: Measuring Progress on Gender Equality in Co-operatives**

The ICA-AP Committee on Women in collaboration with the Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union and ANGKASA, Malaysia will host a workshop on Data Collection and Monitoring for Co-operatives on December 7-8 at Sunway Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. The backdrop to the workshop is the report, Gender is more than a Statistic, and the workshop on Advancing Women CEOs in Co-operatives in China. The report and the workshop called on the need to train members in the collection of gender-disaggregated data, regular monitoring and analysis, and systematic reporting.



Representative image. Image credit: oecd.org

Apexes and member co-operatives can use gender disaggregated data to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their work to mainstream gender in co-operatives, thereby expanding membership base and outreach. Having data helps to assess the development trends in women's leadership across the co-operative landscape - primary, provincial, and national federations, and apex organizations.

In order to be able to report on disaggregated data and performance, we need to know which data to collect and in what frequency; the targets and indicators; ways to track, interpret, and compare; and be able to feed the information back to improve performance. This requires commitment from the highest level of co-operatives; accountability and responsibility to integrate gender; allocating adequate resources and building capacity of staff to integrate gender and be able to measure, monitor and report.

The workshop will aim to achieve the following:

- To generate awareness on gender disaggregated data collection, analysis and use
- To share experience from the region in developing gender tracking systems
- To work towards developing a data collection and monitoring system
- To evolve ways to sensitize and orient leadership/management on issues of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment

The one-day workshop is expected to have presentations from ICA-AP members, FAO, the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Women, Child and Family Development, Government of Malaysia.

## **FAO Workshop to Strengthen National Capacities of Producer Organizations in the NENA Region (Oman - Lebanon – Sudan)**

The FAO organized a regional workshop on strengthening national capacities of producer organizations (POs) in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Region in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture in Lebanon on October 30 and 31.

The regional project aims to support the strengthening of POs through inclusive policies and programmes that reflect the needs of small-scale family farmers and contribute to their empowerment. It focuses on three countries in the NENA; Lebanon, Oman and Sudan with the objective to provide a basis for the formulation of a programme and national plans of action for developing capacities to strengthen POs and to improve their performance and their linkages with markets. The project is implemented under the umbrella of the RNE Regional Initiative on Small-scale Family Farming, within the framework of Strategic Programme 3 “Reducing Rural Poverty”.

The workshop was attended by a number of producer organizations and cooperatives and representatives from government and international agencies. Speaking at the opening, Mr. Alfredo Impiglia, Delivery Manager of the Small-scale Family Farming Initiative in the NENA Region said, “Producers’ organizations and cooperatives have a history of alleviating poverty. The cooperative model has proved to be resilient in times of crisis. This is because cooperatives can provide employment opportunities, security, protection, voice and representation when effectively organized and sufficiently empowered.”



The workshop provided the International Cooperative Alliance Asia-Pacific the opportunity to know more about POs and co-operatives in the region. Similar to the rest of Asia, agriculture is still the mainstay livelihood of people and there is need to update laws, facilitate support, develop producer-consumer linkage, and engage public. We hope to engage more with the FAO and co-operatives in the region.

## **NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS**

### **Celebrating the 65th All-India Co-operative Week**

The 65<sup>th</sup> All-India Co-operative Week was celebrated between November 14-20 across India. The theme for this year’s co-operative week was ‘Inclusive growth and good governance through co-

operatives for rural prosperity'. The National Co-operative Union of India (NCUI) organised an opening seminar to the co-operative week. The Seminar began with an opening message delivered by Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, President of NCUI & Vice-President of ICA-AP.

Dr. Yadav said that farmer welfare is intrinsically linked to a country's economic growth. Co-operatives have played a crucial role in the development of the agricultural sector. Co-operatives can address farmer distress and help stem the suicide rate amongst farmers. Co-operative should work together to help struggling co-operative societies. Dr. Yadav further stressed that women and youth need to be mainstreamed further into the co-operative movement. A strong national co-operative policy will be the ideal boost needed by the co-operative sector.

Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, stated that there are 1.2 billion members of co-operatives across the globe, such that 1 in every 6 persons is a co-operator. It is imperative for co-operatives to continue to innovate and strengthen themselves. Agriculture and consumer co-operatives in India should focus on setting up and bolstering value chains. Another important component for ensuring inclusiveness in the co-operative eco-system is the role of young people. Today young people are interested in start-ups. What better start-up exists than a co-operative? He said that for sustaining and making co-operatives more inclusive, we need to re-imagine how we include youth in co-operatives.

