

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

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14th ICA-AP Regional Assembly

14TH ICA-AP REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Deepening Cooperative Identity

Online Meeting | February 24, 2021 | 11:00 - 13:00 (GMT +05:30)

ICA-AP will first hold its Regional Assembly online in February 2021; and an in-person Regional Assembly to conduct the Regional Board elections, in November/ December 2021, in conjunction with the ICA World Cooperative Congress in Seoul, the Republic of Korea.

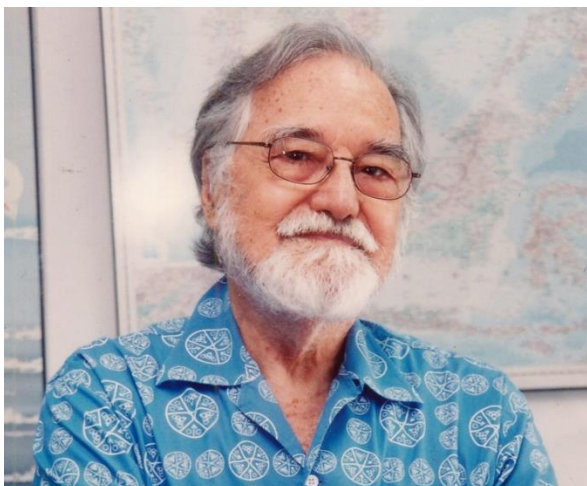
The 14th Regional Assembly will be held online on 24th February 2021 from 11:00 to 13:00 hours India Standard Time to consider administrative issues and approve the postponement of the ICA-AP Regional Board elections. All items will be approved by a show of hand during the online Assembly.

The online assembly will be open to members who have paid their subscription fees for 2020. The number of participants a member can register will depend on the number of votes their organization has in the ICA. While registering, you will have to enter the name of each delegate separately.

Information related to the agenda, registration, and meeting joining details is being posted on the official website of the 14th Regional Assembly – <http://regionalassembly.coop/>.

Please reach out to regionalassembly@icaap.coop, in case you are unsure about the number of votes or have any other questions.

Obituary



**Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz Bin Ungku Abdul Hamid (Ungku A. Aziz)
22 January 1922 – 15 December 2020**

We are deeply saddened by the demise of Royal Professor. Ungku A. Aziz, founding President of ANGKASA (the Malaysian National Cooperative). He was a towering intellect who stressed on cooperative values and principles, ensured cooperative education was made integral in the school curriculum and promoted gender in all its dimensions.

Royal Professor Aziz served as the President of ANGKASA since its inception in 1971 until 2008. With the International Cooperative Alliance, he served as Vice Chairman, member of the ICA-AP Regional Board (then the ICA Regional Office of Asia Pacific Standing Committee) and member of the Human Resource Development Committee of ICA & ICA-AP.

Royal Professor Aziz spent his life working in the fields of education, rural development, and poverty eradication. He pioneered the School Cooperative movement in Malaysia and strongly believed that the cooperative values and principles will produce good future leaders. He was an advocate for the development of women in cooperatives and developed ANGKASA's gender strategy. He was instrumental in establishing courses in Cooperative law for the Faculty of Economics, University of Malaya. He was a pioneer in studying the economics of poverty in Malaysia. He also served as member and consultant at various international and UN organizations such as FAO, ILO, UNESCO, and the UN University Council.

Born into the royal family of Johor, Royal Professor Ungku Aziz had an illustrious career as an academician. He authored more than 50 books and monographs on the social and economic problems in Malaysia. He was the first Malaysian to become the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya. In 1978, he was awarded the title of Royal Professor. He received the Rochdale Pioneers Award in 2007, the Ordre des Arts et Des Lettres from the Government of France and the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Sacred Treasure First Class from the Emperor of Japan.

His passing is a huge loss not only to the cooperative movement in Malaysia but the world of cooperatives. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, ANGKASA, and the cooperative community in Malaysia.

ICA-AP Updates

ICA-MAFF Online Training: Strengthening of Marketing



The ICA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan, Tokyo signed an agreement for the implementation of the “**Capacity Building Project for Farmers’ Organizations to Support the Development of Food Value Chain in Asia and Africa in FY-2020**” for the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, which comprises four programmes:

- **Programme-1:** Training Course on Strengthening Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives and Farmers’ Organizations in Asia and Africa.
- **Programme-2:** Training Course on Empowering of Rural Women for Improvement of their Leadership and Business and Management.
- **Programme-3:** Training Course on Strengthening of Marketing through Improvement of Quality of Farm Produce and Expansion of Marketing Channels.
- **Programme-4:** Follow-up Guidance and Survey of Ex-participants.

Given the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing restrictions on travel, the training programmes are being held online.

The first training course to be held online from 5th to 25th November 2020, was "Strengthening of Marketing through Improvement of Quality of Farm Produce and Expansion of Marketing Channels". The 21-day training was organised by ICA-AP in collaboration with JA-Zenchu (Central Union of Agriculture Cooperatives of Japan) and the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA), Japan. It was attended by 13 participants including cooperative officials and leaders from eight countries – Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

Agriculture, forestry, and fishery are a major source of livelihood in Asia and the Pacific region, major employment sectors and are therefore crucial for achieving economic development. The leaders' statement issued in ASEAN +3 Summit in November 2017 includes promotion of agricultural cooperatives and improvement of their status and role in the markets and the food value chain (FVC). Furthermore, the Government of Japan proposed "Industrial Human Resource Development Cooperation Initiative 2.0" in the Japan ASEAN Summit in November 2018, anticipating human resource development activities for the next five years. With this objective, the training projects funded by MAFF are designed to foster/strengthen farmers' organizations and agricultural cooperatives, promote agri-business by rural women and human resource to build FVC involving well-organized marketing of agricultural products.

Farmers' organizations and agricultural cooperatives play a significant role in building FVC. Hence, the development of these institutions and human resources is expected to contribute to increasing farmers' income, improving the investment environment, and expansion of business of food-related companies in the private sector.

The training was designed to cover topics such as

- the agricultural and cooperative history of Japan
- the role and business of agricultural cooperatives in the socio-economic development of the farmers and rural community
- business models to improve the economic value of farm products thereby expanding markets and increasing farmers income.

