

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

60TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO	2
OVERVIEW OF THE 5 TH DECADE	2
OBITUARY	4
ICA STATEMENT ON COOPERATIVE IDENTITY: 25TH ANNIVERSARY	4
COOPERATIVE CONVERSATIONS ON THE 25 TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ICA STATEMENT ON COOPERATIVE IDENTITY: REFLECTIONS AND TAKEAWAYS FOR ASIA-PACIFIC COOPERATIVES	4
ICA-AP UPDATES	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
REGIONAL WEBINAR: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN COOPERATORS.....	8
TRAINING OF TRAINERS ON DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF WOMEN COOPERATORS	9
JOINT WEBINAR: ICA-AP MEMBERS FROM IRAN, CHINA, AND MALAYSIA MET TO EXPLORE POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS.....	10
ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP: UPDATES	12
SESSION ON ILO TOOLS - THINK.COOP AND 2 ND GCE TEAM COORDINATION MEETING.....	12
RESEARCH UPDATES.....	13
ONLINE DISCUSSION ON REGIONAL FRAMEWORK COOPERATIVE LAW: PILOT PROJECT FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC....	15
ONLINE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON WORKER COOPERATIVE BUYOUTS: STRENGTHENING WORKERS IN THE COVID-19 CRISIS	17
MEET SHIVALI SARNA – ICA-APS COMMUNICATION & MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER.....	20
ANNOUNCEMENTS	21
POSTPONEMENT OF WORLD COOPERATIVE CONGRESS	21
BOOK RELEASE: COOPERATIVES AND SOCIAL INNOVATION	23
COOPATHON 3.0.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
SHORT FILM COMPETITION: #COOPSFC2020	23
CREATHON: A COOPERATIVE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CHALLENGE.....	24
UPCOMING EVENTS	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

60 Years Celebration of ICA in Asia-Pacific

In 2020, we mark 60 years of ICA in the Asia-Pacific region, working hand-in-hand with our members to grow and enhance the cooperative movement. Over the years, ICA-AP has worked across many sectors and focused on key development areas such as gender equality, youth inclusion, entrepreneurship, and capacity building. This month, we highlight the work undertaken by ICA-AP during its 5th decade.

Overview of the 5th Decade

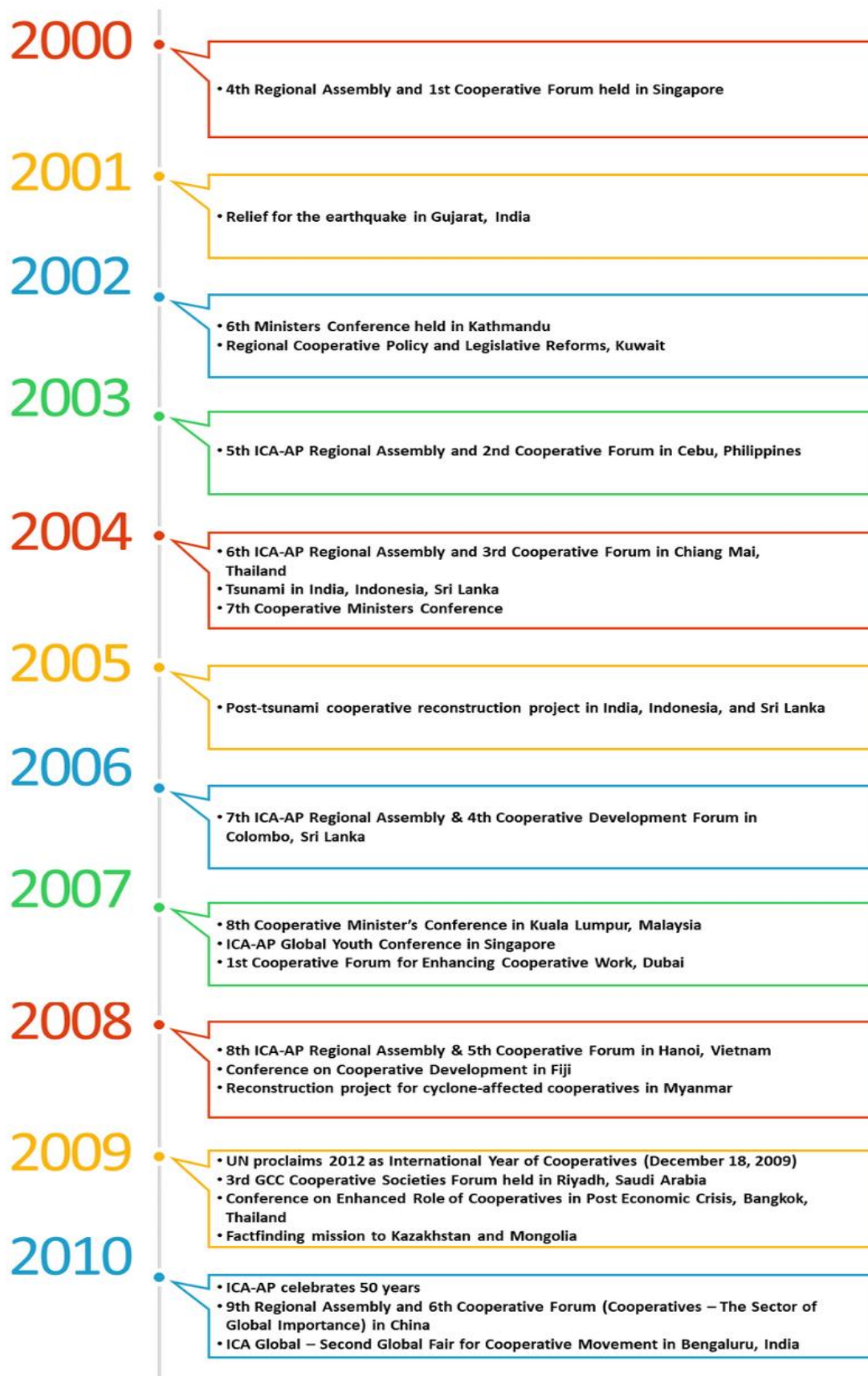
ICA-AP's fifth decade began at the start of the new millennium in 2000. The period 2000 to 2010 was marked by highs and lows caused by natural disasters and manmade crises. The natural disasters included an earthquake in Gujarat (2001); tsunami in India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka (2004); cyclone in Myanmar, and an earthquake in China (2008). The 2008 economic crisis was the worst since the Great Depression in the 1930s caused by deregulation in the financial industry. The ICA-AP and its members were able to respond proactively to these crises by raising resources, carrying out projects, and bringing members together to share their experiences in addressing the crisis.