The Chief Guest of the Seminar was the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri. Radha Mohan Singh. He opined that primary agricultural co-operatives require good governance and upgradation in technology to stay competitive and resilient. He announced that his Ministry had just launched a new scheme to encourage co-operative start-ups and business ventures in agriculture and allied sectors. The 'Yuva Sahakar Co-operative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme' and will be implemented by the National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC). A fund of Rs. 1,000 crore has been allocated to this scheme and is aimed at co-operatives from the North-Eastern part of India and 'those registered and operating in 'aspirational districts' identified by think-tank Niti Aayog as well as co-operatives which have 100 per cent women and SC/ST members.'

### **ICA-AP pays tribute to Mr. Daniel R. Ang- a dedicated co-operator and leader**

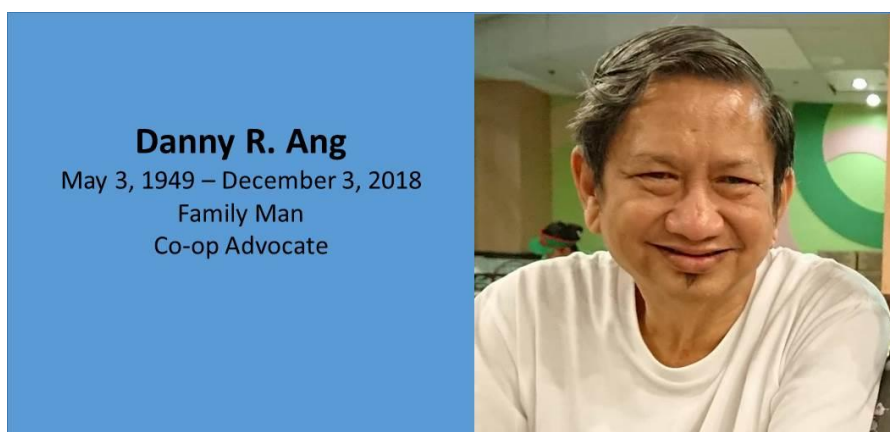


Image credit: NATCCO

Mr. Daniel Ang, beloved Co-operator from the Philippines and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Philippine Co-operative Centre (PCC), passed away on December 3. Mr. Ang brought with him more than 40 years of experience in co-operative development work. He began his co-operative journey in 1970 as a volunteer, rising from the ranks of Coop Officer to his current position, as CEO of the PCC, the apex co-operative of the movement. His legacy will live on through his dedicated work that has contributed to the vibrancy of the Philippine's co-operative movement. We wish to convey our deepest sympathies to Mr. Ang's family, friends and colleagues.

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



In March 2016, the ICA and the European Union signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (Europe Aid/150-053/C/ACT/Multi) to implement a multi-year and multi-country development programme aimed at benefitting and advancing co-operatives worldwide. The Partnership is officially titled "Co-operatives in Development: People Centred Businesses in Action", translated into the social media hashtag #Coops4Dev (co-operatives for development). 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. The AP unit has identified three strategic development priorities namely, participation of Co-operatives in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Youth Inclusion in Co-operatives, and Exploring Work and Ownership Structures in Co-operatives. The ICA-AP implements the programme in collaboration with Alliance members and in partnerships with other stakeholders such as governments, international development agencies, private sector and NGOs in the region. You may read more about the Partnership [here](#).

### **EU Ambassador attends the Aflatoun Financial Education Leaders' Congress, Quezon City, The Philippines (Submitted by Ms. Lasalette Gumban, Unit Head, Children & Youth Program, NATCCO)**

When NATCCO first introduced the Aflatoun program in the Philippines back in 2007, only 18 schools were open to the idea of integrating financial education in the subject areas and introducing the concept of child-friendly savings. Today, more than 1,400 schools are part of the Aflatoun network and the programs are actively implemented by 7,200 teachers across the country. The translation of the teachers' efforts can be seen in the financial behaviour of the children. Through the years, the small yet consistent savings of Aflatoun kids reached P153,000,000 (\$2.93 million) —a testament that children, especially the poor, if given the education and the access, can save and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