The representatives of the organising partners delivered the opening address in the inauguration ceremony. Ms. Savitri Singh, Programme Director, ICA-AP and Programme Coordinator welcomed Mr. Miyazako Masahiro, Director and Senior Negotiator, Bilateral Affairs Division (Emerging Economies Group), MAFF; Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi, Executive Director, IDACA; Staff of IDACA; and all the participants.

Ms. Singh gave an overview of ICA-AP and its various skill and capacity building services for members. She said that participants are selected with great care and it is expected that they will derive maximum benefit from the training and use the learning to strengthen the capacity of farmers and cooperatives in their respective countries. This was the first time the training was being conducted virtually; the course curriculum was designed to include more group work, video presentations, and facility to provide written answers to the questions.

Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi, in his opening address, extended a warm welcome to everyone and gave an overview of IDACA and the objective of the training course. He mentioned, IDACA commenced its activities in 1963 based on the resolution at the 1st Asian Conference on Agricultural Cooperatives, hosted by Mr. Yasushi Hasumi, the first president in the history of JA Zenchu and the founder of this Institute. He said that this course is to let cooperatives in the region play important role to improve product quality, help member farmers get access to markets of high value-added products and facilitate their involvement in the food value chain effectively. He further said that post the training, participants will complete their action plan in responding to the core question – how to strengthen marketing capability of cooperatives, which will certainly play a significant role in ending rural poverty, strengthening farmers' position in the value chain, and the sustainable development of agriculture in their country.

He observed that online communication has its limitations and hoped that the participants will be able to follow the training actively, as, for IDACA, online training is still a new form. Participants missed the opportunity to visit agricultural cooperatives in the countryside but to provide a good virtual

experience, the organising team made their best efforts. He encouraged participants to openly ask questions and share any problem.

Mr. Miyazako Masahiro welcomed everyone and said that It is unfortunate to be not able to meet and attend the training in person; but online training will also provide a good learning opportunity. He said, under the current COVID-19 situation, many agricultural cooperatives and farmers organizations are facing difficulties in implementing their regular activities. Many of them, particularly in Asia, are successfully helping member farmers by distributing agricultural materials, collection and selling of agricultural products, etc. Their efforts are commendable because they encourage not only farmers but those suffering from the impact of COVID-19. He also shared that the expectations from agricultural cooperatives and farmer organizations are increasing under this pandemic situation and it will be great if this training course would enhance participant's capacity to meet the expectations.

The Japan Agricultural Cooperatives or JA Group has comprehensive services and networks, from local cooperatives to the central organizations and strongly supports the Japanese agriculture systems. Mr. Masahiro hoped, the participants will get to know JA Group' role in building the food value chain in Japan through their programme activities and post-training, they will be able to contribute to farmers' communities. He conveyed his appreciation to ICA-AP, IDACA, and all the people who made every effort to implement this training course.

During the training, significant time was spent on preparation of individual action plans where ICA-AP and IDACA experts conducted one-to-one meeting with the participants. The participants are expected to submit their first report one month after the training and the second report after six months. A follow-up visit will be done by the ICA-AP-IDACA team to see the implementation of their action plans, the progress or lack thereof.

The course concluded on 25th November 2020 with a brief closing ceremony. The MAFF, ICA-AP, and IDACA representatives made closing remarks and a representative of the participants from Mr. Ramsudan from Nepal presented the vote of thanks. A 'Certificate of Attendance' was awarded to all the participants virtually; a physical certificate will also be sent to them.

ICA-MAFF Online Training: Empowerment of Rural Women



The ICA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan, Tokyo signed an agreement for the implementation of the **“Capacity Building Project for Farmers’ Organizations to Support the Development of Food Value Chain in Asia and Africa in FY-2020”** for the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Given the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing travel restrictions, these training programmes are being held online. The training course on “Empowering of Rural Women for Improvement of their Leadership and Business and Management in Asia and Africa-2020” was initiated in December 2020.

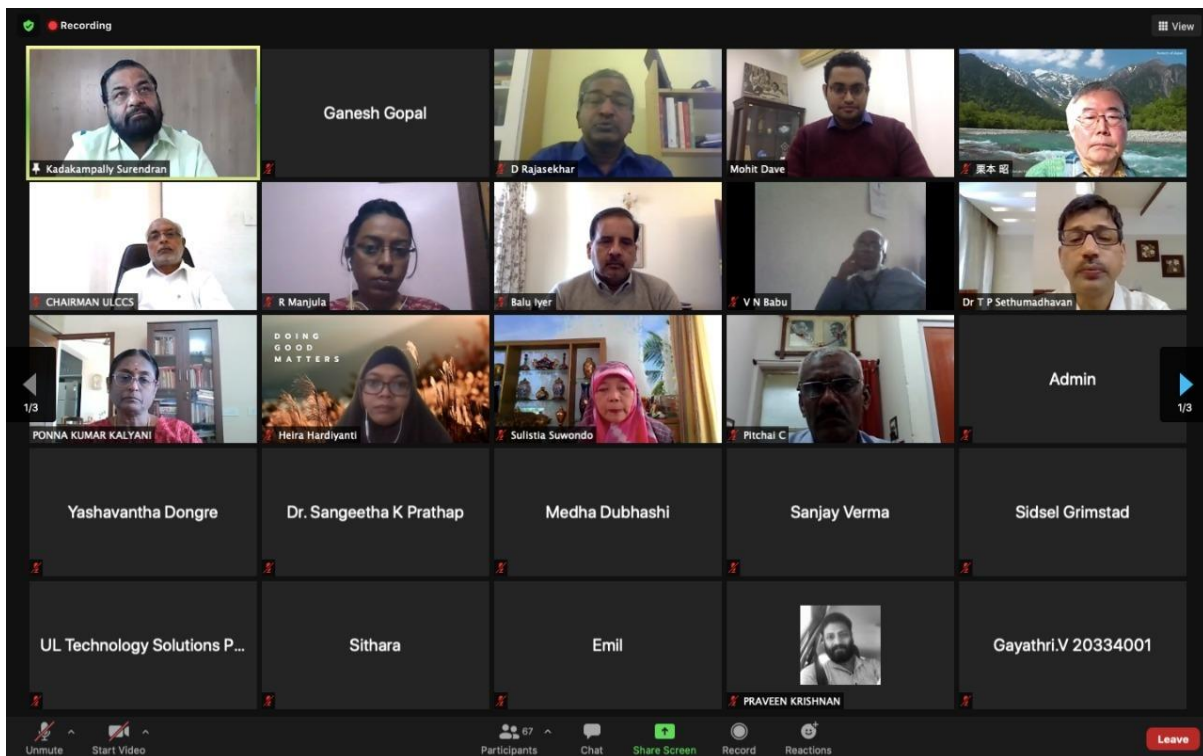
Part-I of the training course was organized from 14th to 18th December 2020. The objective of the training course is to build the capacity of women leaders and enhance their business management abilities.

Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi, Executive Director, IDACA; Mr. Satyanarayana, Chief Executive, NCU; Mr. A.K. Taneja, Programme Coordinator, ICA-AP, representatives of nominating organizations and resource persons; and all the participants attended the opening ceremony. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, made his opening remarks through a video message.

Ten participants from Asian and African countries – India, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Kenya, and Swaziland attended the training programme. At the concluding session, Mr. Iyer, addressed the participants and Ms. Prabha Kumari, the participant from India, presented a vote of thanks on behalf of all the participants.

Part-II of the programme will be conducted online by IDACA from 14th January to 2nd February 2021.

15th ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference



The ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research (CCR) organized the 15th ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference online from 17th to 18th December 2020. The conference was organised in collaboration with the Agricultural Cooperative Staff Training Institute (ACSTI), Government of Kerala, ICA Domus Trust, ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development, and the Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society (ULCCS) to bring together academics and researchers working on cooperatives in the Asia and Pacific region. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference used the virtual platform for research papers' presentation and conducting relevant discussions.

The event was attended by 80 individuals from 12 countries viz. Australia (4), Belgium (1), Ethiopia (1), India (50), Indonesia (11), Iran (2), Japan (2), Malaysia (3), Nepal (2), Palestine (2), Spain (1) and Sri Lanka (1) comprising researchers, policymakers, cooperative practitioners, young scholars, and students. They shared their experiences on issues related to the conference theme, 'Addressing climate change through cooperative enterprise'. The conference format, with two Young Scholar/ Early Career Researcher's workshops on Day 1 and three thematic research panels on Day 2 worked well with the participants.

Special tribute to Dr. Paranjothi

- He had been active in promoting the network of Asian university/campus co-operatives in the ICA AP University/Campus Co-operative Committee since the 1990s.
- He had taken part in networking of the Asian co-operative researchers together with Mr. M. Madane and Prof. Y. Dongre since the late 1990s
- He serves as Vice Chair of the ICA AP Research Co-operative Committee since 2012. We met almost every year (Kobe, Mysore, Bali, Delhi, Seoul, and Newcastle).
- I gave an online lecture on the Japanese agricultural co-operatives for students of VAMNICOM Pune upon his request.
- I learnt on the Indian constitutional reform regarding the co-operative autonomy when we met at the ISTR Conference in Tokyo in 2015.

The conference commenced with Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP welcoming the delegates in the opening ceremony. He expressed sincere gratitude to ICA-AP CCR for organizing the conference despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the unfortunate demise of the Conference Chairperson, late Dr. Paranjothi. Prof. Akira Kurimoto, Chairperson, ICA-AP CCR, in his opening remarks, narrated the background of the research committee and its importance, while giving a special tribute to Dr. Paranjothi. Mr. Ramesan Paleri, Chairman, ULCCS welcomed the participants and expressed his best wishes for the two-day conference.



Sri. Kadakampally Surendran, Minister for Cooperation, Tourism and Devaswoms, Government of Kerala appreciated the efforts of ICA-AP while inaugurating the conference and delivering the keynote address. He said that the Government of Kerala is in the process of ensuring a sustainable, low-carbon path ecosystem in the state including carbon-neutral initiatives. Historically, cooperative societies in the state have played a prominent role in the economic uplift of the people particularly the weaker and marginalised. As part of the Haritha Keralam mission of the state government, cooperatives are already in the forefront for developing organic agriculture, planting saplings, water conservation, promoting non-conventional energy, and waste management. The minister released the book on 'Cooperatives and Social Innovation' edited by Dr. Rajasekhar and Dr. Manjula along with Late Dr. T. Paranjothi. The book aims to empower cooperative researchers in getting insights into the successful cooperative models in Asia and the Pacific region.

Mr. Mohit Dave, Secretary, ICA-AP CCR, introduced the participants to the conference theme and structure. He mentioned the receipt of 61 abstracts for the conference; out of which 36 were shortlisted and called for presentation. 12 research papers around the theme were presented at the conference in three sessions on the second day of the conference.

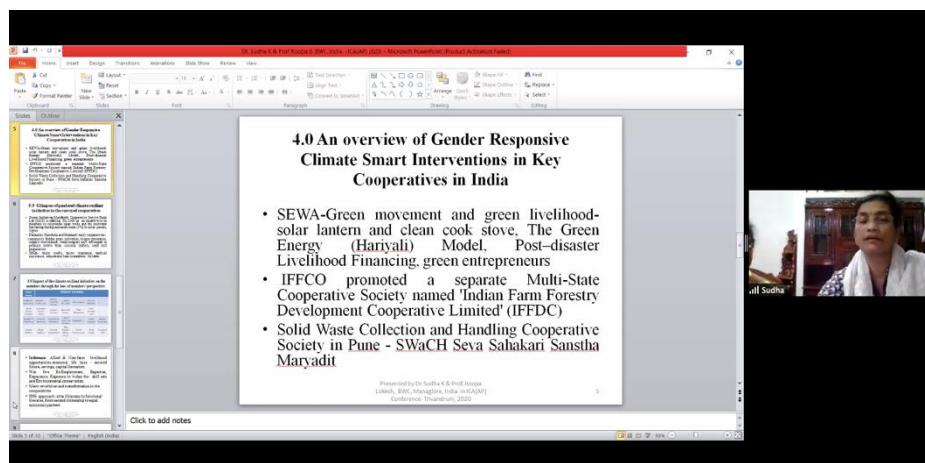


On the first day, two dedicated workshops were organised for young scholars and early career researchers to cultivate and enhance interdisciplinary collaboration. The workshop allowed the scholars to present their research in a friendly environment and receive constructive feedback and support from senior academic researchers in the field. The first session was chaired by Dr. Y. Dongre, Associate Member, ICA-AP CCR. He highlighted where the cooperative research is positioned and touched upon some of the ongoing initiatives including the Asia Pacific Cooperative Research Partnership, which originated in Bali in 2014.



