

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

ICA-AP ACTIVITIES

Report from the 10th Women's Forum, Tehran, Iran



A still of the audience listening to the proceedings of the Forum.

The 10th Women's Forum took place on November 27, 2018 at the IRIB International Conference Centre, Tehran, Iran. The Forum was attended by 44 participants from six countries, including members of various women's co-operatives in Iran, ICA-AP members, and representatives from the government, academia, and international agencies. The Forum was supported by the Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU) and Rah-e-Roshd Educational Complex; a pioneering co-operative working on school education, co-operative research and projects on women's empowerment in Iran.

The Forum was organized to understand the situation of resilience in relation to women's co-operatives, the issues, challenges and opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region. It provided a platform for the participants to

share information, exchange ideas, learn about good practices in co-operatives. The Forum was also to formulate ways to assist in strengthening resilience of women in co-operatives.

The presentations made during the day-long Forum showcased examples from the Asia-Pacific region to improve the resilience of women in co-operatives. The opening session highlighted work being carried out at the global, regional and national level to promote inclusion of women and resilience in co-operatives. Dr. Ariel Guarco in his message reiterated ICA's commitment to mainstream gender in all areas of co-operatives and to encourage formation of Gender Committees or similar spaces within the co-operative movement. Speaking for the region, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer said that the ICA-AP Committee on Women works on multiple fronts to strengthen resilience of women in co-operatives by mainstreaming gender, conducting trainings, organizing workshops on contemporary issues affecting women, and undertaking research. Ms. Om Devi Malla said that co-operatives in Nepal are working to take advantage of the provisions in their Constitution to empower women's participation in public life and increase representation in elected bodies. Dr. Ali Rabie, speaking for Iran said that co-operatives, being democratic business models, are the ideal medium to reduce inequalities and provide dignified livelihood for women. Dr. Susan Bastani, called on governments to constructively support women's co-operatives to enhance their resilience through allocation of funds and providing support for expansion of business and trade through favourable policies.

The panel discussion on, Bolstering preparedness and safeguarding women's interests, presented interesting examples from existing and emerging areas of interest for co-operatives. Ms. Diana Dovgan, made the case for social co-operatives which provide critical services to the community and include flexible scheduling which helps women maintain work-life balance; a concern that prevents many women from joining the workforce. Dr. Sifa Chiyoge providing examples from Africa said that it's been established that there is a strong link between participation of women in co-operatives and poverty reduction. For Dr. Arghavan Farzin Motamed, co-operatives are the key for economic resilience especially when we have multitude of problems; women can increase their social and economic resilience, especially in rural areas, through economic participation in co-operatives. Ms. Laleh Daraie, said that climate change affects women more adversely and called for support to projects that target women, children and young people and harmonizes relationships with their surroundings. The presentations from China, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal and Vietnam showcased country level examples to boost resilience.

The group work session was aimed at understanding the main concerns of women in the Iranian co-operative movement and the steps that could be taken to remedy the situation. The recommendations coming out included access to a platform where women could exchange experiences with an international audience; advocate with government to support social co-operatives and build capacity; and 'Coop Talks' series for women to share their success stories and inspire each other.

Report from the Workshop on Data Collection & Monitoring: Tracking Progress on Gender Equality in Co-operatives, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Mrs. Haslinda Sujak, CCM, Malaysia makes her presentation.

The Workshop on Data Collection and Monitoring: Tracking Progress on Gender Equality in Co-operatives was held on December 7 and 8 at the Sunway Resort and Spa, Kuala Lumpur. The workshop was supported by the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) and ANGKASA, the apex organization of the Malaysian National Cooperative Movement. It was attended by 30 participants from 10 countries and included members of the ICA-AP Women's Committee; representatives from Malaysian co-operatives; and from government, academia, and international agencies. The current workshop was organized to generate awareness on gender-disaggregated data collection, analysis and use; share experiences from the region in developing gender tracking systems; train members in the collection of gender-disaggregated data; and discuss ways to sensitize and orient leadership/management on issues of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