The Regional Assemblies and Cooperatives Forums during the decade touched upon the issues which were of importance to cooperatives - Cooperatives in the 21st Century: Are We Changing (2000), Cooperatives: Past 10 Years and 10 Years Ahead (2003), Re-engineering Cooperatives in the Globalised Economy (2004), Capacity Building: The Priority for Cooperative Enterprises (2006), Cooperative Advantage in the Economy of Asia & the Pacific (2008), and Cooperatives – The Sector of Global Importance (2010).

After having members from most countries, South Asia and Southeast Asia, the regional office made extensive forays into the Middle East and Central Asia. These efforts resulted in members from Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and the UAE.

In the last month and last year of the decade, the United Nations proclaimed 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives!

Below is the timeline of some major activities carried out during the decade.



Obituary



Dr. T. Paranjothi

2nd April 1957 – 13th September 2020

It is our sad duty to inform you all that Dr. T. Paranjothi, Vice-Chairperson, ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research has passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest on the night of 13th September 2020 in Trivandrum, Kerala. Our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues!

Dr. Paranjothi has been with the committee for several years in various capacities, last representing the National Cooperative Union of India since 2016. He was continually associated in several areas of academic research even until the day of his passing. Dr. Paranjothi's dedication and commitment have been an integral part of our success and growth. He has led and guided several important initiatives such as annual research conferences and paper publications.

To staff in the ICA-AP regional office, he was a mentor, friend, and guide. He had a friendly demeanor, was easily accessible, and ever ready to share and guide.

Rest in peace, Dr. Paranjothi! You will be dearly missed!

ICA Statement on Cooperative Identity: 25th Anniversary

Cooperative Conversations on the 25th Anniversary of the ICA Statement on Cooperative Identity: Reflections and Takeaways for Asia-Pacific Cooperatives

Cooperative Conversations

Join us for two unique online events to mark the 25th anniversary of the ICA Statement of Cooperative Identity

September 21: 1300 - 1500 CEST
Looking Back for a Stronger, Brighter Future

September 22: 1300 - 1500 CEST
The Impact of the Cooperative Identity on Regulation



On September 21 and 22 2020, ICA in partnership with the Co-operative College UK held a discussion series, titled '[Cooperative Conversations](#)' to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ICA Statement on Cooperative Identity (ISCI). The Cooperative Conversations were held with the stalwarts of the global cooperative movement who have a rich background in academia, law, policy, and practice. Some of them have had a direct role in defining the statement on the cooperative identity, its cooperative and ethical values, and its seven cooperative principles. Young cooperative leaders from the Americas, Africa, and Europe were also invited to the discussion.

The story is 25 years old when the seeds of today's conversations were successfully sown on the soil of Manchester during the 31st World Cooperative Congress, 1995. It was a special year as the ICA was celebrating its 100th birthday! During the centennial General Assembly of the ICA, the members "adopted for the first time a statement that manifested the international spirit and global movement of organising shared needs and aspirations through cooperative enterprise. This General Assembly was organised in conjunction with the Congress and established a common and harmonious identity of cooperatives, and included a definition, a set of cooperative and ethical values, and a modified set of seven principles" (ICA, 2020). A brand-new **ICA Statement on Cooperative Identity** was introduced to the world for the first time. The ISCI according to Professor Ian MacPherson (who for many years coordinated and prepared the adoption of the text), was "indivisible". He noted that "the deletion of any element (in it) would make it collapse" (ICA, 2020). So, what is the ISCI about? The ISCI as we know today brought about significant changes to ICA's formal statement on cooperative principles of 1966, such as the following (ICA, 2020):

1. A definition of cooperatives was added to the statement for the first time.
2. The cooperative and ethical values were added to the statement.
3. Gender was added to the list of non-discrimination in the first principle.
4. 'Democratic member control' replaced 'one member, one vote' in the second principle.
5. The concept of indivisible reserves for the development of cooperatives was introduced in the third principle.
6. 'Autonomy and independence' was added to the fourth principle which aimed to free cooperatives of interventions from governments and other sources.
7. The fifth principle on education was rewritten and highlighted the importance of educating the young and opinion leaders about the nature and benefits of cooperation.
8. 'Concern for Community' was added as the seventh principle.

The first Cooperative Conversation, titled '[Looking Back for a Stronger, Brighter Future](#)' held on September 21, shed light on how the seven cooperative principles emerged and the significance of the global context at the time. It also involved reflection on the relevance and impact of the seven principles today and in the future. Interaction among the cooperative experts in this session, point towards a long and gradual evolution of the understanding and international consensus on the definition of cooperatives and their guiding rules aka principles.

One of the highlights was the introduction of the 7th cooperative principle, 'Concern for Community'. It is symbolic that 20 years before the adoption of the Agenda 2030 (2015), values of sustainability and human-centred approach were officially integrated with cooperative identity. It is worth noting that this inference from the discussion strongly resonates with the current ICA-EU Partnership on

Cooperatives in Development-People-Centred Businesses in Action ([#coops4dev](#)) that positions cooperatives as development actors at the international level.

#Takeaway for Asia and Pacific cooperatives

As development actors, cooperatives in Asia and Pacific could join the [Co-ops for 2030 Campaign](#) launched under the ICA-EU partnership. This Campaign is for cooperatives to learn about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), pledge their contribution to achieving SDGs, and report their progress. Currently, 33% of the total pledges made are from the Asia and Pacific region. 28 cooperatives from 14 ICA-AP member countries in the region have made 43 pledges across different SDGs. Further, cooperatives could also liaison with government organisations in their countries to communicate the critical role of cooperatives in SDG implementation and participate in local consultations on SDGs held with civil society actors.

The other noteworthy relevance of cooperative identity in today's context is related to cooperative visibility. Italy based Gulliver cooperative has deployed an innovative reporting system to maximise the cooperative advantage and promote cooperative identity among its members and clientele. Along with its annual financial report, it releases a [social report](#) that is developed along the lines of cooperative principles and values. It informs readers about their social responsibility activities, ensures transparency and strong communication, and builds brand value.

