

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

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14th ICA-AP Online Regional Assembly

14TH ICA-AP REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Deepening Cooperative Identity

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

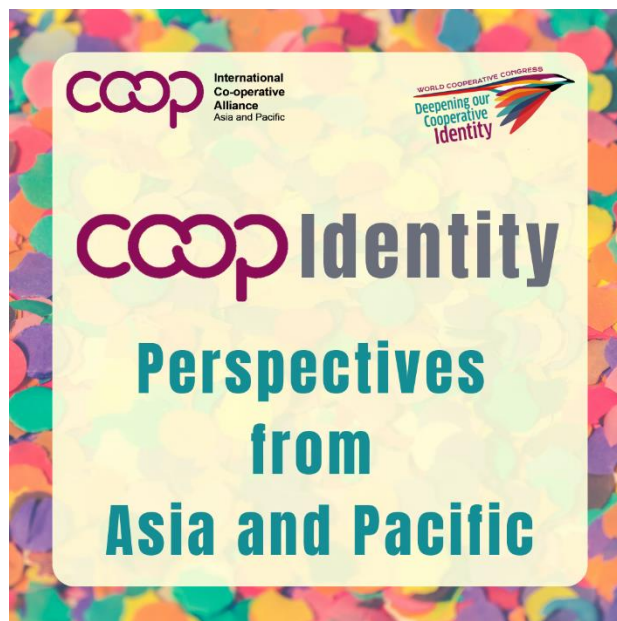
The 14th Regional Assembly will be held online on 24th February 2021 from 11:00 to 13:00 hours India Standard Time to consider administrative issues and approve the postponement of the ICA-AP Regional Board elections. All items will be approved by a show of hand during the online Assembly.

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, proxy, 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 have any questions.

Spirit of Cooperative Identity in the Asia and Pacific Region



Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific Region



Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP

The [33rd ICA World Cooperative Congress](#) in December 2021 with the theme, *Deepening the Cooperative Identity*, will celebrate and deepen the understanding of the Statement on the Cooperative Identity (SCI) and the profound social and economic impact of cooperatives worldwide. The 33rd Congress comes both at a time of celebration and crisis. While we celebrate the 125th anniversary of the ICA and the 25th anniversary of the SCI; we also battle the COVID-19 pandemic, face the impact of climate change, confront widening income and wealth inequality, and explore questions about the future of work.

The ICA [Statement on the Cooperative Identity](#) provides a common definition of cooperatives, a specific commitment to cooperative and ethical values, and clarity on the operational principles that differentiate us from other forms of businesses. The Cooperative Identity and values bring life in the day-to-day operations of a cooperative enterprise. They are the guidelines through which cooperators strive to operate and develop their cooperatives. The principles are ‘living’ as they are specifically intended to be kept up to date over time as societies change. The 2015 [Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles](#) provides the latest guidance on the application of the principles to the governance and operation of cooperatives. They guide those who have the task of registering, regulating, or supervising cooperatives in the local, national, and regional economies of the world.

In August 1997, the ICA-AP Regional Office organised a special workshop on the *ICA Statement of Cooperative Identity: From Theory to Practice* to discuss the extent to which cooperatives in Asia and Pacific had put the cooperative principles into practice, and what progress or the lack thereof had been achieved as a result.

The ICA Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) Regional Office will carry perspectives from eminent cooperators in the region and also organize a series of online consultations with members (before the 33rd Congress) to reflect on how the SCI guides day-to-day operations (practical challenges and strategies to overcome them); sets cooperatives (membership and value-based) apart from other business enterprises; fosters member interest and responsibilities; enhances the effective ‘cooperativeness’ of their organisations; and helps relationships with government and stakeholders. The perspectives will feed into the discussions to deepen the Cooperative Identity by examining its values, strengthening its actions, committing to its principles, and living its achievements.

We are delighted to have Ms. Om Devi Malla, ICA Global Board member and member of the ICA Board Identity Committee and Prof. Akira Kurimoto, Chair of ICA-AP Research Committee and member ICA Committee on Cooperative Research (CCR) to advise and guide us during the online consultations.

In this issue, we present the perspective of two eminent researchers from the region. Professor Kurimoto draws upon his experience as a member of the ICA Principles Committee and his observations from the Asia-Pacific region. Garry Cronan, Cooperative Strategist and Cooperative Business Researcher who earlier served as ICA Director of Communications and founder of ICA's Global 300 project looks at how the cooperative identity has been interpreted by large cooperative businesses over the period since the adoption of ICA principles in Manchester in 1995.