The second session was led by Dr. Sidsel Grimstad, Member, ICA-AP CCR with the help of Dr. Emi Do, Agronomist and Cooperative Specialist (Japan); Mr. Garry Cronan, Cooperative Strategist and Policy Specialist (Australia); and Ms. Heira Hardiyanti, Lecturer (Indonesia). The session laid the vision, where we might be heading in cooperative research, by presenting a framework for publications for young scholars and listing key areas of research such as values and principles; cooperative governance and member participation; cooperative business models and social innovations in times of crisis; contribution to the SDGs, cooperative statistics etc. Mr. Sanjay Verma, Member, ICA-AP CCR summarised the discussions and key findings of Day 1 and shared the offerings and incentives for young scholars from the National Cooperative Union of India.

The second day witnessed several presentations from leading academicians and researchers around the theme - climate action and cooperatives. The sessions were chaired by Prof. Ann Apps from the Newcastle Law School, Australia; Dr. H. K. Misra from IRMA, India; and Dr. C. Pitchai from Gandhigram Rural Institute, India. Several topics of academic interest were discussed and debated.



In the closing plenary, Dr. T. P. Sethumadhavan, Director, ULCCS thanked all the researchers for their presentations at the conference. He stressed upon the need to focus on strengthening regional research networks by making a presence in major research forums and connecting various related fields and research associations. Mr. Iyer, in his closing remarks, mentioned about forming a young

scholars' network and more importantly, carrying out collaborative research projects. He thanked the organisers for their continued support and engagement. The Dr. Mauritz Bonow Award, instituted in 2016, to recognize young researchers and to attract talent to look into issues relating to cooperatives was also announced by him. He said that ICA Domus Trust and ICA-AP endeavour to promote youth participation in not only the ICA-AP Research Conference but also other conferences to bring interest and attention to cooperatives.

A sub-committee of Dr. Sidsel Grimstad, Prof. Akira Kurimoto, and Prof. Yashvanth Dongre looked into the papers which showcased academic rigour and critical analysis in writing and research methods. Mr. Abhishek Saxena, Research Fellow, Institute of Rural Management Anand, India was awarded the first prize of US\$ 500. He had reviewed three case studies of cooperative enterprises/ producer organizations promoted in regions susceptible to environmental degradation and/or trying to promote good agriculture practices. The paper looked at the challenges faced by these producer organizations while trying to stay viable and benefitting for the members. Ms. Sreelakshmi C. C., Research Scholar, School of Management Studies, Cochin University of Science and Technology, India received the second prize of US\$ 300. Her study incorporated the environmental concern and green perceived value to understand the adoption and continuance of green banking and analyzed the role of trust & cooperation in the initial acceptance or confirmation of the expectation process.

International Cooperative Webinar



The Deputy Office for Cooperative Affairs and the International Department of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare of the Islamic Republic of Iran organised an International Webinar on Structural Analysis of Regulatory and Support Models of State Institution (Government) and Cooperative Business in Selected Countries on 15th December 2020. The webinar was to provide a platform to learn from the success stories of other countries in cooperative development, policymaking, and planning; and to exchange information on a system that can help establishing congenial relationship between the government and cooperatives and enable regulators and policymakers to support the cooperative business.

Dr. Moslem Khani, Director General for Cooperative Extension, Education and Research, delivered the opening address and facilitated the webinar. Dr. Shahrivar, Director General for International Department of the Ministry explained the role, function, and projects of the Ministry for Development and Growth of Cooperatives in Iran.

The speakers presented their views on the following two key points –

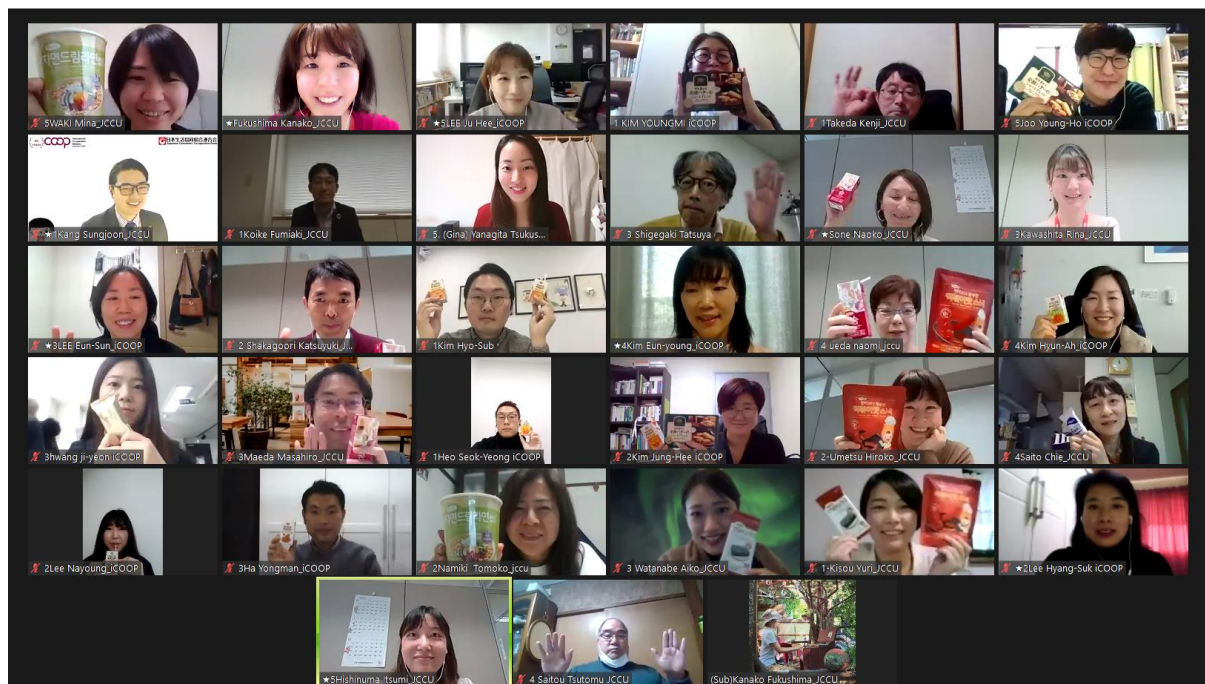
- Title of incentives in place in their country to help establish and develop cooperative business
- Models and methods of the Government regulation/ supervision on cooperative societies.