#Takeaway for Asia and Pacific Cooperatives

To celebrate the cooperative identity and consciously differentiate the cooperative business from private or investor-owned business, cooperatives in Asia and Pacific could adopt the [cooperative domain and marque](#). They were developed by the ICA as a global identity and logo for the cooperative movement. This will help cooperatives increase their brand value in a growing environment for fair, ethical, and eco-friendly production and consumption.

The second Cooperative Conversation, titled '[Impact of Cooperative Identity on Regulation](#)' held on September 22 examined the impact of the ISCI on cooperative regulation at national and international level. The discussion shed light on the difference between law and regulation; amendments in national cooperative law in China, India, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam following the introduction of the ISCI; and the emergence of international legal instruments like the ILO Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives and UN Resolution A/RES/72/143 on Cooperatives in Social Development.

One of the highlights from this session as noted by one of the revered speakers was that the ISCI is not simply a wish-list or philosophical document. It is a source of legislation and regulation for cooperatives and is fundamentally operational. It is also worth noting that one of the interpretations of the ISCI is that it is a legal text of an international non-governmental organisation and given ICA's structure, the statement becomes legally binding on its members as well as their members. While the ISCI is an instrument for the ICA members, instruments developed by ILO and UN are for other general stakeholders (non-cooperative actors) who are bound to recognise cooperatives at the international and national level.

#Takeaway for Asia and Pacific Cooperatives

Cooperatives in Asia and Pacific could use the means of education and training to disseminate knowledge to members and associated stakeholders on the ISCI and its practical application in cooperatives for strengthening democracy and cooperation and ensuring gender equality among others. Further, cooperatives could liaison with national/ local education ministries to mainstream education and training on cooperatives in formal education to reach out to the young generation.

The striking point from this discussion was the importance of the definition of cooperatives, its principles and values within the changing world scenario and emerging Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). It is noteworthy to mention that cooperatives enjoy exclusive recognition within SSE due to the laborious efforts made by the ICA members and supporters of the cooperative movement. Recently, the ICA came out with a [position](#) to support the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSSSE) initiative regarding a UN resolution on SSE.

#Takeaway for Asia and Pacific Cooperatives

Cooperatives in Asia and Pacific could familiarise themselves with the emerging SSE concept, its actors at national and regional levels and engage with them for a stronger SSE model in Asia and Pacific with cooperatives playing the central role in its development and growth.

Introduced towards the end of the 20th century, the ISCI holds relevance even today. The cooperative movement in Asia and Pacific could come together to have a similar chapter on cooperative conversations that takes into cognizance the diversity, strengths, issues and emerging trends in the region. Professor Akira Kurimoto, Chairperson, ICA-AP Research Committee represented the Asia and Pacific region at the August gathering of global cooperative experts invited to the Cooperative Conversations.

The full concept note on the 'ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity: Historical Context and Global Relevance for Today' can be read [here](#). The [33rd World Cooperative Congress](#) will be held in Seoul, South Korea from 1st to 3rd December 2021. The theme for the Congress will be 'Deepening our Cooperative Identity' to strengthen the cooperative movement's role in addressing global challenges and explore avenues to improve lives at the local and global levels.

Reference: ICA (2020). *ICA statement on the cooperative identity: historical context and global relevance for today*.

Article written by Simren Singh (views expressed are personal)

ICA-AP ACTIVITIES

Regional Webinar: Impact of COVID-19 on Women Cooperators



The ICA-AP Committee on Women held a 'Regional Webinar on the Impact of COVID-19 on Women Cooperators in Asia and Pacific on 10th September 2020. 13 women leaders from apex cooperatives from 11 countries (India, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Singapore, and South Korea) participated in the webinar. The committee members convened to discuss the diverse and severe ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic on cooperative business and women cooperators at the grassroots.

Presiding over the webinar, Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson of the Women's Committee, ICA-AP, said that the nationwide lockdown at the beginning of the pandemic outbreak was a difficult time for women's savings and credit cooperatives in India. While sharing the experiences of her organization Indian Co-operative Network for Women (ICNW)/ Working Women's Forum (WWF), she said that the survival of savings and credit cooperative businesses was under serious threat at the beginning of March, as payments were impossible, recovery rates were poor, and there was a huge loss of resources. However, poor women cooperators in ICNW held their feet on the ground and strong cooperation between them helped to survive the pandemic.

Ms. Chitose Arai, ICA-AP Vice-President, Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Vice-President of JCCU and Chairperson of Co-op Mirai, the largest consumer cooperative business in Japan delivered the opening address and shared the impact of COVID-19 on consumer cooperatives in Japan. She said that the webinar was an opportunity to meet committee members and provide them with information that they might need and find useful to cope with the pandemic.

Ms. Juhee Lee, from iCOOP, South Korea; Ms. Chitra K. Subba from National Cooperative Federation, Nepal; Ms. Madhavai Vipradas from IFFCO, India; Ms. Aisha Salem from Economic and Social Development Center, Palestine; Ms. Cardona Joselita Flores from NATCCO, the Philippines, during their presentations shared challenges faced by women cooperators during COVID-19. Some of the challenges were increased – domestic violence cases; effect on mental health; limited involvement of women in cooperatives response, planning and decision making during the pandemic; and layoffs. They also shared the approaches adopted by their cooperatives such as hotlines for women, donations, production of masks, the supply of medicines and PPE kits. They showed the dynamic role played by women cooperators who volunteered to support local action and relief work in their communities. This pandemic has thrown significant light on the heroism that women across countries have exhibited through their local knowledge, meticulous and immediate actions at all levels.

Ms. Khin Moh Moh representing Central Cooperative Society, Myanmar; Ms. Patsie Tan from Singapore National Co-operative Federation, Singapore; Ms. Noorizan Abdul Latif from ANGKASA, Malaysia; Ms. Zulfa Adams from Maldives Fishermen’s Association, Maldives; and Ms. Errum Sharif Bhajji from Karachi Cooperative Housing Societies Union, Pakistan joined the discussions and shared the situation in their countries and activities undertaken by their organisations.

Following the announcements for upcoming activities made by the new Committee Secretary Ms. Simren Singh, Dr. Azad summarised the proceedings of the webinar, thanked members for their active participation, and declared the webinar officially closed.