Deepening Cooperative Identity in the Asia-Pacific



Professor Akira Kurimoto, Chair ICA-AP Research Committee and Member ICA Committee for Cooperative Research

Need for Cooperative Identity

We witness the growing inequality, political and social divides, while we are threatened by the consequences of climate change and rampant pandemics. We could not succeed in overcoming these challenges when we desperately needed the cooperation and solidarity among people. In such a difficult time, we have to address these global issues relying on our basics, Cooperative Identity, crystalized in the ICA Statement on Cooperative Identity. The ICA Statement was agreed as the greatest common factor of Cooperative Identity among cooperators worldwide in 1995. It was then included in the UN Cooperative Guidelines (2001) and the ILO Recommendation 193 on Promotion of Cooperatives as a part of the international public law. It contains the definition of a cooperative, its values and principles that are universal. The Guidance Notes of Cooperative Principles were published in 2015 to help understand and practice the cooperative principles.

Characteristics of the Asia-Pacific Cooperatives

Asia-Pacific region has a vast diversity of the political-legal system, economic system, level of development, culture, and religion. The political system is mostly based on the development states that prioritize socio-economic catch-up to the advanced West. The legal system is the common law in newly independent countries and Oceania, while the statute law is dominant in East-Asian countries. The economic system is based on a market economy with a varying degree of state intervention while the region includes the richest and least developed countries. The ethnocentric culture and nationalism often fuel conflicts among nations while religions also create persistent conflicts. Such diversity makes regional political and economic integration very difficult.

The cooperatives in Asia and Pacific operate under such circumstances. Asian cooperatives are characterized by the dominant state roles in regulation and promotion while Pacific cooperatives face strong competition with the for-profit sector. The British Empire introduced the Cooperative Credit

Societies Act of India with strong government control in 1904, that became a prototype of cooperative legislation in most of the colonized countries. Even after the independence, such top-down tradition was inherited since national leaders had seen cooperatives as an engine of national development. The ICA in Asia and Pacific has convened the biennial cooperative minister's conference since 1990 that aims to strengthen cooperative autonomy and independence based on constructive partnership, but the progress has been very slow. In most of the countries, cooperative ministers or registrars have dominant roles in regulating cooperatives. Even Japan has a strong bureaucracy system that controls cooperatives to promote specific industrial policies (e.g., agriculture, banking etc.).

Deepening Cooperative Identity from the Asia-Pacific Perspective

The ICA 33rd World Cooperative Congress will be held in Seoul, South Korea, in December 2021 with the main theme "Deepening Cooperative Identity". This is the second occasion following the ICA Tokyo Congress in 1992 that discussed basic cooperative values. Seoul Congress is a good opportunity to reflect on the Cooperative Identity after 26 years since its adoption and renew our commitment to deepen it. The International Cooperative Research Conference and the Cooperative Law Forum will be held as pre-events discussing the same.

As far as the definition and values are concerned, there have been very few discussions. A Korean researcher proposed to combine the "Asian values" with universal values in the Research Conference held in conjunction with the Tokyo Congress, emphasizing collective orientation as against Western individualism but could not give an impact. The concept was advocated by Mahathir Mohamad (Prime Minister of Malaysia) and by Lee Kuan Yew (Prime Minister of Singapore) as a political ideology of the 1990s, which defined elements of society, culture, and history common to the nations of Southeast and East Asia, aiming to use commonalities – for example, the principle of collectivism – to unify people for their economic and social good and to create a pan-Asian identity as contrasted with perceived European ideals of the universal human rights. However, the popularity of the concept waned after the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

The 1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership addresses no discrimination. In the Asian context, the participation of women and youth is the most relevant issue since male and senior leaders are prevalent in cooperatives, reflecting on the culture embedded in the public and domestic spheres. The legal tradition of land ownership that is confined to men in farmers' coops may be a factor influencing the composition of membership and leadership. There are cooperatives exclusively composed of women in India, Iran, Malaysia, etc. to avoid gender discrimination while women occupy most of the membership and boards in consumer coops in Japan and South Korea. The youth is also underrepresented group, the lack of youth participation and young leaders may endanger the sustainability of cooperatives.

The 2nd Principle: Democratic Control is concerned with the internal governance of a cooperative. Recently, we witnessed the failure of governance leading to the serious setback of the Cooperative Group in the UK and the bankruptcy of Fagor domestic electric company, a flagship workers' cooperative of the Mondragon group in Spain. The ICA's Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles exhibit guidelines for a wide range of governance issues. In response to scandals including manipulated account and appropriation of cooperative property by chief executives in the mid-90s, the JCCU published the guidelines for sound governance in 1999 covering various aspects of top management, boards, auditors, general meetings, and disclosure of information.