Ms. Savitri Singh, Programme Director, ICA-AP made a presentation on “A comparative Study of Successful Models of Regulations and Support Relationship between Government & Cooperatives”. She presented a comparative study of cooperative legislation in India, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand that comprised developing and developed economies based on Legal Framework Analysis done under ICA-EU Partnership.

The research showed that India has general and multiple cooperative laws, and the nature of law is restrictive. In Japan, cooperative law is sector-specific and some of the laws are restrictive. In New Zealand, legal framework accommodates cooperatives efficiently. In Korea, there are sector-specific cooperative laws, the legal framework is cooperative friendly and supportive.

The conducive legal environment is crucial but effective leadership and active participation of members also play a significant role in the success of the business. Cooperatives are part of the overall system of a country and society. The internal and external socio-economic-legal environment affects both members and business. Since cooperatives are social businesses impacting the lives of people with fewer resources, a supportive legal and policy environment is required to sustain them. She concluded by sharing that “one size” does not fit all; cooperative law should be need-based and mutually beneficial to the government and cooperatives in a specific country.

JCCU-iCoop Self-Study Project



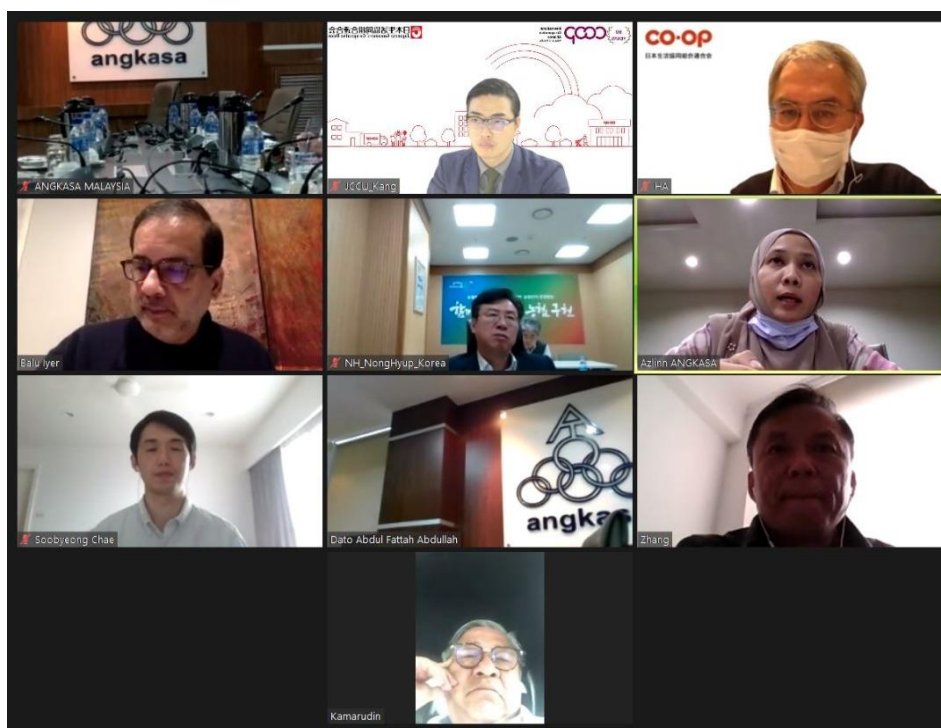
The Japanese Consumers' Co-operatives Union (JCCU) and iCOOP Korea (iCOOP) organised a webinar on 9th December 2020 as a self-study project for their staff.

The participants included 18 representatives from Japan (JCCU - Public Relations Division, Member Relations Division, General Operations Division, and the Consumer Co-operative Institute of Japan) and 13 representatives from Korea (iCoop International Team, Education Team, Management Support Team of iCOOP Support Center, and iCOOP Co-operative Institute).

The objectives of the webinar were to learn about each other's organisations and to share knowledge and knowhow of their operations. The programme included lectures and group sessions to reflect on the business and social activities of each organisation. All participants were encouraged to ask questions about each other's organisations. Each session was translated into both Japanese and Korean. At the end of the session, the participants had a better understanding of both countries' consumer cooperatives as well as the relationship between international cooperatives.

ICA-AP Consumer Committee is also considering similar events with other Consumer Cooperatives in the region.

9th ICA-AP Malaysia Business Office (MBO) Council Meeting



The 9th ICA-AP Malaysia Business Office (MBO) Council Meeting was held virtually on 22nd December 2020. It brought together representatives and seconding staff from the supporting organizations of the MBO – All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC), Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union (JCCU), Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA), and National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF). Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP and staff from the MBO presented the activities conducted since the last meeting held in September 2019 and the tentative plans for 2021. The COVID-19 has impacted the MBO activities for 2020 and tenure of seconded staff. The Council discussed the administration and staffing at the office with a proposal to co-support the cost of a permanent staff. Dato' Abdul Fattah Abdullah, President, ANGKASA and Chair, MBO Council appreciated members for taking time to attend the meeting and wished for better collaboration in 2021.

Member Updates

Mr. Dileep Sanghani Elected as the New NCUI President

Mr. Dileep Sanghani, Chairman, National Federation of State Co-operative Banks (NAFSCOB), and Vice-Chairman, Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative (IFFCO) was unanimously elected as the President of National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) during the Governing Council Elections of NCUI on 23rd November 2020. Mr. Bijender Singh, Chairman, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) and Mr. K. Sivadasan Nair, Chairman, National Cooperative Agriculture & Rural Development Banks' Federation (NCARDBF) were elected as Vice-Presidents.

Mr. Sanghani has been a former Cabinet Minister in BJP Government from Gujarat. He was the Minister of Agriculture, Cooperation, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Legislative, and Parliamentary Affairs. He was also a member of Gujarat Legislative Assembly. Before this, he has also been a member of Lok Sabha, representing Amreli for four terms. For his significant contribution to the cooperative movement, he has been conferred with "Sahakarita Shiromani" Award by KRIBHCO.

