

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

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ANNOUNCEMENT

In remembrance

Dr. Jaya Arunachalam



Dr. Jaya Arunachalam. Image credit: Deccan Chronicle

Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, the Founder of the Working Women's Forum (WWF) and the Indian Cooperative Network for Women (ICNW), fondly known as 'Amma' (mother), passed away on June 29.

Dr. Arunachalam, a stalwart of the cooperative movement in India dedicated her life to uplifting millions of women out of poverty. She believed in leadership that cut across social identities and ensured women were equal stakeholders at work and home and had a say in determining their future.

She created a large network of micro finance units in the southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Jaya Arunachalam was conferred the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award, by the Government of India in 1987. She received the 'Stree Shakthi Puraskar' from the Government of Tamil Nadu in 2002 and the Jamnalal Bajaj Award in 2009 for her work towards the welfare of women and children. She received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Lueneburg (Germany) in 1999; the International Activist Award by the Glietsman Foundation, USA in 2003; the Global Leadership for Economic Development by Vital Voices, USA, in 2005; and the 12th Mandavelli Award from Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands in 2006. In 2008, Dr. Arunachalam joined former U.S. President Bill Clinton for a two-day meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative Asia Meet, Hong Kong to share the inspiring work undertaken by WWF and ICNW. Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited WWF during her visit to India in July 2011.

ICA President Ariel Guarco expressing his condolences to Dr. Nandini Azad (Dr. Arunachalam's daughter and Chairperson of the ICA-AP Committee on Women), said, "On behalf of ICA, I would like to offer your family and all the Indian worker cooperative women our sincere condolences. Dr. Arunachalam, a pioneer of the women's Self-Help Group movement helped the cooperative movement's development and contributed significantly to the advancement and empowerment of women in India and beyond."

Mr. Stephen Sallun

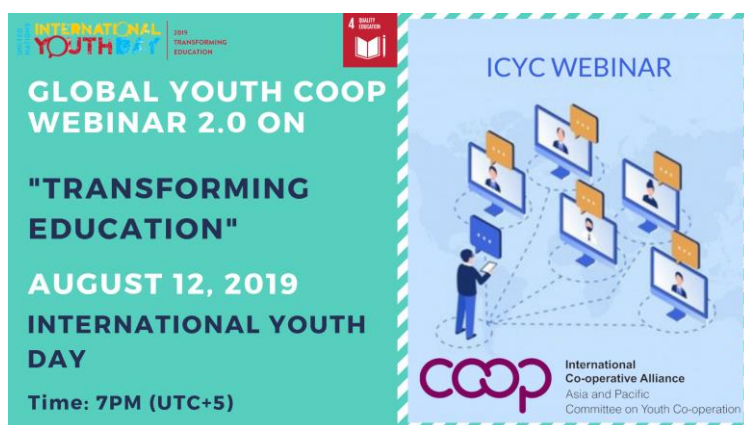


Mr. Stephen Sallun. Image credit: Facebook

Mr. Stephen Sallun, Registrar Office of Cooperative Societies (OCS), Papua New Guinea (PNG) passed away on July 15. Mr. Sallun supported the development of cooperatives in PNG and believed that cooperatives were key to driving PNG's agriculture-based economy, as most people depend on it for their livelihood. Mr. Sallun was instrumental in the OCS becoming a member of ICA in 2015.

In July 2017, Mr. Sallun was appointed by the Government of PNG as Registrar of Cooperative Societies Office within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Registrar is the custodian of the Cooperative Societies Act (amended 1985) and the position reports directly to the Minister for Commerce and Industry. He was the President of the University of PNG Executive Master's Program with over 350 members, on the College Board of Saint Joseph International Catholic College and a member of the PNG Think Tank Group. We would like to extend our sincere condolences to his family and cooperators in PNG and across the Pacific for their loss.

Registrations open for the ICYC Webinar on International Youth Day!



Banner for the ICYC Webinar.

The ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC) is organising its second global webinar on International Youth Day (IYD) on August 12 from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm (IST). The IYD is observed every year on 12th August based on the [United Nations Resolutions 54/120](#) passed in 1999. IYD's theme for this year focuses on 'Transforming Education' to highlight initiatives in making education inclusive and accessible for youth.