The 3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation deals with members' obligation in strengthening the capital of their cooperative. A cooperative has inherent difficulty in raising capital because of limited return on investment and equal voting right. Therefore, alternative ways of raising capital were developed and demutualisation took place in the Western countries. Some cooperatives in Australia and New Zealand followed this way but it seems that demutualisation is not so popular in most of the Asian countries. In Japan, agricultural cooperatives run the world-class banks, but a huge amount of farmers' deposit is not effectively utilized, while the consumer cooperatives build up members' share through monthly instalments since they are not allowed to operate credit business.

The 4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence is a principle newly added in 1995. It is especially relevant to the Asian cooperatives since they are still by and large under the strong control of the state bureaucracy. To establish a constructive partnership based on equality, both states and cooperatives need to change their attitude. The former has to confine itself to legal supervision in accordance to the UN/ ILO guidelines and the resolutions of the ICA ministerial conferences while the latter has to build capacities in strategic planning and coordination to be more independent in policymaking in the members' interests.

The 5th Principle: Education, Training and Information is a principle enlisted since the time of Rochdale Pioneers. Member education is essential for the success of cooperatives while the manager and employee training are conducted at primary, secondary, and national levels. The school and university cooperatives in many Asian countries are conducive to the cooperative development in the long run. In the information age, the importance of public relations is increasingly recognized but cooperatives tend to lag in utilizing state-of-art digital devices.

The 6th Principle: Cooperation Among Cooperatives is a principle added in 1966 and its importance is ever increasing in the time of mega competition. Cooperatives of the same kind are naturally federated at the regional and national level while the collaboration among different kind of cooperatives needs to be facilitated. In Japan, the direct transaction between consumers and producers (Sanchoke) has been promoted by consumer and farmer/ fishery cooperatives to enhance mutual understanding and realize mutual benefits since the 1970s; while the Japan Cooperative Alliance (JCA) was set up as a thinktank covering all types of cooperatives in 2018. In the Asia and Pacific region, the ICA-AP Regional Office is expected to strengthen the collaboration among national cooperatives while the ASEAN Cooperative Organization (ACO) needs to create tangible benefits in the sub-regional cooperation.

The 7th Principle: Concern for Community is a new principle added in 1995. This is related to cooperatives' community engagement through policies approved by members. It is noteworthy that this principle presented a notion of sustainable development 20 years ahead of the SDGs. In the Asia and Pacific region, prone to natural disasters caused by earthquakes, tsunami, and typhoons/ cyclones, that frequently brought formidable human and monetary losses, we can note the cooperative responses to such calamities in both rescue and rehabilitation phases. We observed cooperative endeavors to rehabilitate victims' life in Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka and so on after the Indian Ocean Earthquake/ Tsunami in 2004. After the Kobe Earthquake in 1995 and the East Japan Earthquake/ Tsunami in 2011, the Japanese cooperatives made tremendous efforts to rescue victims and helped them to rehabilitate lives. Additionally, cooperatives succeeded in enacting the Act to Help Victims to Rehabilitate Lives in 1998.

There exist many best practices of implementing cooperative values and principles that are not necessarily known widely, but some of them are analyzed in the case studies in the volume “Waking the Asian Pacific Cooperative Potential” published in 2020. We need to document these cases to draw lessons and do better in meeting challenges through deepening Cooperative Identity in the future.

Views expressed by the author are personal.

Size and Identity



Garry Cronan, Cooperative Strategist, Policy Specialist, Cooperative Business Researcher

Cooperatives define themselves through a set of agreed values and principles. One of the key roles of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) is to act as the global steward of these principles.

The ICA last revised its international principles in 1995, at its Centennial Congress in Manchester, United Kingdom. The resulting *Statement on the Cooperative Identity*, including a newly spelt out definition, values and updated and new principles were, like the previous two revisions of the original ‘Rochdale’ principles in 1937 and 1966, the result of extensive consultations over several preceding years. In each case, these revisions have reflected both the changing external environment in which cooperatives were operating and the internal tensions and adaptations occurring within these organisations.

The resulting 1995 principles have been included in a number of international instruments, recommendations, and guidelines, as well as being included and referenced in a wide range of individual countries’ legislation and policy settings. In this sense, the principles have acted as a guiding and unifying light for movements and governments throughout the world. Greater harmonisation of laws and policies, between and within countries, is possible because of the wide acceptance of these international principles. However, sometimes the devil is in the detail.

While cooperative representatives can agree on a set of informing principles and definitions, how these are put into practice can vary widely throughout the world. Several different cooperative traditions of thought and practice along with different institutional and historical experiences have shaped national movements and how cooperatives, particularly large cooperative businesses, have operationalised the ICA principles.