6th National Representative Congress of Vietnam Cooperative Alliance

Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) organised the 6th National Representative Congress for the term 2020 – 2025 from 20th to 22nd December 2020 in Hanoi. This event was organized when Vietnam is striving to implement the "double objectives" in preventing the Covid-19 pandemic effectively as well as concentrating on revival and socio-economic development.

The event provided an opportunity for the VCA system to evaluate the results achieved in the past five years and prepare the direction, objectives, and mission for the coming time. The delegates of the 6th National Representative Congress were high-ranking leaders of the Party, the State, and the Government of Vietnam; representatives of ministries, branches, massive organizations, international organizations and diplomatic missions in Hanoi; and over 1,000 delegates representing 63 provincial, city cooperative alliances nationwide, the cooperatives, the federations of cooperatives in all fields and sectors in Vietnam. The objectives of the Congress were:

- The collective economy and cooperatives in the period of 2020-2025 will continue to develop in quantity, scale, and quality. Average growth speed to be increased to 8-15% per year, the income of the cooperative members to be increased from 6% per year.
- Attract individuals, households, and others to join the cooperatives and pre-cooperatives on an average 15% per year and at least 60% of individual households in the rural areas to be cooperative and pre-cooperative members.
- By the end of 2025, attract at least 90% of the total cooperatives, 100% of cooperative federations, and 30% pre-cooperatives that are operating, to become the regular members of VCA system.

These objectives were defined based on the data at the end of 2020 – there are 119,248 pre-cooperatives, 26,400 cooperatives, and 100 federations of cooperatives. There are 8.1 million members who are represented by individual households in rural areas, accounting for 33% of the total and who influence the living, the income, and the purchasing power of 30 million people.

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP congratulated VCA on the conduct of the Congress and appreciated their efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 effectively.

JAPAN Enacts Worker Cooperative Act



The Japanese Cooperative Movement witnessed a historic moment with the unanimous enactment of Worker Cooperative Act on 4th December 2020.

Japanese cooperators have been campaigning for over 40 years to have an act for Worker Cooperatives. In the absence of a specific act, worker cooperatives had to register either as non-profit organisations or small and medium enterprises. The adoption of the new law gives workers cooperatives their due recognition and enables them to register as cooperatives with legal backing. This will also pave way for new employment opportunities for the newer generations.

Mr. Nobuhiro Furumura, Chairperson, Japan Workers' Co-operative Union said "Today, amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, we live in the midst of unease and confusion to which no end is in sight. I cannot help but think that the enactment of the Workers' Cooperatives Act in Japan under such conditions was somehow inevitable. I see the Act as being intended not merely to establish a way of cooperative but to take on the challenge of returning to the essential fundamentals of society: self-governance, human rights, and democracy."

More information can be read [here](#).

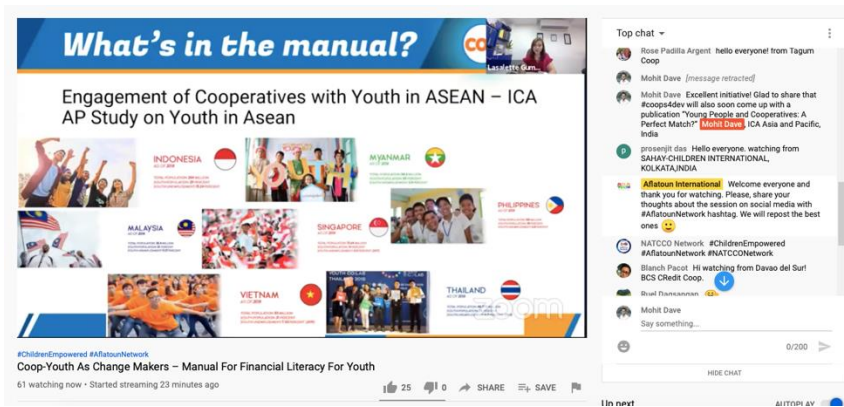
ICA-EU Updates

Launch of Aflatoun Manual for Cooperatives



Aflatoun International and NATCCO (ICA member from the Philippines), held a joint launch event of Aflatoun Manual for Cooperatives “Coop-Youth as Change Makers – Manual for Financial Literacy for Youth” on 2nd December. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP participated in the event and encouraged cooperatives in the region to consider the importance of the life skill and financial education for children and young people, as shown by NATCCO in the last 12 years.

The Philippines is the third youngest nation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with almost 32% of its population under the age of 15 years. A consultation carried out by the World Bank’s Knowledge for Development Community (KDC) network in the Philippines in 2016 with youth groups on issues of education, employment, environment, and governance called attention to problems plaguing the Filipino youth. High transportation costs and poor infrastructure prohibiting access to schools, limited support for aspiring entrepreneurs, and the need for career guidance programmes are just among these problems. Programmes like Aflatoun teach young people to create financial buffers that empower them to face some of these challenges and to create their innovative solutions.