The Global Youth Webinar will have four young speakers from cooperatives and non-profit organizations and with a background in the education sector from Asia-Pacific, Africa, Americas and Europe. The speakers will share their experiences in the education sector and discuss the role of youth and cooperatives in transforming education.

[Register](#) and catch us live on August 12 on Zoom meetings (link will be shared soon). If you wish to know more about ICYC, please contact Ms. Simren Singh, Secretary, ICYC at simren.singh@icaap.coop and we will be more than happy to help you!

ICA-AP ACTIVITIES

ICA President Ariel Guarco's visit to Asia: A Photo essay

We're delighted to share that ICA President Ariel Guarco recently completed his official tour to six countries in Asia. The 12-day tour took him to Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, China, Korea and Japan. President Guarco met with ICA members, called on Ministers and representatives in charge of cooperatives, and visited cooperatives to gain first-hand understanding of the movement in these countries. This was his third visit to Asia since taking over as President in 2017. In April 2018, President Guarco joined [1,000 delegates at the Second Cooperative Congress of Nepal](#). In February 2019, he was in [India and Vietnam](#) as part of the High-Level Government of Argentina mission led by H.E. Mauricio Macri, President of Argentina.

The six countries in Asia are home to some of the oldest and most vibrant cooperative movements in the world. They have a long-standing history of contributing to the economic, social and political development of their countries. Cooperatives from Indonesia, Japan, Korea, and Singapore figure in the [World Cooperative Monitor](#) which ranks the Top 300 cooperatives in the world in terms of turnover and turnover/GDP per capita. Cooperatives in these countries are not only improving livelihoods and contributing to the GDP, but are also actively contributing to the attainment of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

President Guarco's expectations from the tour were to get a deeper insight of the cooperative movement in these countries, know first-hand the ground realities, hear the proposals and needs of members, and facilitate contact with relevant government bodies. We hope you enjoy the photo essay we have prepared capturing key moments from this tour!



Thailand

President Guarco at the offices of the Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperatives Limited, Thailand and the Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions. The seeds of the cooperative movement in Thailand were first sown by credit cooperatives as early as 1916. The thrift, credit and credit union cooperatives in Thailand constitute 30% of the cooperative sector in Thailand.



Singapore

NTUC Health Co-operative CEO Ms. Chan Su Yee (centre in blue) receives a token of appreciation from President Guarco. NTUC Health Co-operative, one of Singapore's largest eldercare service providers, offers a comprehensive and integrated suite of quality and affordable health and eldercare services: from senior day care, home care, nursing homes, rehabilitation, and active ageing, to community care services such as senior activity centres and support for vulnerable seniors.



Indonesia

President Guarco visits the Tofu and Tempe producers' cooperative. Indonesia is the world's second largest consumer of soybeans (chief ingredient of tofu & tempe) for direct human consumption. Tempe and tofu makers who are SMEs account for approximately 90% of total domestic soybean consumption or production in Indonesia!



China

One of the last stops in China was at the Community Comprehensive Store, which connects rural producers and urban consumers. The store offers physical and online purchasing and real-time tracking of consumer purchase behavior!



Korea

Seen in this image are (L-R) the Argentinian Ambassador to Korea, H.E. Alfredo Carlos Bascou, NACF Chairman Kim Byeong Won and President Ariel Guarco. Cooperar Argentina and NACF Korea signed an MoU to enhance trade and inter-cooperation.



JAPAN

President Guarco met with the Japan Cooperative Alliance (JCA). JCA seeks to promote inter-cooperative collaborations, lobby for pro-cooperative policies, provide better information and education about cooperatives to the general public!

Report from the 2nd ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum



A group photo of all participants the Forum.

ICA-AP in partnership with the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance and the Institute for Organic Agricultural Economics organized the 2nd Asia Pacific Cooperative Registrars' Forum on *Creating Enabling Legal Framework and Policies to Promote Sustainable Development of Cooperatives in the 21st Century*, in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The Forum was co-funded by the ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development (#Coops4Dev).