Training of Trainers on Digital Financial Inclusion of Women Cooperators



The ICA-AP Committee on Women in collaboration with Working Women’s Forum (WWF), India and with the support of Japanese Consumers’ Co-operative Union (JCCU) held a successful training of trainers (ToT) program on digital financial inclusion of women cooperators. The ToT was organised at WWF’s headquarters in Chennai, Tamil Nadu from 16th to 18th September 2020.

The ToT was conducted in response to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the financial sector and aimed to build the capacity of women cooperators at the grassroots. The ToT covered basic concepts on digital (internet) banking such as downloading money-transfer apps, linking bank account with apps, creating security pin, and educating women cooperators about the benefits of using digital banking services. The training was attended by 50 women members, the staff of WWF, and Indian Co-operative Network for Women (ICNW) from Chennai, Kanchipuram and Vellore. It was delivered in the local language using interactive modules.

In August, the Office Bearers of the Committee convened online and discussed the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on cooperatives and women. The need for digital literacy for financial inclusion of women members in primary cooperatives was acutely felt and it was decided that the Committee would reach out to women cooperators at the grassroots to build their technical capacities and prepare them for future emergencies.

The ToT was thus aimed at supporting women cooperators at primary level so that they can make and receive payments, access loans, and undertake banking-related activities anywhere and anytime. The Committee plans to replicate the training in other countries in future.

Joint Webinar: ICA-AP members from Iran, China, and Malaysia Met to Explore Potential Collaborations



A joint webinar was organised by the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) between cooperatives from Iran and the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC) and Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA) on 9th September 2020.

The webinar was held to introduce the Iranian cooperators to ACFSMC and ANGKASA and vice-versa and to explore potential cooperation between cooperatives from China, Iran, and Malaysia. ICA-AP

staff members were invited as speakers and key observers. This meeting was the second in a series of discussions organised by the ICC, with the first being with ICA-AP.

Senior representatives from 10 Iranian cooperatives (ICA-AP members) participated in the webinar. These included ICC, Central Organisation for Rural Cooperatives of Iran (CORC), Central Union of state Rural Production Cooperatives of Iran (CURPC), Supervision and Coordination Central Union of Rural and Agricultural Cooperatives of Iran (SCURA), Central Union of Rural and Agricultural Cooperatives of Iran (CURACI), Tose'e Ta'avon Bank (T.T. Bank), Iran Oilseeds and Vegetable Oil Processing Factories Cooperative (Farda Co-op), Taavon Insurance Co., and Pishgaman Cooperative Union (PCU).

On behalf of the Iranian cooperative movement, Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, International Affairs Manager, ICC welcomed the guests and presided over the proceedings. In the first half of the meeting, members from Iran presented a comprehensive overview of the cooperative movement in the country, their organisations, and business activities pursued by them cooperatives in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, rural development, communications, and information technology (IT). Cooperatives in Iran contribute about 7% to the national GDP (as of 2018). Agriculture is the second-largest sector for cooperatives in the country. As of 2018, there were more than 22,000 agriculture-based cooperatives with over 300,000 members and more than 200,000 employees.

Mr. Mohammadreza ShahPasand, Deputy President, CORC invited ACFSMC and ANGKASA to visit Iran and observe the vast agricultural cooperative network in the country. Mr. Jalil Eskandari from CURACI spoke about the expanding rural and agricultural cooperative unions in Iran which have over 5 million members. He noted that CURACI has two agro-industrial organisations which are ready to engage in international business such as the export of saffron, and joint ventures with China, Malaysia, and other ICA-AP members on agricultural projects. Saffron, dates, fruits, and oilseeds are among the most lucrative agricultural products that Iranian cooperatives produce in large quantities and export to international markets.

Mr. Zhang Wangshu, Director General, International Cooperation Department, ACFSMCF spoke about the Chinese cooperative movement, the role of ACFSMC, and a wide range of member services undertaken by them. Some of their highlighted services are – strengthening the distribution network to connect distribution centres; wholesale markets and grassroots chain stores; build logistic parks and cold storage facilities; develop e-commerce; set up crop hospitals; provide training to members.

Mr. Nasir Khan Yahaya, Group CEO, ANGKASA introduced the Malaysian cooperative movement and spoke about the role of cooperatives in Malaysia's economy in the context of National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030. Mr. Yahaya noted that cooperative training and education are the most important functions of ANGKASA as even though cooperatives keep getting formed in Malaysia, they need to know about the cooperative identity, principles, and values.

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer commended ICC's initiative to understand ICA-AP and its members and to explore possibilities of cooperation among cooperatives (principle 6) in the Asia-Pacific region. It was noted that such initiatives have the potential to bridge the geographic divide between cooperatives and to foster unity, business-linkages, and cooperation in the region. He urged members to involve

youth in the cooperative movement, promote women’s participation at cooperative leadership and decision-making levels, and embrace digital technology.

Following the exchange of knowledge and discussion on potential collaboration between ICA-AP members vis-à-vis export of agricultural products from Iran and research projects, Mr. Banaeifar officially declared the webinar closed with the positive proposal of establishing B2B and C2C cooperative packages between Asia-Pacific cooperatives.

ICA-EU Partnership: Updates



Session on ILO Tools - Think.COOP and 2nd GCE Team Coordination Meeting



Given the current pandemic and the ensuing difficulty in conducting offline training and organizing physical events, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has developed an online version and materials for the delivery of their tool – Think.COOP. Think.COOP is a tool developed by the ILO Cooperatives Unit as an orientation exercise for introducing individuals to the cooperative model. It is one among the two tools developed by the ILO around cooperatives – the other being Start.COOP which is a step-by-step tool to start up a cooperative.

The ICA Asia and Pacific’s Global Cooperative Entrepreneurship (GCE) team of mentors & ambassadors (GCE Catalysts) went through the easy to use tools and to understand how it can be used to rally people, particularly youth in the context of GCE, around the idea of starting-up cooperatives. GCE catalysts also provided detailed feedback to the ICA after testing the tool, which was, in turn, conveyed to the ILO.

The Team Coordination Call (TCC) for the GCE Programme of the ICA-AP region was held on 10th September 2020. This was the 2nd TCC meeting after the one held on 26th June 2020.

