

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Happy International Cooperative Day!



Dear Members,

Happy International Day of Cooperatives!

On July 6th we will mark the 97th International Cooperative Day and the 25th United Nations International Day of Cooperatives! The cooperative movement will be celebrating the #CoopsDay, under the theme COOPS 4 DECENT WORK.

At the 108th International Labour Conference on the occasion of the Centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the [‘ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019](#) was adopted. Thanks to the work done by ICA, member organizations and stakeholders, the Declaration recognizes cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy. The text states as follows: “The ILO must direct its efforts to (...) supporting the role of the private sector as a principal source of growth and job creation by promoting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises, as well as cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy in order to generate decent work, productive employment and improved living standards for all.”

The Centenary Conference also adopted an [unprecedented Convention and accompanying Recommendation](#) to combat violence and harassment in the world of work, as well as a Declaration charting the way towards a human-centred future of work. ICA has committed itself to “respect, promote, and act diligently to support the fundamental tenets of decent work” through the [ICA Declaration on Decent Work and Against Harassment](#).

In the Asia-Pacific region, ICA-AP and members are promoting decent work at a number of levels. At the C20 Summit which took place in April in Tokyo, the Japan Worker’s Cooperative Union was able to insert cooperatives in the policy packs. The policy paper on Labour, Business and Human Rights which provides recommendations on policies to support decent employment states, “Adoption by G20 members of systems of protection of youth employment in all its organizational forms (employment, self-employment, cooperative movements etc.) within the framework of workers’ rights and social security as guarantors of inclusion to the G20 goal of reducing the percentage of young people who are most at risk.”

The Study on Industrial and Service Cooperatives in the Asia-Pacific region carried out by ICA-AP and CICOPA, the International Organisation of the Industrial and Service Cooperatives, calls for the enactment of new legislations for Cooperatives in Industrial and Service Sectors (CIS) with a clear definition of CIS in line with international conventions and standards; facilitate start-ups of young cooperative entrepreneurs; introduce conducive policies for CIS - financing cooperative start-ups with worker members; and legislations to include social protection and rights at work with decent work should be at the centre.

Cooperatives, as people-centered enterprises and key development actors, have a strong role to play in creating decent jobs and empowering economically and socially local communities. Let us use the day to increase awareness on the work being done to promote decent work and underscore the contributions we are making to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 8: “promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.”

Please do share with us how you are celebrating #coopsday at the [2019 #CoopsDay interactive map](#).

ICA-AP ACTIVITIES

ICA-ACFSMC Regional Training Program on Development and Practices of Agricultural Cooperatives’ Services, Jinan, China, June 10-15

The Regional Training Program on Development and Practices of Agricultural Cooperatives’ Services brought together cooperatives from across Asia and Africa to focus on services provided by

agricultural cooperatives to their members. The workshop was inaugurated by Mr. Cai Zhenhong, Vice President of the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives.



Participants at the Regional Training Program in Jinan, China.

In Asia Pacific countries, agriculture continues to be the mainstay, in terms of livelihood. However, agriculture today stands at a crossroads. The consequence of population growth, climate change, environmental degradation, soil depletion and bio-diversity loss, land and water scarcity, increasing demand of food, rampant urbanization are leaving resource-poor small-scale farmers in dire straits. Farmers continue to be distressed on account of falling prices, difficulty in repaying loans, non-availability of credit (and insurance), limited access to markets, and a weakening of membership groups (that could provide moral and other forms of support). The aim of many governments in the region is to improve farmers' income. This can only happen when farmers are kept at the center and their needs looked at in totality. Youth account for a huge percentage of the most vulnerable and affected populations; yet in the development context they are seen as the beneficiaries rather than partners and are not too keen on traditional agriculture.

Agricultural cooperatives play an important role in the development of agriculture and are an integral part of a community's social structure. Cooperative agricultural production has kept up with global growth, but its share of retail and wholesale is declining. This calls for the need to add value and develop linkages with markets. The workshop looked at agricultural cooperative services not only in relation to input, purchase, storage, processing, sale, and finance; but also at Comprehensive Land Trust, application of agro-processing technology, use of big data and ecommerce, and practices across the participating countries.

The lessons coming out of the workshop were that while cooperatives are contributing to the development of an agricultural production-base, and helping to strengthen farmers' household income, there is need to strengthen these by: building capacity of agriculture cooperatives (link producers and consumers, value addition, human resources); promoting trade both through the traditional route and new technologies; and providing a range of value-added services.