The 2nd Forum was organized to focus on the 21st century challenges relating to food security, nature of work and employment, financial inclusion, economic growth, gender equality & equity, climate change, and freedom of association. The rapid economic and social changes as well as crises during the last decade

have prompted the need to think beyond ‘business as usual.’ While cooperatives have shown their resilience, there is need to reinvent, remodel and reorganize to stay relevant to members and society at large. In order to do so, there is need for conducive and enabling legal and policy frameworks to increase the ease with which cooperative business is done in Asia-Pacific. While serving as a platform of exchange on strategic issues, the Forum aimed to build consensus for collaboration among the stakeholders. It brought together Registrars and regulators concerned with the promotion and development of cooperatives; leaders and managers of cooperatives from the Asia-Pacific region; and other stakeholders to discuss matters pertaining to legislation, policies and regulations that complement existing laws.

The complete Report from the Forum can be accessed [here](#).

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Celebrating the International Day of Cooperatives, 2019

July 6 was observed and celebrated as the 97th International Cooperative Day (Coops Day) and the 25th United Nations International Day of Cooperatives! Every year this day is a reminder of the power of cooperative enterprises and their vital contribution to the social, economic and political empowerment of people from around the world. The theme this year was ‘Coops for Decent Work,’ as a testament and support of the Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG8) - ‘Decent Work and Economic Growth.’ The theme is also relevant as the International Labour Organization is celebrating its centenary year with a special focus on the ‘future of work’. Cooperatives help reduce inequality, provide job security, and combat high unemployment levels, especially for youth and other vulnerable groups. Cooperatives employ close to 250 million worldwide and remain resilient in times of financial distress. They are truly the ideal mediums to achieve decent work for all.

Cooperatives enthusiastically celebrated the Day in their own unique way. The National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) and the ICA-AP organized a Seminar on the theme of Coops for Decent Work. NCUI also organized a theme-based painting competition for young children.

Mr. T.K. Kishor, Program Director, [ULCCS](#), gave an insightful presentation about how ULCCS contributes to each of the 17 SDGs. For example, ULCCS sets up a health camp every six months for its workers (SDG 3), 65% of its engineers employed are women (SDG 5), and the wages earned by the workers is higher than the industry average (SDG 8). Mr. Sung Chang Hong, Managing Director, The Nonghyup Bank (NH Bank) shared that NH Bank was established by the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Korea (NACF). NACF represents 2.3 million farmers and 100,000 cooperatives. Mr. Hong said that the Governments of India and Korea had collaborated to set up the Bank in India in 2016. In the long run, NH Bank hopes to contribute to rural development in India. Ms. Mirai Chatterjee, Chairperson, SEWA Cooperative Federation, shared the inspiring and humble beginnings of SEWA Bank by a group of 40 rural women with little to no education. Today the Bank has grown by leaps and bounds, empowering millions of women. She shared the journey of SABINA, their first handicraft artisan cooperative, which was established from the struggles of women labourers demanding fairer wages in the garment industry in Gujarat, India! Ms. Chatterjee said that women’s cooperatives offer decent work and income, are inclusive, decentralised and closer to women’s homes, ensure leadership for women, and above all are ‘laboratories for democracy’. Mr. Satoshi Sasaki, Deputy Director, ILO India, shared that ILO has had a long-standing partnership with the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC). He said that today the main challenges faced by those working towards labour rights are child labour, modern slavery and forced labour. One important way forward is the formalization of the vast numbers of workers in the informal sector. Cooperatives provide such an avenue leading to decent work opportunities. In the emerging gig economy, cooperatives can find their space through digital platforms. Mr. Mohit Dave, Program Manager, ICA-AP, presented the findings from the ICA-AP & CICOPA Study of Industrial and Service Cooperatives in Asia Pacific region. The main recommendations from the Study include i. introduction of appropriate legal frameworks with clear definitions, ii. Specification of worker-member status, iii. Closely monitoring against misuse and abuse, iv. Reasonable minimum number of founding members, amongst others. The full version of this Report will be made available soon.

NCUI presented eco-friendly tokens of appreciation to the speakers in the form of house plants that used coir pith. Coir pith is a spongy material that binds the coconut fibre in the husk. It is an excellent soil conditioner and has moisture retention qualities, contributing to water conservation!



Panellists, ICA-AP and NCUI staff at the closing of the Seminar.

The Cooperative Department of Myanmar organized a ceremony commemorating the International Day of Cooperatives. H.E. Hon'ble Vice President U Henry Van Thio graced the ceremony and urged the cooperative societies to prioritize the development of their communities, emerge as just workplaces, and contribute to nation-building. The ceremony recognized the exemplary work of cooperatives and presented them with awards. Loans for cooperative development were also presented to some cooperative societies. A sales exhibition was also set up for cooperatives to display and sell their products.