The roundtable meeting was primarily in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic to review the state of activities and action plans within the GCE programme. The meeting saw candid discussions revolving around concerns and challenges, and brainstorming of ideas move ahead by adopting to the new normal. Creative ideas were suggested to organize training sessions and webinars for the capacity building of the GCE catalysts. It was discussed that they could, in turn, explore organising multiplier events online by first mobilising local youth and moving them to an online platform. The meeting was attended by all the GCE mentors and ambassadors and resulted in a productive exchange of ideas towards improving the programme's implementation.

The meeting included an introduction session to the Coopedia Knowledge Base and to discuss as how the GCE team can help populate & popularise the database. GCE catalysts from Indonesia suggested a translated version of the same into the local language and also showcased their ongoing attempts to create localised literature in the Bahasa language and ultimately work towards creating a database for cooperatives in the vernacular language in the country.

The meeting also discussed future projects envisaged by the ICA-AP to engage with youth in the region to introduce technology-tools and innovation into the traditional cooperative model and explore the creation of collectives which solve specific problems affecting local communities and that which have emerged during recent times.

Research Updates

Legal Framework Analysis

The National Report has been received for the Philippines and is currently being reviewed. National reports of 14 countries are now available on the website and can be accessed at [#coops4dev](#). The national reports from Singapore, UAE, and China are awaited.

Mapping of Cooperatives

The mapping research aims at collecting and publicizing exhaustive and up-to-date statistics of cooperative organisations in different countries to showcase the cooperative impact and provide data for advocacy.

Seven national reports for Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Myanmar, Nepal, PNG, and Vanuatu were finalised and uploaded on the [#coops4dev](#) website. Overall, there are nine national reports available on the website including the reports for two pilot countries - Iran and the Philippines. National reports for Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Sri Lanka will be made available soon.

Global Thematic Research on Youth

The findings of the global thematic research on youth from all regions have been compiled into a global report based on different themes concerning youth including, education, employment, entrepreneurship, and inequalities.

The first draft of the report has received feedback from ICA's Youth Network and Co-operative College, UK. The Asia and Pacific office made revisions in the chapter on Education as per the feedback received. Stay tuned for further updates!

Country Snapshots

Country snapshot for Myanmar has been finalised and uploaded on the [ICA-AP website](#).

19 country snapshots are now available on the website for public view. These include snapshots for Australia, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Iran Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, PNG, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, and Vanuatu.

Country snapshot for Palestine will be made available next.

Sectoral/ Thematic Snapshots

Thematic snapshots on Youth in Cooperatives and Cooperatives in Educational Institutions will be made available next. Stay tune!

Global Thematic Research on Environment

The second global thematic research on environment has been launched under the #coops4dev project.

This research aims to provide an innovative overview on how cooperatives are acting to protect the environment, as well as mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. It seeks to elaborate on the links between cooperatives and principle seven on concern for community, including the access and management of natural habitats and resources through cooperative approaches (such as water, energy, etc.). The research will draw upon existing literature and resources in order to highlight a select number of case studies, with the intention to showcase a range of innovative practices from cooperative enterprises.

The collection of secondary literature for this research has begun in all regional offices. The Asia and Pacific regional office has started collecting secondary information on cooperatives working on SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 15 (Life on land) for the purpose of developing case studies on them.

Online Discussion on Regional Framework Cooperative Law: Pilot Project for the South Pacific



ICA Asia-Pacific (ICA-AP) in collaboration with ICA Cooperative Law Committee (ICA-CLC) and with the support of the ICA-EU Partnership¹ organized an online discussion on framework cooperative law on 26th August 2020. This is part of the proposed pilot project to facilitate collaboration between South Pacific countries to develop a regional framework for cooperative law. The countries at this stage of the discussion are Fiji and Kiribati.

The meeting was organised to work with the cooperative departments in Fiji and Kiribati to better understand the issues with existing laws, compare the two Acts to identify issues that are shared as well as unique, and work to determine what parts of existing laws work well and what parts need reform. Based on the outcomes, the project can later be expanded to other countries in the region. During this process, we hope to facilitate dialogue between the two departments and other stakeholders, enable sharing of resources, and promote education and training.

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director (ICA-AP) opened the discussion talking about the outcomes from the [1st ICA-AP Forum on Development of Cooperatives in the Pacific Islands](#) held in Vanuatu in 2018 and the [2nd Forum](#) held in Australia in 2019. Recently, the participants came together in the International Workshop on [Role of Cooperatives in Sustainable Development in Asia-Pacific countries](#) organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in

¹ In March 2016, the ICA and the European Union signed a Framework Partnership Agreement to implement a development programme aimed at benefitting and advancing cooperatives worldwide.

collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of the Government of Fiji at Nadi from 3 – 5 March 2020. The participants have also been involved in the [legal framework analysis](#) (LFA) of The Co-operative Act 1996 in Fiji, Cooperative Societies Act and Cooperative Societies Regulations of Kiribati, and other ICA member countries in the South Pacific.

The common need which came across from all these engagements with the South Pacific countries was to review and update existing cooperative laws. It is believed that a regional instrument can provide the needed support without interfering with the need for each country to tailor the laws to meet their own cultural, social, and legal context. All countries in the region are members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), which was discussed during the March 2020 workshop in Fiji, as a Forum we needed to engage with. A regional engagement could help access resources and support from the PIF Secretariat.

Ms. Ann Apps, Consultant (ICA-AP) and Mr. P. Santosh Kumar, Secretary (ICA-CLC) discussed how cooperatives benefit from regulations acknowledging their specificities and ensuring a level playing field with other types of business organisations. The absence of a specific legal framework for cooperatives or a weak legal framework may damage co-ops, while in contrast, a supportive regulation may allow their development. This is the reason why knowledge and evaluation of cooperative legislation is a necessary tool for ICA offices and to support their advocacy and recommendations on the creation or improvement of legal frameworks, to document the implementation of cooperative legislation and policies, and to monitor their evolution.

Ms. Kammari Betiota, Director, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives, Kiribati and Mr. Faizal Khan, Director and Registrar, Department of Cooperative Business, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Fiji agreed to conduct a series of workshops at regular intervals over the coming months to keep the conversation going and build the momentum. The delivery of these workshops is proposed to be interactive - it will need the cooperative departments from Fiji and Kiribati to bring their expertise, practices and identify issues and problems for discussion. Each workshop will also have representation from a co-op to share their experiences from the field.