A visit to the Delhi HealthCare Cooperative Society in Delhi

On June 14, a team from ICA-AP visited the Delhi Healthcare Cooperative Limited to understand its working, functions, and future plans. The Bhajanpura Co-operative Urban Thrift and Credit Society, which has been in operation for 28 years, started the Healthcare cooperative in 2017 to meet the needs of its members. The team was welcomed by members of both cooperatives who comprise of teachers, doctors, bankers, and other public sector employees. It was interesting to see that while the members were above 60 years in age; the CEO was half their age, in his mid-30s. What was not diminished was their entrepreneurial spirit and their determination in starting the health cooperative after visiting one in the state of Kerala. Below is the analysis of the Delhi HealthCare Cooperative through the seven cooperative principles:



Presentation about the Delhi HealthCare Cooperative Society.

1. Voluntary and open membership: membership is open to individuals from the healthcare background only. The cooperative is exploring the Kerala (India) and Nepal healthcare models to include individuals from non-healthcare background as well.
2. Democratic member control: The cooperative has been recently registered; the frequency and transparency of elections is to be ascertained.
3. Member economic participation: Donations from individuals and the parent cooperative, Bhajanpura Thrift and Credit Cooperative Limited.
4. Autonomy and Independence – Limited application of this principle was highlighted by suggesting that they face constraints in amending their bylaws which impacts their vision to include individuals from the non-healthcare background as members.
5. Education, Training, and information – The medical camps are used to educate people about cooperatives and health related issues.
6. Cooperation among cooperatives – The Bhajanpura Thrift and Credit Cooperative Limited provides funds to meet operational costs and space to house the Delhi Healthcare Cooperative.
7. Concern for community – The cooperative was started to address the rising costs of private medical treatment and the fading trust of people in medical professionals. The cooperative aims to make healthcare services available to all and not just to the ones who can afford it.



At the end of a fruitful visit to the Delhi healthcare cooperative!

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Teacher Talk: A novel initiative of the Rah-e-Roshd Cultural and Educational Cooperative (RCEC)

Introduction by Ms. Anahita Eslahpazir, CEO, RCEC

In Iran the oral tradition of story-telling is a legacy of our ancestors. Although texts exist as alternatives, for teachers to reach out to a diverse classroom, the spoken word is more effective. This was our primary motivation for starting 'Teacher Talk', where teachers are given the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges.

Teacher Talk will help diffuse teaching experiences, unveil treasured learnings unknown to fellow teachers, stimulate new ideas while underlining mistakes that are elusive to routine consciousness. Admittedly, as a teacher, each and every of us make a great deal of mistakes in our careers; however, sharing our experiences may serve as a step to prevent similar ones.



Ms. Eslahpazir at Teacher Talk

Teacher Talk is expected to be a step forward in promoting empathy, perseverance, courage, and cooperation among teachers. Today, human beings are bogged down by the competitive and selfish attitudes prevalent in the education system, riddled with false values. Cooperation, transparency, and honesty should be the cornerstones of the education system and its administration. RCEC as part of her mission wants to promote a positive atmosphere where teachers come together and participate in a heart-to-heart talk about their failures, and how these can be turned into tools for success.

First edition of Teacher Talk

Teacher Talk has been inspired by the globally popular [Ted Talk](#) series which is a platform for showcasing short and powerful talks on important issues. A public call was made for teachers to submit their ideas for the talk, and a shortlist prepared. The first talk, titled 'Miracle of the Last Day', was delivered by a teacher from the primary school for boys. She had a student with disciplinary issues and she developed a positive solution by naming him the 'best student in class'. This encouraged the student to change his attitude without the teacher adopting punitive measures. The second, 'Miss Miss may I say?', was about the need to give students more avenues to express themselves. The third talk was a teacher who shared her initiative 'enjoy reading' which was introduced to inculcate the dying habit of reading amongst young people. The joy of learning through Origami was the topic of the fourth talk. The speaker, a teacher of mathematics, channeled his passion for the art form to make his lessons more interesting and attractive for his students. The last talk, 'Principal Mother', was about how the speaker juggled being a new mother and being appointed as the school principal. She shared her gratitude for the support extended by her colleagues.

RCEC believes that the education system can be improved in its entirety in a collaborative manner, staying true to its cooperative roots. Teacher Talk is a vital step in that direction.

ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

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 cooperatives worldwide. The Partnership is officially titled "Cooperatives in Development: People Centred Businesses in Action", translated into the social media hashtag #Coops4Dev (cooperatives 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 Cooperatives in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Youth Inclusion in Cooperatives, and Exploring Work and Ownership Structures in Cooperatives. The ICA-AP implements the programme in collaboration with ICA members and in partnership with other stakeholders such as governments, international development agencies, private sector and NGOs in the region. You may read more about the Partnership [here](#).

Building a world which leaves no one behind: European Development Days 2019

The 13th edition of European Development Days (EDD) took place in Brussels on June 18 and 19. Organised by the European Commission (EC), the EDD brings the development community together each year to share ideas and experiences in ways that inspire new partnerships and innovative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

Under the main thread of, 'Addressing inequalities: Building a world which leaves no one behind' the EDD 2019 agenda was framed around three major themes: *Why inequalities matter for sustainable development*, *Understanding the structural causes of inequalities* and *Working better together through more effective policies to address inequalities*. The event was attended by over 8,000 delegates, 5 heads of States, 30 Ministers, and other stakeholders in development, politics, diplomacy, and business. In his keynote address, EC President, Jean-Claude Juncker, maintained that "I have always believed that the European commitment to the world and in the world, should not be about charity. The era of charity is over. What we need is a partnership between equals that can provide and create mutual benefits."



Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker delivering the keynote during the opening ceremony of the EDD 2019.

Other speakers, including Her Majesty the Queen of Belgium, His Excellency, Carlos Fonseca, President, Republic of Cape Verde, His Excellency, Dr. Lotay Tshering, Prime Minister, Bhutan; all hailed the choice of the conference theme and tasked delegates to pursue meaningful deliberations that will help in addressing inequalities around the world.



Lyonchhen Dr. Lotay Tshering speaking at the EDD 2019.

The Asia-Pacific office of ICA was represented by Mr. Mohit Dave, Program Manager for the ICA-EU Partnership. He discussed with potential partners on the EC's collaborative [platform](#) for the international development community, where cooperative organisations could join the discussions, access resources and learn from peers. He interacted with [AVSI on the Aamal Project in Lebanon](#) which is focused on employment opportunities for refugees, with the help of cooperatives. He also had an opportunity to explore synergies in Timor Leste on a project supported by GIZ and Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), the national focal agency in international development cooperation.



At the Model Villages in Timor-Leste stand - successful application of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP).

Cooperatives Europe Development Platform's (CEDP) projects and the ongoing [#coops4dev](#) activities were showcased at [stand 7 in the EDD village](#). Participants were able to discover projects implemented by cooperatives worldwide and meet cooperators from the field, particularly through the CEDP projects WOPRE (We Effect), fighting for women's political representation in Kenya and S.P.R.IN.G (Legacoop), working at strengthening civil society organisation's participation for responsible and inclusive agriculture growth through the development of rural cooperatives in Iran. Among others, participants also had the opportunity to discover the [aroundtheworld.coop](#) documentaries, including Bhabishya Nirman Sana Kishan of Nepal. Mr. Dave also met with the CEDP representatives to discuss potential collaboration with ICA members in the Asia-Pacific region and develop a regional platform to promote cooperatives in international development.



Members of the CEDP Platform.

A participatory programme, EDD started in 2006 as a European Commission initiative and has been referred to as the “Davos of Development”. Please click here for a [short video](#) on this year’s highlights.

Coop Mic with Mr. Rajiv Khandelwal

Coop mic (or cooperative microphone) is ICA-AP’s endeavour to provide a platform for experts from within and outside the cooperative ecosystem to talk about topical issues and help spread awareness about the cooperative model. ‘Coop mic’ stems from the universal idea of an open-mic that has attracted people to come forward to voice their thoughts and opinions on various topics and themes, in an open and voluntary fashion. Previous speakers have included, Hon. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmal and Hon. Bob Loughman, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister (respectively) of Vanuatu; Ms. Alexandra Wilson, ICA Global Board member; Mr. Aditya Kriplani, Director of the movie, Tikli and Laxmi Bomb; Ms. Ishita Chaudhry, Founder and Managing Trustee of The YP Foundation; and Dr. Gopi Ghosh, Independent Consultant in Agriculture and Food Systems. Some of the videos from previous Coop Mics can be viewed on our Youtube channel [here](#).