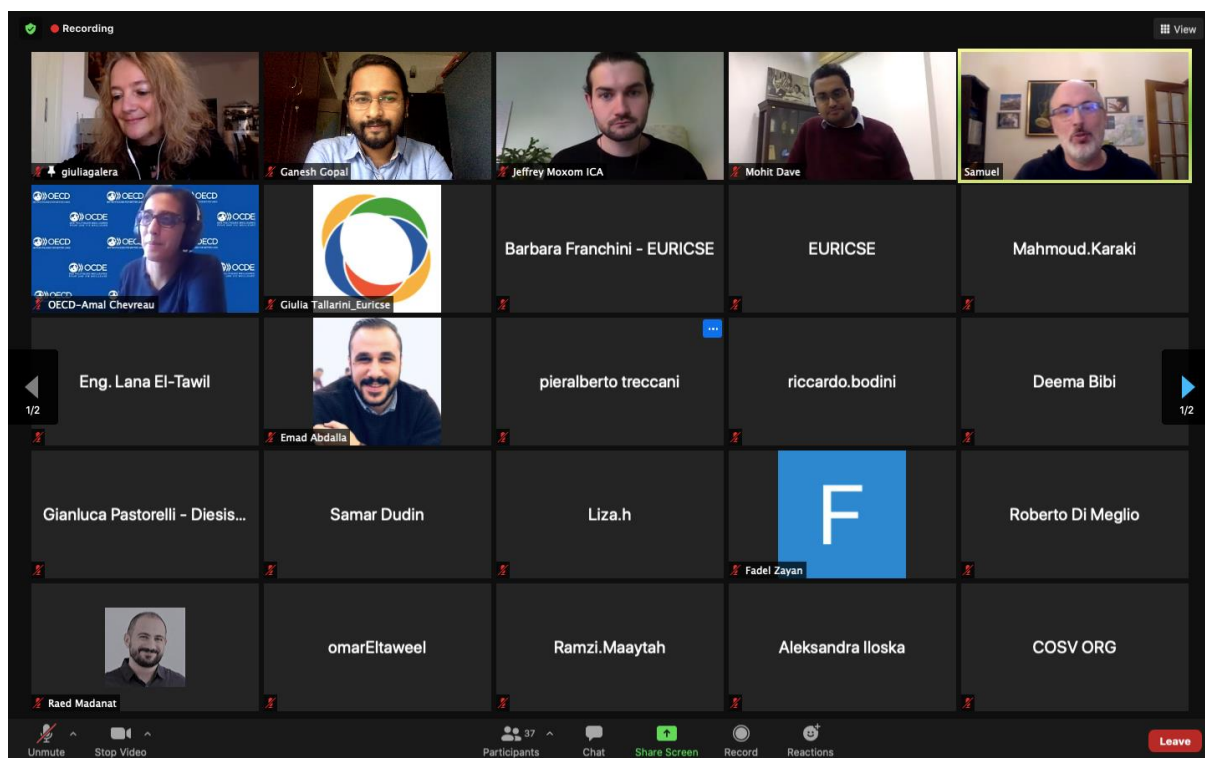
The Aflatoun Programme is a prominent success story in empowering children and young people through the medium of social and financial education. The humble project started in Mumbai by Ms.

Jeroo Billimoria currently reaches 5.4 million children and youth through 200 global partners in 116 countries! The programme has created entrepreneurs as well as responsible citizens who have become changemakers in their local communities.

NATCCO began implementing the Aflatoun Programme in 2006 in partnership with the Aflatoun Child Social and Financial Education Organization (formerly Child Savings International); laboratory co-ops; and the Philippine government agencies - Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) and Department of Education (DepEd). The driving force was to empower young people from financially insecure households who had dropped out of schools, or who were working in menial jobs to make ends meet. The goal was to teach financial management and life skills as well as instil a spirit of entrepreneurship among these young people.

The ICA Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) recognizes the power of young changemakers and has focused on youth engagement through coops. It established its Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC) in 2006 to encourage youth to become active members, employees, and leaders of coops. ICA-AP’s focus on youth empowerment is also supplemented by the Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (ICEI) that advocates for coops to be built within educational institutions like schools, colleges, and universities. This manual and the success stories of youth and coops that it contains have immense potential for replication across countries and will provide an important tool for ICA-AP’s focus on youth-based activities.

ICA-AP Participates in the EURICSE International Seminar



An international seminar was organised by the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (EURICSE) in association with other partners, within the framework of the project "Mubaderoon for social change" in Jordan on 15th December 2020. The theme of the open webinar was “Unlocking the Potential of Social Enterprises in Jordan”.

ICA-AP was invited to speak at a session on “Social Enterprises and Social Economy Organizations: Legal Trends and Challenges from an International Perspective”. The office was represented by Ganesh Gopal, Programme Officer and Mohit Dave, Programme Manager.

The ICA as part of the ICA-EU partnership (#coops4dev) has undertaken the legal framework analysis (LFA) research to understand the state of cooperative law in its member countries. The methodology of the LFA research was developed in association with EURICSE. 62 country National Reports from over 56% ICA member countries are available at <https://coops4dev.coop/en>.

Ganesh Gopal, Programme Officer, in-charge of the legal framework analysis (LFA) in Asia and Pacific region gave a presentation on, “ICA-EU Partnership and Cooperative Law: developing an enabling environment for cooperatives - reflections and learnings from Jordan.” His presentation focused on the state of cooperative law (No. 18 of 1997) and Cooperative Societies Charter (No. 36 of 2016) in Jordan, taking insights from the National Report of the LFA research, prepared by an independent expert. He focused on how social enterprises, particularly cooperatives, can play a role in national development by being vehicles of inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods. He highlighted the need to promote among young people the relevance of collective enterprises and social enterprise creation. He stressed on the need for national cooperative legislation to be aligned with the Statement on the Cooperative Identity. Instances were pointed out from Jordan’s Cooperative Societies Charter where the principles were implicit and the best practices such as the relative ease with which a cooperative can be registered swiftly by having to deal with only a single authority. Ganesh delved into the specific aspects of ‘Cooperative Legal Friendliness’ in Jordan. He said that cooperative laws worldwide are being viewed from the lens of ‘Cooperative Legal Friendliness’ akin to the Ease of doing business (EoDB) index of the World Bank. The Q & A session saw several engaging questions on specific clauses in the cooperative charter and on-the-ground experiences from cooperators in Jordan.

Other speakers included representatives from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), DIESIS Network Belgium, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship of Jordan and other academics and policymakers.

Tête-à-Tête with PerMaTa



PerMaTa (*Independent Leprosy Association*) from Indonesia is one of the [#coopyouth](#) Replication Project winners! The core of the proposed cooperative is waste recycling - solving waste disposal problems and imparting environmental health education in Indonesia. The business model is based on the concept of the "Waste Banks" which is already practised in several parts of Indonesia, but not in their region.

We bring to you a brief conversation with the team.

Congratulations on being one of the winners of the ICA Youth Replication Project! Can you share how did you all come together as a team?

We are young people from the same background, we all have had leprosy. We all want to be free from the restraints of stigma and discrimination that we have experienced in one way or the other. Because of leprosy, most of us have no education and no permanent job. Therefore, we want to help each other to improve our standard of living.