Online Roundtable Discussion on Worker Cooperative Buyouts: Strengthening Workers in the COVID-19 Crisis



ICA Asia-Pacific (ICA-AP) in collaboration with Cooperative Development Network in Australia and with the support of the ICA-EU Partnership², organized an online roundtable discussion on worker cooperative buyouts on the theme, “Strengthening workers in the COVID-19 crisis” on 2nd September 2020. The countries represented at this stage of the discussion were Australia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. The roundtable successfully shared experiences in worker cooperative development addressing the issues of rising unemployment amidst the ongoing crisis and promotion of inclusive societies.

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director (ICA-AP) opened the discussion talking about the effect of the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic which is projected to be for a long time to come. During these times there will be an increase in companies under distress and rates of insolvency. Historically, worker cooperatives have formed during an economic downturn to save/ create jobs. This time around, it is going to be no different and we are expecting to see interest in worker cooperatives to assist:

1. Distressed companies achieve a worker buyout
2. Companies with a business succession problem to sell to its workers
3. Freelance workers looking to form cooperatives to secure their work
4. Social/ service workers who have been badly affected.

Many countries have put in place stimulus packages to kickstart the economy and revive businesses. Federations representing cooperatives in Canada and the United States are coming up with strategies to access government funds and use it to support worker cooperatives buyout.

² In March 2016, the ICA and the European Union signed a Framework Partnership Agreement to implement a development programme aimed at benefitting and advancing cooperatives worldwide.

The recently published book, “Waking the Asian-Pacific Cooperative Potential,” has a chapter on workers cooperatives. There are case studies on six worker cooperatives of which three are worker buyouts and these demonstrated that the buyout process is difficult but doable. Professor Anthony Jensen, an expert in worker cooperative buyout, who edited the chapter on worker cooperative in the book is working on a worker buyout initiative in Australia and has written to their Treasury to support, based on the Marcora Law in Italy (1985). Building upon the experience, he presented a proposal for action-based research on the topic.

The image shows a video recording interface. On the left, a slide titled "Research on Worker Buyouts" is displayed. The slide content is as follows:

- Research Proposal**
 - To understand the emergence and success of worker buyouts through a cross national study
- Research Hypothesis**
 - Worker co-operative buyouts/take overs will emerge due to economic downturns
 - Worker co-operatives will emerge due to lack of business succession
- Objectives**
 - Develop strategies to increase and support worker co-operative formation

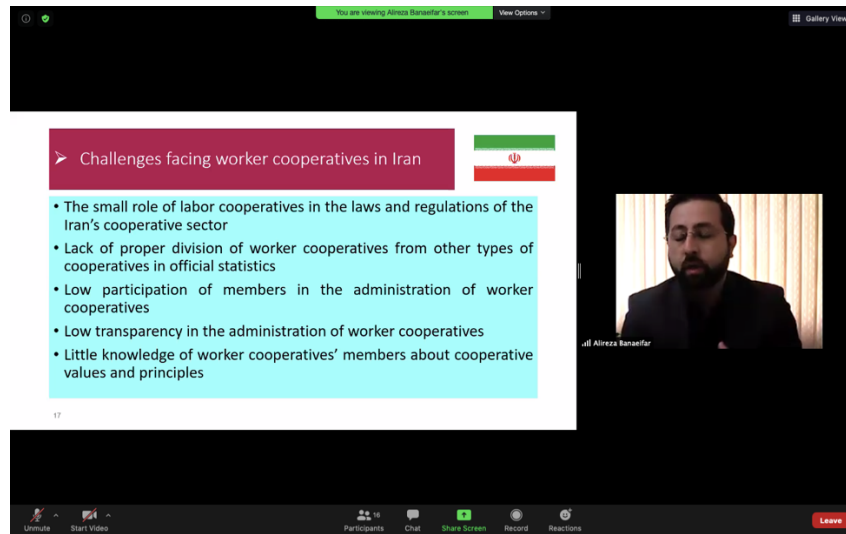
On the right side of the slide, there is a small video inset showing Professor Anthony Jensen, an older man with glasses, speaking. The name "Anthony Jensen" is visible in the bottom left corner of the video inset.

Dr. Yashavantha Dongre, Director, Planning Management Evaluation Board, University of Mysore shared about the case in India which has more than 50,000 worker cooperatives - the majority of them being a labour and/or artisan co-ops. The worker takeover examples have shown mixed results. A transport co-op formed by workers buying a private firm did well for well over 25 years but were recently in trouble. Kamani tube in Mumbai which was a failed private firm was taken over by workers and a co-op was formed, but it failed within 10 years. It has now been revived and profitably runs under private ownership. Some of the earliest examples of worker takeovers have been in the Northeastern part of India - the states of West Bengal and Tripura - both at that time under the communist rule - where tea estates were taken over by workers and successfully run. At present, there are only a couple of them working well. So, these experiences seem to have made the governments reluctant to support the formation of worker cooperatives. In any case, cooperatives being a subject handled by respective state governments, there is need to work for a clear policy at the state level. Kerala is an ideal state to begin such a process in India.

Dr. T.P. Sethumadhavan representing Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society (ULCCS) agreed that they can convince the state government both to come out with a policy initiative and provide support for workers to take over the failing private firms and form co-ops. ULCCS would also be interested to buy such firms and/ or facilitate worker takeover of firms by workers of respective organisations and help them to stabilise.