The latest edition of Coop Mic was with Mr. Rajiv Khandelwal, Executive Director of Aajeevika Bureau, India. Aajeevika Bureau is a pioneering public service organization that provides services and solutions to vast numbers of rural migrant workers in urban centres. Its work ranges from skilling, legal aid, health care, financial services and destination support to vulnerable migrant workforce. The topic of the talk, ‘Decent and Dignified Work Demands Action Now!’, was in consonance with the theme of this year’s International Day of Cooperatives, i.e., Cooperatives for Decent Work.



Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP (left) and Mr. Rajiv Khandelwal

The focus of the talk was distress migration in India from rural to urban areas and the kinds of interventions being carried out by Aajeevika Bureau to provide decent work opportunities and dignified for migrant workers. The primary cause of distress migration are lopsided development policies which are driving thousands away from agriculture and towards unregulated, poorly protected and low value jobs. Such migration has long-lasting impact on the lived experiences, their cultural identities of workers and in their assimilation. Cities are hostile spaces for migrant workers and they have to leave them as and when their work is complete. In the cities the migrant workers don’t have access to shelter, proper drinking water, schools for their children, and other services for their basic survival. They are forced to enter these low value job markets like construction, head-load carrying, mining, brick making etc. They enter the workforce at 13-14 years of age, and due to the

physically strenuous nature of the jobs retire by the time they are 40; the prime working age for salaried people. The lack of portability of entitlements (safety nets and rations) is another major concern for these temporary migrant workers as this is not transferable from one state to another.

Many Civil Society Organisations are unable to help these migrant workers as they are work in their own defined silos of rural, urban, youth, farmer etc. and the concerns of these temporary workers often fall through the cracks. Aajeevika Bureau, established in 2004, started its work by issuing identity cards for migrant workers which also helped them track the number of people migrating each year. Among Aajeevika's programs are legal-aid to help workers facing wage disputes and exploitation at their work place; health to address work related ailments; and training young workers to access better jobs. The overall goal of Aajeevika is collectivisation and promotion of unions amongst workers, and to this end they have set up 25 unregistered but membership-based collectives and six labour unions.

This eye-opening talk was followed by an enthusiastic round of questions and answers. The full video of the talk will be available on our social media channels on July 6, the International Day of Cooperatives.

THE MEMBER BULLETIN



The Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), the apex body of cooperatives, represents 99% of the cooperatives in Singapore! One of their strategic interests is to increase engagement with young Singaporeans.



Catholic Junior College Co-operative Society, the oldest school-based cooperative in Singapore. Image credit: SNCF

The Campus and Youth Team of SNCF implements the Campus Strategic Plan to 'Educate (advocacy through the education industry and stakeholders), Explore (raise understanding of the co-op movement, values and principles), and Engage (active participation and support from stakeholders to be part of a co-op)' young people. The Team implements a combination of [programmes](#) and services to 'increase awareness of cooperatives amongst youth and develop sustainable cooperatives/coop clubs.' The SNCF Campus and Youth Team supports cooperatives run in various educational institutions at the primary, secondary and tertiary level. They support Coop clubs, which are extra-curricular activities, to strengthen the knowledge of students about cooperatives; provide students with first-hand experience of running a business based on cooperative values; learn business-development, leadership, and inter-personal skills; and inspire them to set-up cooperatives. Social entrepreneurship training is imparted, and platforms created for representatives from different campus cooperatives to talk with one another. Overseas coop exchange visits are arranged for high-caliber students to learn about the functioning of cooperatives in other countries.

The [SNCF Co-op Scholarship](#) has been set-up to attract bright and motivated undergraduate students to the cooperative fold. The scholarship, capped at four years, covers full tuition fees, and provides allowance for maintenance, accommodation and computer grant. Upon graduation, the Scholar is to be bonded to SNCF for a period of up to four years and may be deployed to work in cooperatives and related sectors. During the scholarship period, SNCF arranges for scholars to take on roles that provide exposure and learning opportunities and the chance to attend cooperative-related forums and seminars.

Through a comprehensive set of activities and programs, SNCF is cultivating a supportive ecosystem for campus cooperatives to grow and thrive.

SNCF contact information

Website: www.sncf.coop

Social media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

COOP NEWS

ICA-ILO Joint Conference on Cooperatives and the Future of Work

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the ILO headquarters in Geneva on June 24, 2019. The MoU signed by Ariel Guarco, President ICA and Guy Ryder, Director General ILO reiterates the commitment of the two organization to their 100 years of association. From its very beginning, the ILO has recognized cooperatives as an important tool to achieve its mission.