The Aflatoun Financial Education Leaders' Congress on October 11-12, 2018 at Microtel Hotel, Quezon City was attended by 90 thought leaders on social and financial education from the government, co-operatives, schools, international and national non-government organizations and civil society organizations. The Department of Education (DepEd), NATCCO's major partner in the implementation of the Aflatoun Program, presented the updates on the implementation of Financial Education Curriculum across Grade Levels, particularly on the Policy on the Integration of the Financial Education in the K-12 Curriculum. The updates were given by Jocelyn Andaya, Director IV of the Bureau of Curriculum Development and Aileen Supnad, Supervising Education Program Specialist. Mr. Brian Lariche, Aflatoun Board for Asia, shared about the global reach of Aflatoun and the strategic direction that hinges on advocacy, quality programs, and scaling-up. Alan Wang, Aflatoun Board and Executive Director of Be Better Education in China, shared how the program has created positive impact in the lives of the young children by developing their entrepreneurial skills and exposing them to fun activities that stimulate creativity and greater self-confidence.



(L-R) Ms. Sylvia Paraguya, CEO, NATCCO, Mr. Franz Jessen, EU Ambassador to the Philippines, and Mr. Brian Lariche, Board Member, Aflatoun International

NATCCO also recognizes the value of smart partnerships in furthering the goals of the program. The European Union in the Philippines is one organization that supports youth inclusion through its Framework Partnership Agreement signed with the International Co-operative Alliance. Ambassador Franz Jessen, Ambassador of the EU Delegation to the Philippines, graced the Congress and gave an inspiring message in the session, Youth, Co-operatives, and the ICA-EU Partnership: Prospects and Future Partnership for Coops in the Philippines. Ambassador Jessen shared about the EU's commitment to providing youth with more opportunities to have their voices heard and helping future leaders to emerge. He was excited to share that EU's focus will be strengthened and mainstreamed in all activities of future cooperation programs to build young people's capacities, strengthen their access to resources, link them to the private sector, and enhance their involvement in value chains. As the country is being challenged by issues on food security, the European Union is also convinced that resources should be invested in areas like agriculture, where the impact will be high especially in the rural areas.

The Congress presented a holistic and sustainable mechanism for private and public partnerships. As one of the best forms of social enterprises, co-ops promote equity, inclusion, and inclusive education-continuously stirring the spirit of innovation and creating stronger partnerships to develop more children and youth.

### **Update from the Research Stream under the ICA-EU Partnership**

The following research initiatives have been undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region within the partnership between the European Commission and ICA, to strengthen the co-operative movement and its capacity to promote international development.



## **Mapping**

The mapping research seeks to collect exhaustive, consistent and reliable data on the co-operative situation in every region and across sectors, applying a common methodology and displaying the results by country in a dynamic online database. The objective is to provide an accurate picture of the movement to both cooperators and external stakeholders, and use this to reinforce co-operatives' policy, capacity building, visibility and networking activities. To achieve this, the regional office had recently started this exercise on a pilot basis with ICA members in Iran and the Philippines to fill in an online questionnaire, in order to collect data on their organisation and their members. The final results are now under process and expected to be released on the coops4dev website in December 2018.

## **Legal Framework Analysis**

This research aims to provide co-operative organisations with concrete tools for their advocacy. The objectives are threefold: acquire general knowledge of the national legislation on co-operatives as well as of supranational cooperation legislation if existent; evaluate the national jurisdictions covered based on a scale of their "co-operative friendliness"; and provide recommendations for eventual renewal of the legal frameworks in place. This process is piloted by the regional office for the countries Kyrgyzstan and Vanuatu, using commonly agreed methodological tools. The national reports are now under review and expected to be released in December 2018.

## **Global Thematic Research on Youth**

The main goal of this research is to highlight how co-operatives can benefit the youth, and seek ways to enhance the inclusion, opportunities and empowerment offered by co-operatives to young people – especially by conveying suggestions stemming from the youth themselves. The regional office has completed the design and approval of qualitative instruments (surveys, interviews) at centralised level. The next step is application of these qualitative instruments to the targeted populations at decentralised level in India, Iran, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea. The submissions from the respondents in Iran are currently being processed.

## **Regional Thematic Research on Work and Ownership**

A thematic research on exploring Work and Ownership structures in co-operatives in the Asia-Pacific has been initiated to draw up the status of industrial and service co-operatives (ISC), and in the process map work-based co-operatives and ISCs in the region. This research will also highlight the legal environment these co-operatives operate in, as well as describe the various forms of prevailing co-operative ownership structures. The publication will be carried in a collaborative manner with contributions sought in the form of country/area specific reports authored by interested institutions and individuals. Partners from 11 countries in the region confirmed their participation and expressed their willingness to join the project. Among them, target types with brief information from 7 countries have been identified by partners and the research coordinators. The next stage of the research is to carry out a context analysis and survey on organisational models.