The National Cooperative Federation of Nepal (NCF) co-organised a Seminar with the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation and UNDP. The Hon'ble Minister for Cooperatives, Ms. Padma Kumari Aryal, stated that the future of cooperatives hinges on their ability to provide entrepreneurship development, youth inclusion and decent work opportunities. Cooperatives from all seven provinces were awarded with the 'Excellent Cooperative Award' and 'Excellent Cooperative Business Awards' for their performance, effectiveness, and contribution towards decent work throughout the year. NCF also distributed office equipment to 10 district cooperative unions for their capacity enhancement under the strengthening cooperative program. Ms. Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labe, Resident Representative, UNDP Nepal applauded the Constitution of Nepal for recognising cooperatives as one of the pillars of economic development. She mentioned that UNDP has been closely working with more than 500 cooperatives at various levels and is ready to work with them in the future as well.



Speakers at the Seminar organized by NCF.

In a press release issued by the Business Council of Cooperatives and Mutuals (BCCM), CEO Ms. Melina Morrison stated that “there were many ways coops and mutuals support decent work for everyday Australians citing the policy of mutual banks and credit unions to [not offshore](#) call centre jobs and the emergence of cooperatives owned by workers in the [recycling](#) and [green manufacturing sectors](#), [disability](#) and [aged care](#) and a new [taxi cooperative](#) where drivers have united to provide local competition to Uber.” BCCM also launched a [video](#) for the updated Get Mutuals cooperatives’ resource site. Get Mutual is a resource for cooperatives and mutuals looking to start a coop or mutual and existing coops and mutuals seeking to strengthen or grow. It offers online resources, a constitution builder and other tools, and links to advice and training options.

Mr. Craig Presland, CEO, Cooperative Business New Zealand (CBNZ), wrote an [article](#) on the theme of Coops Day, titled ‘The Essential Role of Co-operatives in the Future of Work’. He made reference to the [Report](#) of the Global Commission on the Future of Work. The Report acknowledges cooperatives for their contribution to gender equality (SDG 5), and the emergence of worker cooperatives as a way to improve the situation of workers in the informal economy. Mr. Presland notes that ‘the report provides an opportunity to reflect upon how cooperatives can contribute to creating a brighter future and deliver economic security, equal opportunity and social justice.’ He mentions that the Report, among other things, talks about the correlation between climate change and the world of work. In this regard, Mr. Presland includes the ways by which the cooperatives in New Zealand are protecting the environment including; ‘fencing to keep livestock out of rivers and waterways; improved on-farm systems in the treatment and discharge of effluent; reduction in on-farm carbon emissions; reduction in the burning of fossil fuels; more efficient use of energy; the emergence of “clean” energy in the form of solar and wind power’ etc.

The Singapore National Cooperative Federation (SNCF) celebrated Coops Day by organizing the third edition of the [Bicentennial Pop-Up Art Event](#). The event showcased art installations on the theme of "Coming Together As One Through Art.." It featured ways in which NTUC cooperatives have impacted Singapore through the years and still continuing to improve the lives of people in Singapore, by managing the cost of living, increasing affordability and accessibility of daily necessities. The Event also included activities like ‘test your creativity,’ where visitors taking the most creative photographs at the installation received cash prizes!



At the SNCF Bicentennial Pop-Up Art event.

The Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) organized an event addressed by high-level dignitaries including Dr. Dezhpasand, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran. Dr. Dezhpasand said that there is an urgent need for export-oriented cooperatives and for public cooperatives that are strong enough to compete at the stock markets. ICC unveiled its ‘Intelligent System for the Distribution of Essential Goods’ or MAHTA, which is an efficient way of connecting the value chain of cooperative products from the beginning till the end. Every step of the distribution can be monitored through this application. ICC also launched its ‘Database of Iran’s cooperatives’ or BATA, providing latest updates on the changes in the cooperatives including the Board of Directors, and products and services. MoUs were signed between the different ICA members in Iran. The ICC, Rah-e Roshd, and Barg-e No

launched a book titled 'Genealogy of Cooperatives in Iran.' A short video capturing the celebration can be viewed [here](#).



During the panel discussion on Coops for Decent Work. Image credit: ICC

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](#).