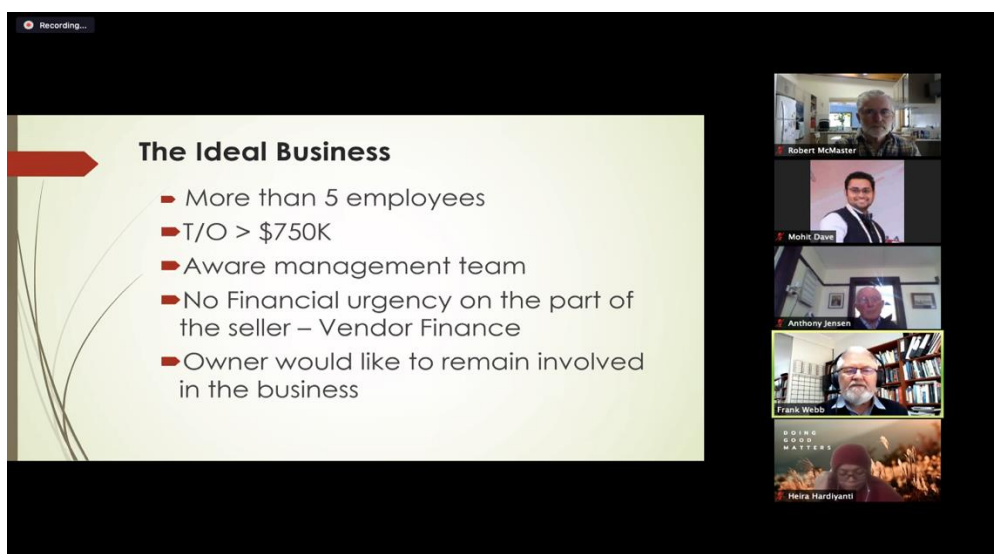
Recently the Japan Workers Cooperative Union submitted the “Workers Cooperative Act” for revision, which if passed, will enable worker cooperatives to be set up with their specific legal form. ICA

members from the Philippines and Iran also made a presentation on the situation in their respective countries.



Mr. Rob McMaster, former Managing Director of C-Mac industries, the family firm that he sold to the employees as a worker co-op, brought the commercial perspective of an existing owner to understand the employee buyout process. He has written the book “Swapping Desks” as a memoir of his nine-year quest to preserve his family business, by converting it into one that is employee-owned. He shared his experiences to prepare business succession plans and encourage firms to consider employee ownership as a neat exit. The obstacles encountered show how Australia needed an official framework for employee ownership as a succession solution. He discussed that if C-Mac was a UK company, it could have been sold to an employee-ownership trust (EOT). Introduced in 2014, the EOT formalised a tried and tested succession solution and, also, provided a capital gains tax exemption for sellers and income tax-free bonuses for employees.

Mr. Frank Webb, General Manager of the Co-operative Development Network in Sydney talked about developing the business model and legal structure of the co-operative buyout.



The roundtable was useful to stimulate collaboration amongst stakeholders to promote a conceptual understanding of worker cooperative buyouts at multiple levels. The discussion gave an opportunity to know demonstrated interest, enabling environment, and the need for adequate funds and a pool of human resources to explore the worker buyout and other initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region.

Meet Shivali Sarna – ICA-APs Communication & Membership Development Officer



Tell us about your background, and what brought you to working with cooperatives?

Thank you! So, I come from a Development Communication background. I pursued B. Sc. Honours Home Science from the University of Delhi; which is not only about cooking and stitching, unlike the common belief ;-)

Development Communication and Extension were my majors in graduation, and I did my Post Graduation in Media Governance from Jamia Millia Islamia University.

In a career of 4 years, most of my work experience has been with a social enterprise working on the ground with producer companies (PCs). PCs - a model of collective enterprises is very similar to cooperatives and that is exactly how I got to know about cooperatives. However, I recently gained an understanding of cooperatives when I came across ICA-AP and started reading about it in detail. I had been involved in communications and outreach for the social enterprise as well as the PCs to help them gain members. So, I come with a mix of both traditional and mainstream communication experience.

That's interesting! Given your experience as a Communication, Knowledge Management and Outreach Professional, what applications do you foresee with the cooperative movement?

I guess the experience will help in strengthening the communications and outreach “of the” and “for the” cooperative movement through ICA-AP. The communications and outreach strategy of ICA-AP is comprehensive, but we do need to focus a bit more on member communication as much as we focus on cooperative communication. I will try and contribute more in that direction as well.

Great! What is your role going to be at ICA? And how does working with cooperatives align with what you want to do?

I am joining as the Communications and Membership Development Officer (CMDO). “Cooperate” is a very commonly used word and cooperative values are very much a part of humankind which people tend to overlook easily. However, these very basic values are necessary to be practised given the present circumstances. People are now realising the importance of “Cooperation”. Even the big Corporates nowadays are talking about cooperation and collective actions, so why not us and me?

Cooperatives are a win-win structure, they are inclusive, give complete autonomy, rights, benefits, and a sense of community and belongingness. And, this is the need of the hour given the sad world that we live in today. I have been a people’s person and don’t believe in isolation so carrying forward that value in my work will be something that I will enjoy, and I can see myself committedly working for it. I also understand that the picture will not be all rosy and philosophical like my answer, but I will like to use my skills for doing something that gives satisfaction on a personal level as well.

Announcements

Postponement of World Cooperative Congress



**ICA 33rd World Cooperative Congress to be held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea
From 1-3 December 2021**

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) has announced that the 33rd World Cooperative Congress will be held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea from 1st to 3rd December 2021. The theme for this event will be “Deepening our Cooperative Identity” to strengthen the cooperative movement’s role in addressing global challenges and also explore avenues to improve lives at the local and global levels.

The original Congress was due to be held in November 2020 in Seoul but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis. This year marks both the 125th anniversary of the ICA, which was founded in 1895 to promote the interests of cooperatives worldwide and the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity which was adopted on 21st September 1995.

Ariel Guarco, the President of the ICA, said: "I'm delighted to confirm that the 33rd World Cooperative Congress will go ahead next year in Seoul. This will be an opportunity to share experiences of resilience in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and discuss how cooperatives can overcome other global challenges from climate change to gender equality. Together we can create a better, fairer, and more inclusive world for generations to come."

All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC) has signed on as the premiere Pillar Partner for this event. This signals ACFSMC's commitment to make this event a success and their dedication to bringing together the cooperative movement during a challenging yet critical time.

Li Chunsheng, the president of ICA Asia and Pacific and also Vice President of ACFSMC said: "This event will allow the cooperative movement to strengthen our relationships with each other, our role in improving the global economy, and to share with our partners that we have proven solutions to many of the global challenges the world is facing today."

To learn more about the event, cooperators, sponsors, and interested people can visit the new dedicated website [here](#).