Over two-days during the Workshop, the participants heard the views of stakeholders and on-the-ground practical experiences from a range of speakers and also to discuss ways to improve data collection. The two studies conducted in the region, *Gender is more than a Statistic* (Azad, 2016) and the *Eliza Report* (Orr, 2017), highlighted not only the stark discrepancies in representation of women at the leadership level but also ways in which the situation could be bettered through training, sharing of best practices, work place policies, and sponsorship. Nepal Agriculture Central Cooperative Federation Limited (NACCFL) shared their experience in using the FAO data collection and monitoring system to track their work on increasing participation and representation of women at all levels of their Federation. The data is then analysed on a periodic basis to track progress of women in membership, staff and leadership positions. The FAO recognizes the crucial role played by co-operatives in the upliftment of women in agriculture co-operatives and is working to improve their visibility and representation. The MASS-SPECC study from Mindanao, The Philippines documented the contribution of co-operatives to the local economy, both in economic and non-economic terms. The Malaysian experience shed light on the ways the National Statistical Agencies and bodies responsible for co-operatives, the Cooperative College of Malaysia and the Malaysian Co-operative Societies Commission could work together to collect gender-disaggregated data in co-operatives. The presentations like those made by NACCFL, MASS-SPECC and the Statistics Division of the Government of Malaysia, highlighted the importance of having robust systems in place to collect gender-disaggregated data in order to, create gender-sensitive policies, track progress, and strengthen advocacy efforts towards holistically empowering women. The group work on day two provided participants the opportunity to offer feedback to improve the questionnaire utilized in the 2015 Study to collect gender-disaggregated data.

To read the full-length Report from the Workshop, please click [here](#).

Announcement

Upcoming 2nd ICA-AP Co-operative Registrars' Forum



ICA-AP in collaboration with the Vietnam Co-operative Alliance (VCA) will organize the 2nd Co-operative Registrars' Forum on Creating enabling legal frameworks and policies to promote sustainable development of co-operatives in the 21st century, from April 17-19, 2019 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The theme of the Forum will be, "Creating enabling legal framework and policies to promote sustainable development co-operatives in the 21st Century." The Forum will look at trends in the 21st Century and its impact on co-operatives; ascertain legislations and policies that affect co-operatives in relation to new and emerging areas for co-operatives, access to credit and microfinance, data in co-operatives and implementation of the SDGs. ICA-AP will present findings from the legal frame work analysis it has been conducting in a few countries. The Forum will develop concrete action items to enhance collaboration between government and the co-operative movement in addressing current socio-economic issues and working towards sustainable development.

Consumer Co-operative Store Study Visit 2019 - Mumbai, India

The ICA Committee on Consumer Cooperation for Asia and the Pacific (ICA-AP Consumer Committee) continues its work on Asian Consumer Co-operative research to explore the possibilities of co-operation between co-operatives in retail business.

The first visit of the year was to the financial capital of India, Mumbai, which has the most active consumer co-operatives in the country. The city with a population of 12 million living in an area of 600 sq km is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. The city attracts migrants from all over the country, who comprise 60% of the population. Modern supermarkets struggle for consumer patronage as their share is only 9%, when compared to 91% for the traditional "Baniya shops." Baniya shops are small retail stores (16 m² ~ 66 m²), which exist in every corner of the city, with a wide selection of products and convenience services. From rice to cosmetics, it is possible to purchase all kinds of merchandise from these stores, purchase on credit (regular customers) and get it delivered to the home. In this environment, with all its conveniences, the modern retailer is unable to compete with the Baniya shop.



At the Raigad Bazar premises.

Co-operatives in Maharashtra are governed like other Indian co-operatives both by the Federal Law (The Co-operative Societies Act, 1912) and State Law (for e.g. the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act, 1960). Usually, primary consumer co-operatives are governed by State Laws. The authority for Consumer Affairs is the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public. To be registered a co-operative must have at least 500 members.

The study visit to four co-operatives took place between 8th January to 12th January, 2019.

1. Sahakari Bhandar

Official name: The Colaba Central Co-op Consumers' Wholesale & Retail Stores Ltd.

Year of establishment: 1967

History: In 1962, the border disputes between China and India led to shortage of supplies. This triggered a campaign to start co-operative associations by the State Government as a solution to procure supplies. As a result, in the latter half of the 1960s, many co-operatives were established under the guidance of the State Government.

Share Capital: 2.2 million INR (approx. 31,500 USD)

Number of members: 3,000

The members include the middle class in Mumbai city such as civil servants. Apart from members, the cooperative issues "Store membership cards" to store users. 250,000 people are currently availing the "Store membership" which enables free membership fee and an additional discount of 1% when using the store.

Number of employees: 1,500 (including temporary workers)

Business: Retail (Mainly store operations and partial delivery operations)

Total Sales: Rs. 3.5 billion (approx. 49 million USD). It is the largest co-operative and the third largest retailer in the state of Maharashtra.