If you have any questions/concerns about any research component, Mr. Mohit Dave (mohit.dave@icaap.coop) in the regional office would be happy to provide you further information.

## **Reaping the rewards of the Asia Pacific Co-operative Youth Summit 2.0: Reflections from a young participant (Submitted by Ms. Yohana Tamara Y.; nickname Ara)**

The Keling Kumang Group (KKG) is a holding co-operative in West Borneo, Indonesia. It originally started as a Credit Union, but now has multiplied into a number of single-purpose co-operatives to help the poor in West Kalimantan meet their livelihood needs. On the invitation of ICA-AP, KKG sent me as a young representative to attend the Asia Pacific Co-operative Youth Summit 2.0. in Cebu, The Philippines, from 17 to 21 August 2018. LAMAC Multi Purposes Co-operative was the host for this international youth event. The conference was attended by around 140 youth from 16 countries from all over the world. It was truly a great event where the participants were taught many subjects both in a classroom setting as well as in the field. At the same time, youth participants were exposed to a host of rich cultures, especially the local culture in Cebu.

All the activities were inspiring. However, for me, there was one particular subject that caught my attention. It was “CA-CAO”.

I was one of the delegates who arrived late at the Hidden Valley Resort due to heavy traffic on the way to the venue. It was already 8 p.m. and I had not had any meal since early afternoon. After putting my luggage in my room, I went straight to the restaurant guided by a helpful staff of the organizing committee. I was welcomed by Ms. Raquel Choa, the Chocolate Queen from the Philippines; and Edu, Chairperson of the Philippine Cacao Industry Council from Region 7 and Executive of Ralfe Gourmet Casa de Cacao. Raquel served me and other delegates delicious food while sharing the knowledge about cacao - Indonesia is the third largest cacao producer in the world. Later during the Summit, participants were taught cacao grafting, which would produce cacao fruits that could be harvested within 16 to 18 months.

The knowledge that I gained during the Summit provided me with some excellent stories to be shared with co-operators back home in West Borneo, Indonesia. Based on the documentation and experiences gained during the Summit, I shared the results with KKG. Since KKG has been actively involved in farm-based activities, they were interested in inviting Raquel and the Chocolate Chamber team to Indonesia to share their knowledge. KKG believes that cacao could become a major commodity as a primary source of income for farmers who are members of the Keling Kumang Credit Union (KKCU). Up until now member-farmers of the KKCU are primarily engaged in rubber and palm oil production. However, the price of rubber and palm oil has been falling and has had a big impact on the income of members. By exploring a new commodity such as cacao, KKG felt that it could be a good solution for the members of the credit union to get another source of income to uplift their meagre livelihood.

Raquel and Team spent three full days in West Kalimantan. On the first day they visited a few cultural destinations in Sintang. The second day was a full-day workshop on cacao production, and the third day was a visit to a cacao plantation owned by a local cacao farmer.



Representative image of Ms. Raquel Choa. Image credit: One awesome planet.

Members of Keling Kumang were very enthusiastic when they heard the news about the cacao workshop. The quota for the cacao workshop was for only 50 participants, but due to high demand, KKG had to accommodate up to 80 participants. The Chairman of KKG, Mikael, and Acting Director/Manager, Hilarius Gimawan, and CEO of the KKCU, Valentinus, also took part in the workshop. The Chocolate Chamber team shared their vast knowledge of cacao starting from how one has to choose the best quality of seedlings, all the way to how good quality cacao products could be sold with decent profit margins. The cacao workshop had truly encouraged and motivated the farmers to start planting cacao instead of rubber and palm oil. The Chocolate Chamber team and KKG have



created a joint business strategy and action plan to help the members in the long term. As a representative to the youth summit, as well as the KKG, I wish to extend our hearty thanks to Mr. Balu Iyer and Mr. Robby Tulus who encouraged me to participate at the Asia Pacific Co-operative Youth Summit.

In addition to the rich technical cooperation on cacao as a result of the Youth Summit, the Summit itself has become a fruitful platform for myself to gain new knowledge and connect with my peers as young cooperators, as well as many co-operative leaders and activists. The cacao workshop in West Kalimantan is a real evidence as to how youth can actually implement the knowledge gained from attending international events, and implementing it in real situations among the grassroots communities.