PerMaTa (Independent Leprosy Association) is a non-governmental/ community organization, a DPO (Disabled Persons' Organisation), a place for us to develop ourselves. We all have grown through and because of this organisation. Within PerMata, we are involved in various projects to help other persons affected by leprosy who feel alone and scared. We meet regularly and always lookout for more members.

How did you come to know about the ICA Youth Replication Project and tell us about your experience?

We were informed about this opportunity by our colleague Kerstin from Dare This Indonesia (DTI). She is a member of the 'FundsforNGOs' platform where calls for proposals worldwide are shared and the ICA replication project was posted. She was hooked immediately because PerMaTa has been talking about starting a cooperative for a long time but did not know how to begin, without funding, training, and support. We were enthusiastic once we heard from her and knew we had to try, and we had to win this! Our advisor and mentor Doddy Tumanduk already had experience with cooperatives and with his help, we were able to write the proposal. We worked hard for the video pitch, had to take shots repeatedly, but we were determined to make it as good as possible to show what we are capable of.

Were you expecting to win?

We hoped to win, but of course, we did not know the competition and we feared that our low education might be a problem. Usually, we can obtain funding from development organisations or donors for leprosy. This was the first time we applied for a real global 'business' organisation and were not at all sure if we could win. But we knew we would not disappoint them; in case we were selected! So, we worked hard to make the video pitch, we spent the night learning our text by heart and had to overcome our shyness to speak in front of the camera. We were also supported by Doddy and Kerstin in putting together the proposal.

What is the concept of your project?

We see a lot of garbage in our neighbourhoods, which creates many problems. People just throw their garbage bags from their motorbikes onto the streets. We understood that waste can also be profitable if it is managed in the form of a waste bank. The waste bank can be a solution for the garbage problem and an opportunity for us to earn an income.

What is your plan of action now?

We are very lucky to have been linked up with two mentors from Indonesia who will train us and help us understand how a cooperative works. In January, we will identify two collection points for the waste bank, in addition to the two locations that we already have. We will then start purchasing equipment needed for the operation of the waste bank. We will visit other waste banks to continue learning. We will coordinate with the local government regarding the waste bank to obtain the necessary permits and support. Then, we will disseminate information to the public about environmental cleanliness and the advantages of waste banks. By the end of January, we hope the waste bank to be running. And while doing this, we will also start the process of registering the cooperative. For this, we also will recruit more members!

Why did you choose the cooperative enterprise model and what were the challenges that you faced in your journey so far?

For us, it seemed that cooperatives with the concept of community economic development, based on democratic procedures are good. We can help each other and improve our economy through cooperatives. Cooperatives teach us not only about business but also about saving, which is not very common here in Indonesia. We can also learn about business together through existing business group. Our funds can be safe because we can monitor the development of cooperatives together. The challenge we face right now is that we have no previous experience with cooperatives, so we need to learn a lot. Besides, some of us do not have jobs, so it is difficult to pay the basic savings. We will hopefully overcome this problem with the waste bank.

Announcements



**SHORT FILM
COMPETITION
COOPSFC20**

Last date for submission: 31 January 2021

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The poster features a central illustration of a woman with blue hair in a bun, wearing a yellow shirt and blue pants, operating a camera on a tripod. The background is a vibrant pink with various film-related icons like a camera, film strip, and clapperboard scattered around.

Short Film Competition: #COOPSFC2020

ICA-AP's Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (ICEI) initiated the first-ever regional cooperative short film competition in September 2020. 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. The deadline for registrations has been extended until 31st January 2020.

Postponement of World Cooperative Congress



WORLD COOPERATIVE CONGRESS

**Deepening our
Cooperative
Identity**

**1-3 DECEMBER 2021
SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

The logo features a stylized bird or wing shape composed of overlapping colorful bands in shades of purple, blue, green, yellow, and red. The text is arranged around and below this graphic.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICA Global Board has postponed the 33rd World Cooperative Congress. The Congress will now be held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea from 1st to 3rd December 2021.

The theme for the Congress is, “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. The 33rd World Cooperative Congress will be an opportunity to look back and validate the cooperative movement’s resilience, leadership, and solidarity during times of crisis. This event will serve as an important forum to:

- Discuss why the cooperative identity, including definition, principles and values, is needed now more than ever;
- Show cooperative resilience by sharing experiences and testimonies; and
- Discuss how cooperatives can significantly contribute to the global economic, social, and environmental reconstruction.

The Congress will consist of pre-events on 28th to 30th November, followed by the conference itself from 1st to 3rd December. Details of the Congress will be available at <https://ICAWorldCoopCongress.coop>. The World Cooperative Congress will be held at the Grand Walkerhill Hotel, in Seoul: <https://www.walkerhill.com/grandwalkerhillseoul/en/>

The dates for the Congress are subject to be further rescheduled should the pandemic make it necessary for force majeure.

Rita Panikar wins OCDC International Cooperative Innovation Award



Rita Panicker, Founder and Director of Butterflies was awarded the prestigious 2020 International Cooperative Innovation Award by the Overseas Cooperative Development Council (OCDC), USA. The International Cooperative Innovation Award is given annually by OCDC, to an individual or individuals who champion, advocate, and promote effective, sustainable international cooperative development in a remarkable way.

Butterflies, a registered voluntary organisation, based in Delhi, India, has been working with the most vulnerable group of children, especially street and street connected children since 1989. In 2001, Butterflies launched the Children’s Development Khazana (CDK), a life-skills education programme to educate children on democratic values and financial management. CDK is a cooperative managed and owned by children. It has a membership of over 40,000 children between the ages of eight and 18 and is operational in seven countries.

Rita Panicker has been recognized for her courage and creativity to develop innovative and participatory model to meet the needs of some of the world’s most vulnerable children. OCDC will

make a \$1,000 contribution to Butterflies in Rita's honor. The video of her getting the award can be viewed [here](#).

Upcoming Events

- Online training: Empowerment of Rural Women for Improvement of their Leadership and Business Management in Asia and Africa Part 2 – **January 2021**
- Online Training: Strengthening Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives and Farmers' Organisations in Asia & Africa - **February – March 2021**
- ICA-AP Regional Board meeting – 23rd February 2021
- 14th ICA-AP Online Regional Assembly – **24th February 2021**
- ICA-AP Regional Board Elections – Seoul, the Republic of Korea, in conjunction with World Cooperative Congress (TBC)
- 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.



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