Stores and scale:

- Extra small (82-92 square meter): 2 Stores approx. 5,000 SKU
- Small (325-464 square meter): 9 Stores approx. 6,000 SKU
- Medium (650-836 square meter): 8 Stores approx. 6,500 SKU. The stores mentioned above carry the "Sahakari Bhandar" brand and enjoy a minimum of 2% discount on all products.
- Large (930- 1,860 square meter): 4 Stores approx. 6,700 SKU. The Large stores carry the "Smart Sahakari Bhandar" brand and enjoy a minimum of 6% discount on all products (from April 2018). 70% of the items are in the food category and the remaining are in the non-food category.



The PET bottle recycling machine at the premises of Sahakari Bhandar.

Social Contribution Activities:

The co-operative collects milk cartons and juice packs (tetra pak) and partners with regional NGOs to make various recycled items (i.e. notebooks, desks and chairs etc.). The recycled items are then provided to local schools. They have also set up PET bottle crushing machines which is a unique and interesting initiative. A coupon providing a discount of INR 1 coupon per bottle is generated when a PET bottle in the machine. It also carries out garbage collection drives at regional events (like marathons). The co-operative empowers people with disabilities (PWD) with 15% of the workforce comprising PWDs.

Contact Information:

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- Website/Social Media Presence <https://www.facebook.com/SahakariBhandar/>

2. Apna Bazar

Official Name: Mumbai Kamgar Madhyawarti Grahak Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit

Year of establishment: 1948

History: Local social activists and factory workers formed co-operatives to protect the interests and rights of working class after World War II. Initially, they dealt with clothing and medicines; opened grocery stores from 1967; and grew to a comprehensive supermarket, handling food and household items.

Share Capital: Rs. 22 million (approx. 314,000 USD)

Number of members: 9,383. The members include farmers, fishermen, workers, civil servants and in the town (belonging to the low to middle class).

Number of employees: 475 (including temporary workers)

Business: Retail (mainly store operations, partial delivery operations), Gas supply business (local Government contractor)

Total Sales: Rs. 1.14 billion (approx. 16 million USD)

Stores and Scale:

- Small (37-46 square meter): 4 Stores, approx. 3,000 SKU
- Medium (55- 92 square meter): 13 Stores, approx. 6,000 SKU
- Large (464-557 square meter): 6 Stores, approx. 6,800 SKU. 60% of the items are in the non-food category and the remaining are in the food category.
- Pharmacy Business: The co-operative has 4 Shops (3 Shops are part of larger stores, 1 is a stand-alone shop) 20,200 SKU. The members can avail a 10% discount from regular prices for pharmaceutical products.
- Gas distribution center: 1(in store)

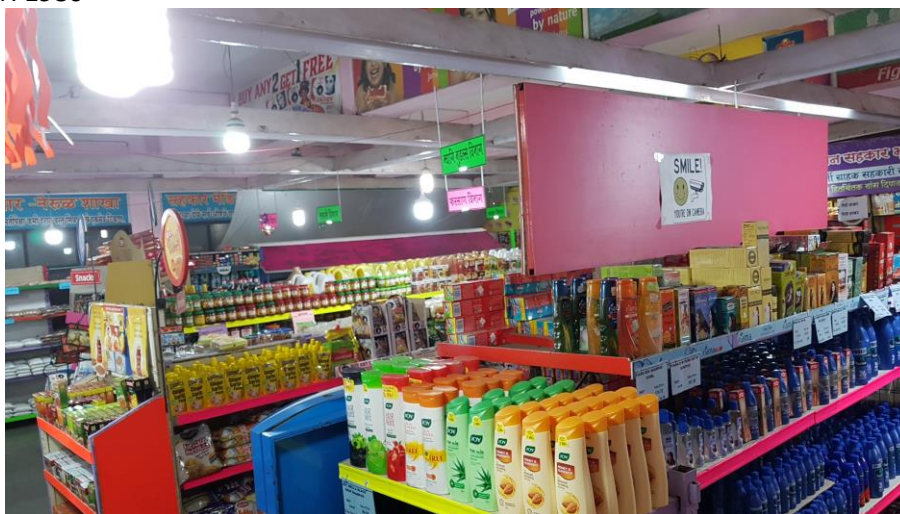
Contact Information:

- Tel + 91 2419 5200
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- Website/ Social media presence <http://www.apnabazar.co.in/>

3. Raigad Bazar

Official name: Shribag Sahakari Madhyavarty Grahak Mandal Ltd.