## **COMMUNICATIONS WATCH**

### **A tête-à-tête with Ms. Bo Young OH; a young participant at the recently concluded ICA-AP Regional Co-operative Research Conference in Tehran, Iran.**



Ms. Bo Young OH

1. Hi, Ms. Bo Young Oh! Thank you for taking the time to speak to us. Can you give a brief introduction of yourself for our readers?

Hello, I am currently taking Master course in the Department of Management of Co-operatives at Sungkonghoe University; specifically, in Organization studies. My research focuses on organizational change, process approach and qualitative research. I would love to extend my field of research into the social and solidarity economy (SSE), community, regional research and gender. I am currently working on publication and translation of researches on Korean consumer co-operatives.

2. What drew you to the world of researching co-operatives?

I got interested in co-operatives while writing my graduate paper. While studying for my double majors in philosophy and management, I wrote a paper drawing the significance of 'co-operatives' and 'sharing economy' with the idea of modern Philosophy. Different from the typical major corporations, the member and community centered co-operative model, stimulated my curiosity because it is said to represent cooperation, solidarity and otherness rather than the capital, power and normality. However, looking at the various cases so far, I now feel that the co-operative model does not guarantee the superiority nor the mere benefits of co-operative values and principles. Rather, it builds the process of organizing and seeking the meaning of cooperation, solidarity and otherness within the discourse and discussion of organization. In this regard, I would continue to learn and study co-operatives as an organizing process.

3. Please share about the work done by CoopY with our readers?

I am also a member of CoopY, a researcher co-operative consisting of students and professors of Department of Co-operative Management at Sungkonghoe University. We conduct research, organize conferences and undertake consulting for co-operatives and social economy organizations. Speaking of Youth Co-operative Conference, we've held conferences every summer for youth since 2012. CoopY now carries out research projects on Fairtrade for the Seoul national government. I participate in this as a research assistant on cases from the French speaking region. We are now developing a team coaching education model based on the Mondragon Team Academy.

4. What were the highlights of your experiences from the ICA-AP Co-operative Research Conference recently held in Tehran, Iran?

The research conference was such a pleasant experience to learn not only about the current situation of Iran but also various cases about co-operatives from other countries. I was very impressed that in Iran, co-operative sectors are a central part for the development of the country. It would be very important to analyze how the ecosystem of public, private and the co-operative sector contribute to the development of the economy. It is always interesting to know and learn from various cases of co-operatives in other countries. I hope to see and discuss the case studies from the presentation in the future.

5. How would you suggest we can bring in more young people into the fold of co-operative research?

Actually, the very reason that I decided to make a presentation at the ICA-AP Research Conference was to network and meet other researchers in the co-operative sector. So, I would like to suggest in two parts to have more youth participate in such spaces: Networking and Financial support. To begin with, networking in terms of business or research field would be interesting. As ICA-AP research conference focuses more on case studies than theoretical background, it would also be interesting to have a joint workshop session or project research with youth employees and employers of co-operatives or members of co-operatives with youth researchers. For example, school co-operatives and co-operatives schools would have youth engaged who would love to share and get ideas from other cases. Financial support would also be important to encourage youth towards the research field. To cover their independent living and research, the financial aspect must be considered as an imperative to sustain and develop their interests.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### December 2018

- Meeting of the ICA-AP Committee on Women and Workshop on Data Collection and Monitoring, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, December 7-8, 2018
- Meeting of the ICA Committee on Consumer Cooperation for Asia and the Pacific, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, December 6, 2018
- Workshop on Future of Cooperative Business in the Digital World by ICA-AP, All-China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC), Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, December 9 to 12, 2018
- ACFSMC-ICA-AP Workshop on Capacity Building and Case Studies for Poverty Alleviation through Co-operatives, Haikou, China, December 10-15, 2018

#### January 2019

- Young Development Professional's Meet on SDGs, New Delhi, January 28-29
- Workshop on Strengthening Women's Co-operatives, New Delhi, January 31- February 1

#### February 2019

- Co-operative Development Meeting for Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Countries, Marrakech, Morocco, February 4-6
- ICA-Japan Training Course on Fostering and Improving Management of Agricultural Co-operatives, Japan, February 12 – March 29

#### April 2019

- Asia Pacific Co-operative Registrars' Forum on Promoting the Co-operative Enterprise Model to address challenges of the 21st Century, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, April 17 - 18