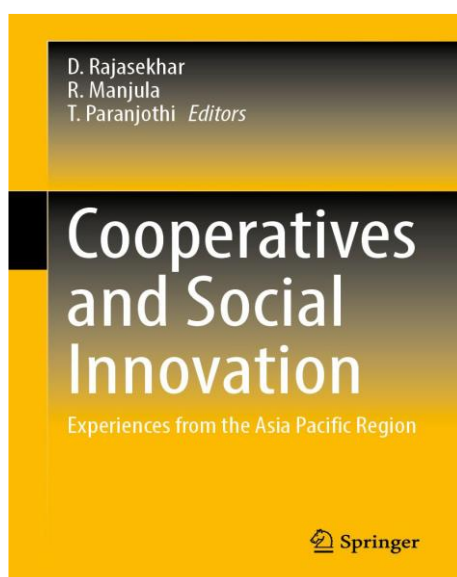
Park Cha Hoon, President of the Council of Korean Cooperatives, co-hosts for this event, said: "We are very much looking forward to welcoming cooperators to Seoul. At the 33rd World Cooperative Congress, we will get a glimpse of what cooperative identity means for Korean cooperatives and how co-ops can help drive sustainable development in communities."

Mr Guarco added: "Cooperation is not only good for addressing crises. Cooperation is the alternative way to build a fairer, more balanced and, fundamentally, less fragile economy in the face of global challenges. Our cooperative identity, values, and principles have remained strong and are the foundation for cooperatives worldwide to help their communities survive and cope following the pandemic."

The Congress will consist of pre-events from 28- 30 November followed by the conference itself from 1-3 December. More details of the schedule are at <https://ICAWorldCoopCongress.coop>

The World Cooperative Congress 2021 will be held at the Grand Walkerhill Hotel, in Seoul: <https://www.walkerhill.com/grandwalkerhillseoul/en/>

Book Release: Cooperatives and Social Innovation



The book, *Cooperatives and Social Innovation*, edited by Dr. T. Paranjothi, Dr. Rajasekhar, and Dr. R. Manjula, discusses social innovations by cooperatives from the Asia and Pacific region. Social innovations emerge when the state and market in developing countries find it difficult to solve problems such as poverty, hunger, ill-health, poor education systems, inadequate drinking water and poor sanitation. These countries also face barriers to economic growth such as climate change, poor governance, unequal opportunities and social exclusion. This volume, therefore, addresses the following questions. What are the distinctive features of social innovations by cooperatives? How social innovations bring in changes in the process and outcome of development? After presenting theories of social innovation and a critical review of cooperatives and social innovation, the book presents 15 chapters on social innovations by cooperatives in the Asia Pacific region. These social innovations are related to health insurance, community-based tourism, disaster response, climate-smart agriculture, use of social media for youth empowerment, training for the emergence of second-line leaders in cooperatives, social inclusion through innovative finance, profitable marketing of organic produce to strengthen economic status of small farmers, digital auction and value addition for income security of farmer members, a collaboration between cooperative members and workers for the mutual benefit, worker cooperatives, women leadership and participation, building a union-cooperative partnership in finance and rating of cooperatives to promote transparency and accountability. A chapter on innovative services of cooperatives during the time of Covid19 is also included. This volume will be quite significant for co-operators, researchers, teachers, practitioners and policymakers at the global level.

Source: Springer

Short Film Competition: #COOPSFC2020

ICA-AP's Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (ICEI) presents the first ever regional coop short film competition. The entries are invited from students, faculty, and staff from any school, college or training institute from any country in the Asia and Pacific region until October 31, 2020.

International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (ICEI) invites entries for the first ever regional Coop Short Film Competition

Last date to submit entries: **October 31, 2020**

Image credit: Digital Studio Middle East

Creathon: A Cooperative Social Enterprise Business Challenge

Singapore National Co-operative Federation presents Creathon 2021, a business challenge where teams compete to develop surprising and innovative solutions for social challenges. Creathon is the only co-operative social enterprise business challenge held in Singapore and within the South-East Asian region. It is a stimulating experience in co-learning and co-development of entrepreneurial skills and insight in specific details of the challenges.

2021 A Co-operative Social Enterprise Business Challenge
CREATHON

NOV 2020 - JAN 2021
VIRTUAL EVENT

Creathon is a co-operative social enterprise business challenge where teams of 5 compete to develop surprising and innovative solutions for social challenges. Teams will pitch their ideas to a panel of judges and winners get to bring their ideas to life.

A CO-OPERATIVE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

INITIATE YOUR OWN START-UP AND RECEIVE UP TO \$14K IN FUNDING!

CATEGORY		
SCHOOL 13 - 17 YEARS OLD	IHL 17 - 23 YEARS OLD	OPEN 17 - 35 YEARS OLD
1 st Place - \$500	1 st Place - \$1000	1 st Place - \$4000
2 nd Place - \$300	2 nd Place - \$700	2 nd Place - \$2000
3 rd Place - \$150	3 rd Place - \$500	3 rd Place - \$1000

REGISTER ONLINE BY 31 OCT 2020
WWW.SCOOP.COOP/CREATHON2021

Scan for more info!

Organised by: **SNCIF**

In partnership with: **PITCHSPOT**

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



UPCOMING EVENTS

- ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting – **27th October 2020**
- Regional Consultation Meeting on UN Decade of Family Farming: *Formulating Strategies and Action Plan to Strengthen Smallholder Family Farmers in South Asia* – **5th and 6th November 2020** (Virtual)
- Asia-Pacific Regional Webinar: The Impact of COVID-19 and Disrupted Education on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions – **November** (date TBC)
- Online Training: *Strengthening of Marketing through Improvement of Quality Farm Produce and Expansion of Marketing Channels* – **4th – 25th November 2020**
- Online Training: *Empowerment of Rural Women for Improvement of their Leadership and Business Management in Asia and Africa* - **December 2020 – January 2021**
- Online Training: *Strengthening Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives and Farmers' Organisations in Asia & Africa* - **February – March 2021**
- ICA 33rd World Cooperative Congress to be held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea – **1st – 3rd December 2021**

The Covid-19 outbreak has disrupted many scheduled plans and activities across the world. Following WHO guidelines and government advisories, ICA-AP and members have put out on hold physical activities planned for the time being. We will update you as and when the rescheduled dates are available.



The articles related to the ICA-EU Partnership in this newsletter have been co-funded by the European Union. The contents of these articles are the sole responsibility of the International Co-operative Alliance and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.