Established year: 1986



At the premises of the Shribag Sahakari Madhyavarty Grahak Mandal Ltd.

History: Regional politicians and their families established cooperative banks and then established some co-operatives, one of which is the Raigad Bazar. It is based in Alibaug (100 km east of Mumbai with a population of 50,000, a typical rural town with many fishermen and farmers.)

Number of members: 4,925

The members include farmers, fishermen, workers, civil servants and office goers in the town (belonging to the low to middle-class)

Business: Retail (mainly store operation, partial delivery operation), Gas supply business (Local Government contractor)

Total Sales: Rs. 300 million (approx. 4.2 million USD)

Stores and Scale:

- Medium (92-140 square meter): 7 Stores approx. 7,000 SKU. 90% of the items are in the food category with the remaining in the non-food category.
- Large (2,300 m²): 1 Store approx. 10,000 SKU. There is a 50-50 split in the categories of the items. The co-operative is the only retailer for electronic products (i.e. TVs, refrigerators, washing machines, etc.) in Alibaug. The members avail discounts on all products.
- Pharmacy: 2 shops (located in the store)
- Gas distribution center: 1 which covers almost all households in the Alibaug area.
- Social Contribution Activities
- Hiring women in town for packaging work of grains.

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4. Sahakar Bazar

Official name: Kalwa Madhywarti Grahak Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit

Established year: 1945

History: Farmers and workers (mainly tailors) who live in the suburbs of Mumbai (Navi Mumbai) and who wanted stable supplies of food formed co-operatives to counter sharp increases in prices because of shortage.

Share Capital: Rs. 8.1 million (approx. 114,108 USD)

Number of members: 7,221. The members include farmers, workers, employees etc. (belonging to the low to middle class)

Number of Employees: 165 (Including temporary workers)

Business: Retail(Store operation)

Total Sales: Rs. 33 million (approx. 464,886 USD)

Number of stores and scale:

- Stores : 10 Stores, approx. 6,000 SKU. 60% of the items are in the food category, while 40% are in the non-food category.
- Pharmacy: 2 shops 10,000 SKU
- Milk Sales Center: 1
- Social Contribution Activities - Members are assisted with a discount of 50% for an annual medical check-up. The co-operative also undertakes initiatives to protect the environment by planting trees in the community. Till now it has planted close to 200,000 trees.

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NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

JCCU wins the second Japan SDGs Award

The Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU) received the Deputy Chief of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters (Chief Cabinet Secretary) Prize at the second Japan SDGs Award. These awards have been set up by the Japanese government to recognize the unique and effective work undertaken by companies and organizations to realize the SDGs, which will also serve as catalysts for other organizations to undertake similar work.



JCCU receives the 2nd Japan SDGs award at the Prime ministers' office. (Photo credit: jccu.coop)

According to the update on the JCCU website, 'In this award, two points were evaluated. One is the development and supply of CO-OP Brand Products by adopting the concept of ethical consumption. Secondly, as a national federation of consumer co-ops, JCCU is supporting its member co-ops nationwide in their initiatives for achieving SDGs from both sides of business and activities.' JCCU has been involved in developmental activities for a long time, since it established 'The Ideal of Japanese Consumer Co-ops Movement for the 21st Century' in 1997. It further strengthened these efforts by adopting a 'Co-op Action Plan for SDGs' at their 68th General Assembly. You can read more about the Plan [here](#).

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](#).

Coopathon 2.0 at the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI)

The pilot edition of Coopathon in April 2018 saw 100+ young students from across the southern Indian states compete at the country's premier institute - Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode. Building on this innovative initiative, ICA-AP organized the second edition of Coopathon 2.0 on January 29 at the NCUI

headquarters, to source sustainable, innovative and technologically-enabled solutions to address various challenges in the co-operative sector. Coopathon 2.0 was thus intended to be a two-way street where young professionals/students were not only expected to deliver solutions to problems faced by co-operatives and but also to be made aware of the co-operative movement in general, so that its ultimate goal of 'Promoting Cooperative Entrepreneurship Among Youth' can be fulfilled. The event saw inspiring ideas and solutions compete for attractive prizes. Participants came from various Indian cities like Delhi, Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Patiala, Kundli, and Bangalore. They were mentored by some of the best minds from the fields of technology and co-operatives in India and abroad, to fine tune their ideas before their presentations in front of an expert jury.



Teams presenting their ideas to the jury.