Regional Experts Consultation Meeting on Family Farmers Cooperatives to End Hunger and Poverty through Integrated Farming in South Asia

ICA-AP in collaboration with Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), the National Dairy Development Board in India (NDDDB), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) through its Secretariat and the SAARC Agriculture Center (SAC) and support from the ICA-EU Partnership), attended the Regional Experts Consultation Meeting on Family Farmers Cooperatives to End Hunger and Poverty through Integrated Farming in South Asia. The meeting was organized at the Verghese Kurien auditorium of NDDDB, Anand (India) from 22 - 24 July 2019.

The 18th SAARC Summit Declaration, under the section on Poverty Alleviation, recognized the potential of cooperatives in achieving inclusive, broad-based and sustainable economic growth and development, and called for sharing of experiences, expertise and best practices in this sector. The overarching objective of the consultation was to strengthen the farmers cooperatives in attaining the SDGs on no poverty and zero hunger in South Asia, by sharing of good practices, through policy formulation, and support incentives. Around 18 papers were presented from country focal point experts, universities, family farming organizations and cooperatives, regional agencies and development partners.

The ICA-AP office was represented by Mr. Mohit Dave and Mr. Ivjyot Singh in the session on Agricultural Cooperatives Movements, Innovative Good Practices, Enterprise Development and Employment Generation in South Asia. They spoke about how the regional office of ICA-AP works closely with members and development partners at various levels to promote family farmers cooperatives in the region. They emphasized on the role of youth and women in family farmers

cooperatives and the contribution of agriculture and allied sectors in the economy; taking cues from the World Cooperative Monitor 2018 report and also ICA's commitment to engage with the SDGs on the [Coopsfor2030](#) platform. The presentation can be accessed [here](#).



Mr. Mohit Dave makes his presentation during the Meeting.

Throughout the three-day meeting, ICA-AP reaffirmed that the SAARC member states need to take cooperatives into account by carrying out consultations with the sector when developing economic policies and regulations, creating legal frameworks and undertaking administrative decisions on social and economic issues. The joint communique from the outcomes of the meeting recommended to build and strengthen the capacities of concerned government agencies and leaders of family farmers' organizations in establishing and strengthening family farmers' cooperatives and their enterprises; encourage and support the strengthening of commodity value chains through enabling government policies; promote access to finance and tax incentives at country and regional levels; and constitute and support a multi stakeholder working group on agriculture cooperatives within the SAC. In terms of next steps, ICA-AP will work closely with the forum participants and stakeholders in South Asia to support the outcomes of the meeting at the regional level. The photographs from the Forum can be accessed [here](#).



Mr. Ivjyot Singh participates in a group discussion during the Forum. Image credit: NDDB

Research Watch

The following research-based activities were undertaken by ICA-AP in the months of June and July.

- **Legal Framework Analysis**

14 National Reports from India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu and Lebanon, along with a sub-regional Report of Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), are now being firmed up, and will be uploaded on the #Coops4Dev website. The upcoming National Reports will be from Fiji, Maldives, Bangladesh and the United Arab Emirates.

- **Mapping national cooperative movements in East and South East Asia**

The national cooperative movements in seven countries of East and South East Asia (Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, China, Japan and Korea) were studied and mapped using secondary research methods. The key parameters studied included contribution of cooperatives to the national economy, sectoral distribution of cooperatives, genesis and evolution of the cooperative movement, historical and current laws on cooperatives, and association of national cooperatives with the international cooperative movement and ICA, amongst others. Each cooperative movement studied has been documented in the form of a country brochure. Six of these brochures can be accessed [here](#).

- **Autonomy and Independence of Cooperatives in India**

Cooperatives are autonomous organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy. ICA-AP entered a joint research project with Access Livelihoods Consulting (ALC) India Ltd. to ascertain the status of autonomy and independence of cooperatives and compared the items listed below with the legal ecosystem of five states of India: -

1. 97th Constitutional Amendment 2011 promoting cooperatives: practice, implementation and future
2. Self-Reliant Cooperative Acts in India: Recent trends and relevance in future for youth and skills
3. Beyond Cooperatives: Other people-centric enterprise structures and models operational in India

The first draft of the report was reviewed in July and the suggested changes are being incorporated into the final report. A designed e-version of the report is expected to be ready soon.