Dr. Ariel Guarco, President, ICA (left) and Mr. Guy Ryder, Director General, ILO (right) after the signing of the MoU. Image credit: ICA

Speaking on the occasion, President Guarco said, “ICA had to be here at the 100th anniversary celebrations of the ILO! We share common deep-seated values and commitment to a human centered approach with decent work at its core.” Director General Ryder in his keynote address said, “we are committed to carrying in our second century a human centered approach to future of work which resonates with cooperative values and principles and for a continued partnership with coops for sustainable development.” The conference was attended by representatives of governments, international agencies, ICA members and supporters.

Jangkeun Lee, Permanent Ambassador from the Republic of Korea and Dr. Ramin Behzad from the Islamic Republic of Iran representing their governments said that cooperatives are effective tools to solve issues in the labour market and address concerns around instability and inequality. There is the need for new forms of cooperative effective laws, and robust statistics. Wenyan Yang from UNDESA

in her presentation said, “Cooperatives as business enterprises with solidarity link well with the SDG agenda. We support coops by research (demonstrate evidence), capacity development (run business better) and advocate (gov create environment). Reema Nanavaty, from SEWA Federation and member on the ILO’s Commission on Future of Work stressed on the need for a worker centered approach with workers as owners of cooperatives and SSEs. Such enterprises have a core role due to their focus on trusteeship, their non-political nature, and emphasis on distribution of income and equality.

The second part of the ILO-ICA Joint Conference saw a presentation of the book “Cooperatives and the World of Work” (Routledge, 2019). The book is a culmination of four years of collaboration between the ILO, the ICA Committee on Cooperative Research and CICOPA. It brings up a wide array of issues and situations that illustrate the past collaboration and reflect on the future that the ILO, its constituents, and the cooperative movement will act upon.



Ms. Om Devi Malla (left) and Mr. Greg Wall (right).

ICA Global Board members, Ms. Om Devi Malla (Vice Chairperson, National Cooperative Federation of Nepal), and Mr. Greg Wall (CEO, Capricorn Society Limited, Australia) were presented with State honours in their respective countries for their vital contribution to the development of cooperatives! More details about this recognition can be read [here](#).



Mr. Roeland Monasch, CEO, Aflatoun International (left), and Dr. Sifa Chiyoge, Regional Director, ICA Africa after signing the MoU.
Image credit: ICA Africa

ICA Africa and Aflatoun International signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to empower children and young people with social, financial, and entrepreneurial skills across the African continent. More details about this partnership can be read [here](#).

Register for the global 
marque and a .COOP domain
at www.identity.coop



UPCOMING EVENTS

July 2019

- International Day of Cooperatives, July 6
- 3rd Training Course on 'Empowering women in business and management of agricultural cooperatives', Thailand & Japan, July 14- August 10
- Training Programs for Managers of Consumer Co-ops in Japan (Summer), Tokyo/Miyagi, Japan, July 15-28
- President Ariel Guarco visits Asia-Pacific countries, July 21 to August 1

August 2019

- Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Development of Grassroots Women's Cooperatives, Ahmedabad, India, August 8-9
- ICYC's International Day of Youth Webinar on 'Transforming education', August 12
- 3rd ICA-Japan Training Course on 'Fostering Agricultural Cooperatives to Build Food Value Chain', Japan, August 19- September 11
- ICA-AP Women Committee Workshop on Enhancing Gender Equality in Cooperative Businesses, New Delhi, India, August 20-22

September 2019

- SDG Seminar in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 4-5
- ICA-MAFF Follow-up Visit, Venue and Dates (tbc)
- Policy Forum on Development- Asia Regional Meeting, Kathmandu, Nepal, September 24-26
- ICA-AP NACF Joint Workshop on 'Agricultural Cooperative System in Korea', Seoul, Korea, September 24-27

October 2019

- ICA Global General Assembly, Kigali, Rwanda, October 14-17

November 2019

- ICA Regional Workshop for Managers on “Management of Consumer Co-ops”, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, November 3-7 (tbc)
- ICA-AP Regional Conference on Climate Action: SDG 13, Theme: Save the environment for future generation, Bangkok, Thailand, November 19-20
- Training Programs for Managers of Consumer Co-ops in Japan (Winter), Tokyo/Kobe, Japan, November 18- December 1
- Training of Trainers for Management Capacity Building of Women and Gender Integration in Co-operative Development (tbc).

December 2019

- ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference, Newcastle, Australia, December 12-14
- Second ICA-AP Forum on Development of Cooperatives in Pacific Islands, Newcastle, Australia, dates (tbc)