Team Tech-Coop(s) bagged the first prize by coming up with an online platform intended to act as a bridge between co-operatives and private companies through which private companies can invest in co-operatives under the head of Corporate Social Responsibility. Team Techmites was the first runner up which attempted the problem given by Buldana Urban Coop Credit Society (BUCCS) and came up with a prototype to streamline warehouse transactions intended to maintain a database and save work-hours of different stakeholders. The 2nd Runner up, Team Saksham took a shot at the ICA-AP's problem statement for developing an online platform where young people who wish to form co-operatives will find mentors, funding agencies and knowledge repository required to take ahead the cooperative movement. Finally Team Go-Getters got an honorable mention for attempting Vasundhara Agri Horti Producer Co. Ltd's problem statement.

The next steps for ICA-AP are to devise ways to assist these teams in realizing the solutions and contribute to an eco-systems where young people are contributing to the visibility and sustainability of co-operatives.



The winning Teams pose with the mentors and ICA-AP staff.

The Young Development Professionals' Meeting (YDPM) marks its debut

ICA-AP in partnership with the ICA-EU Project and support from IFFCO, India organized the first Young Development Professionals' Meeting (YDPM) on January 30th at the Fertilizer Marketing Development Institute (FMDI), Gurugram, India. The YDPM was intended for Young Professionals in the Development Space and Students interested in pursuing careers in local, national and international development, to come together, get to know each other and the work they do, share aspirations and discover one of the most celebrated democratic and value based economic enterprise model; co-operatives! The Meeting witnessed an array of ethical entrepreneurs and community leaders from Asia Pacific share their stories, struggles and successes. The idea for YDPM stemmed from the belief that both Co-operatives and CSOs have sustainable development in their fabric and can learn from each other, and strengthen efforts to achieve the mandates under Agenda 2030, especially on youth related SDGs targets. The overarching goal was to bring together young professionals and orient them on the cooperative enterprise model and create space to work together. The broad objectives of the YDPM included exchanging ideas and fostering development partnerships among CSOs and co-operatives, generating awareness on the co-operative enterprise model, and creating joint action & research plans addressing community action to achieve SDGs.

The Meeting was planned along three main themes- Not Business As Usual (A session to introduce social enterprises and co-operatives formed by entrepreneurs and/or organisations who believe in doing business more inclusively), No More Add and Stir (A session focused on SDG 5, Gender Equality, highlighting the work undertaken by co-operatives and CSOs, and the gaps that remain in the scope of SDGs) and Climate Action Now! (A session intended to build a multilogue on how organisations are tackling climate-based challenges and contributing to a cleaner environment). The sessions saw stellar speakers representing upstanding work of co-operatives and non-profit organisations. The YDPM succeeded in highlighting the similarities in the development work undertaken by co-operatives and CSOs and points of potential synergies for the future. A detailed report based on the presentations will be shared on the ICA-AP website soon.



Mr. Rylan Peery, COLAB USA, during his presentation in Not Business As Usual.

Launch of the Around the World Project



A still from the trailer capturing the Coopérative Toudarte, Morocco. (Picture credit: AroundTheWorld Twitter handle)

The ICA-EU Partnership along with two prolific film-makers from Italy, Sara Vicari and Andrea Mancori, will work jointly on the “Around The World” project. The initiative is the brain-child of the association ‘aroundtheworld.coop’, and it aims at collecting and documenting stories of co-operatives around the world having contributed to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development by using creative and innovative methods. The final aim is to contribute to the visibility of the impact of the cooperative model on the improvement of people’s wellbeing, raise awareness on the role of collective action develop by co-operatives and share knowledge on methodologies for participatory action research with co-operatives. The film-makers will travel across different continents capturing inspiring examples of co-operatives through short video films and case studies. The trailer of the first co-operative to be covered by the Project is out and can be viewed [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 2019

- Co-operative Development Conference for Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Countries - Fostering Cooperative Partnerships to Enhance Collective Action on SDGs, Marrakech, Morocco, February 4-6
- ICA-MAFF Training Follow-up visits to Thailand and Philippines, February 11-23
- Result Oriented Monitoring of ICA-EU Project on Co-operatives in Development: People Centered Businesses in Action, February 12-14
- ICA-MAFF (Japan) Training Course on Fostering Leaders for Management and Development of Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia, Thailand and Japan, February 5- March 16

March 2019

- Annual Review Meeting of ICA-EU Project on Co-operatives in Development: People Centered Businesses in Action, Nairobi, Kenya, March 4-8
- Training on Global Co-operative Entrepreneurship Tool, Manchester UK, 18-21 March

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 – 19