FIRST DRAFT

Our monthly blog covering developments in policies for cooperatives, inspiring case studies, interviews, and more!

**Cooperatives: A possible way out for the current global economic distress
(Mr. Sibaditty Baidya who recently completed his summer internship at ICA-AP).**

Population explosion, economic distress, poverty, and inequality are some of the biggest concerns of the 21st century. Many discussions have taken place in international and national public forums and policy arenas, to address these concerns. The SDGs focus on these concerns especially through SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Much of the economic distress and inequality can be traced to the 'trickle-down' economic growth models implemented across the world. The trickle-down theory which promotes targeted tax cuts to corporations, capital gains, and savings taxes, has been debunked by several development economists. The starkest evidence of its failure is the gross concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, while millions live below the poverty line. In January 2019, a renowned international non-profit, Oxfam, released a scathing [report](#) stating that "the 26 richest billionaires own as many assets as the 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of the planet's population."



The Sungmisan cooperative in Korea. Image credit: Shareable.net

Instead of following this top-down approach, if countries start focusing on and implementing a bottom-up approach of creating income and employment, it will create a more effective ripple effect. People-centred business models like cooperatives can be a boon in this regard. Unlike corporates, cooperatives not only think about maximizing the monetary value of shareholders, but also take into account the social wellbeing of the members and the local communities. Unlike non-profit organizations, they do not depend on external funds only, making them self-sustaining.

I was especially inspired by a case study from South Korea that started off small, and quickly became a large-scale model helping many of its citizens. Sungmisan is a small neighborhood of 700 families near Seoul, where the community established a cooperative school. The positive result of the school inspired the whole community to lead life through cooperatives. The entire community adopted the cooperative model, establishing a cooperative village café, a cooperative restaurant, a shared kitchen, a co-housing building, consumer cooperatives, etc. The story of the village inspired a lot of people in South Korea and provided a live example of how we can live in a collaborative manner. Cooperatives have the potential to be at the forefront of development in the current work scenario. If all stakeholders can work together towards creating a conducive environment and enabling policies for cooperatives and collectives, the idea can surely propel and help the world to be a better place for coming generations.

THE MEMBER BULLETIN

Department of Cooperative Business (DCB), Fiji



Logo of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Fiji.

The Department of Cooperative Business, Fiji is a government entity under the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism. DCB became a member of ICA in 2019. The department is responsible for formulating and implementing policies and strategies to facilitate the promotion, establishment and monitoring of cooperative businesses in Fiji. Its other key role is to provide trainings and capacity-building to cooperative members and officials. The Department creates awareness around cooperatives, registers and supervises them, and monitors them to ensure their smooth operation. The awareness drives focus on cooperatives at the global scale, cooperatives in Fiji, features of cooperatives, membership/rights and responsibilities of members in cooperatives, auditing/other provisions, and the registration process for cooperatives.

Annually at least 50 direct jobs are created through cooperative development by the Department. The Department has been focussing on resource- based cooperatives as this encourages the communities to fully utilise their natural resources. It has registered 157 new cooperatives in the last 5 years . The diversification and revival of cooperatives is also a core activity of the Department. The approach taken by the Department is to identify cooperatives that are progressing well and encourage these cooperatives to pursue diversification. Diversification will allow them to extend their operations or venture into new businesses with growth potential.

The Department is looking at increasing employment and entrepreneurship through cooperatives. Specifically its strategic priority is improving livelihoods through cooperatives, young entrepreneurs and micro and small enterprises. This strategic priority is linked to the Fijian Government's National Development Plan and also complements Sustainable Development Goals No. 1- No Poverty and No. 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Contact Information:

Website: <https://mitt.gov.fj/>



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at www.identity.coop



UPCOMING EVENTS

August 2019

- ICA-AP exposure visit to the Indonesian youth cooperative movement, Indonesia, August 5-7
- 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's Committee Workshop on Enhancing Gender Equality in Cooperative Businesses, New Delhi, India, August 20-22

September 2019

- Seminar on SDGs, 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

- Coop Mic, dates (tbc)
- 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 Cooperative Development (tbc).

December 2019

- ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference, Newcastle, Australia, December 12-14
- Second ICA-AP Meeting on Development of Cooperatives in Pacific Islands, Newcastle, Australia, December 13