Large cooperative businesses have witnessed, in the period leading up to and following the adoption of the 1995 ICA principles, very significant global change. Not least the ascendancy of neoliberalism and increased and more competitive globalisation of the markets in which they have traditionally operated. These trends have represented, for some, an almost existential threat to their very nature

and way of doing business. In several countries, there have been major commercial failures of long-established cooperatives. Additionally, there have been, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries, waves of demutualisation of large and very significant national and international cooperative businesses. This has been particularly the case, in my home country, Australia.

It is worth noting that most demutualisation if they are contested by the membership, are fought locally. An opportunity exists for the international cooperative movement to show solidarity and defend the cooperative identity - as well as defining and promoting it - by helping to resist the loss of many of these large, viable and important cooperatives. Early actions such as a coordinated international/ national campaign of support against local conversions may well prove decisive in addressing what are often self-serving arguments against the cooperative business model.

Nevertheless, these, often high-profile business failures or demutualisation, should not obscure the overwhelming sustainability of large cooperative businesses throughout this period. The cooperative business model has proven remarkably resilient and adaptable. Understanding how to meld cooperative principles and values into sustainable business models appropriate for national and industry settings and institutional histories is the key to survival. Knowing, how and why these large businesses survive during this period is therefore not only of real and urgent interest to the large cooperatives themselves, and their members, but is a key strategic issue for the wider international cooperative movement. Large cooperative businesses are almost always long-lived organisations. Many can trace their formation back, often to over 100 years. They are the survivors of several waves of major economic, social, and political changes over this period. In one sense, they are the living history of the cooperative movement. The result of both organic business growth and mergers between similar cooperative businesses. They contain the 'DNA' of countless cooperative members, practitioners and traditions built up over many years.

There is much that can be learnt from how these large, complex cooperative businesses have adapted to these changing and challenging circumstances. The ICA itself has been aware of this and has in some of its research and publications including its *Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles* focused on the particular challenges of applying the principles in large complex cooperatives facing very competitive market situations. Increasing size or scale has often been pointed to in research as holding the prospect of weakening cooperative identity. Levels of trust can decline the further the members are from the management and governance of these complex businesses, which often include hybrid structures, non-cooperative (for-profit) subsidiaries, and external equity. Increasing heterogeneity among differing membership bases within the large cooperatives has again been examined as a possible problem for the retention, and advancement of cooperative identity.

How large cooperative businesses embrace their principles, structure themselves, and behave towards their members and in the marketplace, is therefore of strategic importance. A significant part of the global cooperative asset and revenue base is concentrated into these large businesses. Resources which are available to help promote and support their national and international cooperative movements. They are also the conduit through which large numbers of the public, by way of their membership, see cooperative principles in action, or not. And finally, it is these businesses which are most visible to government and help shape their opinion and the resulting policy and legislation governing not only the large cooperative businesses but the wider cooperative movement including its new and innovative applications to changing societal needs.

Therefore, cooperative identity needs to work and be relevant, in larger and older as well as in smaller, younger cooperatives. Indeed, it could be argued that it is even more important for cooperative identity and values to be at the centre of successful scaled-up business models if cooperatives, are to be able to offer, as seems a real possibility now in a post-global financial crisis, post-COVID world a

genuine alternative to the investor-owned, profit-driven models dominant during neoliberalism. In this sense, it is also important to acknowledge that the ability of cooperatives to scale-up and be competitive globally with large investor-owned firms is somewhat limited. Only, certain industry sectors seem to have been able, through a combination of market conditions, institutional history, and business models to scale and be sustainable over time, while retaining a cooperative structure and character.

Understanding the patterns as to why some large cooperatives succeed, and in what circumstance, while others fail is, therefore, critically important. More research is required to better understand this and the key relationship between cooperative size and identity.

ICA-AP Updates

ICA-MAFF Online training: Empowerment of Rural Women Part 2



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 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 was conducted from 14th to 18th December 2020, followed by Part-II from 14th January 2021 to 2nd February 2021. The objective of the training course is to build the capacity of women leaders and enhance their business management abilities.

It was implemented by ICA-AP in collaboration with National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) and the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA), Japan.

P Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi, Executive Director, IDACA; Mr. Satyanarayana, Chief Executive, NCUI; 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. 10 participants from Asian and African countries – India, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Kenya, and Swaziland attended the training programme.

Part-II of the program was coordinated by Ms. Eiko Oshita from IDACA. Mr. A.K. Taneja, Programme Coordinator, ICA-AP; Mr. Miyazako Masahiro, Director, MAFF; and Mr. Kobayashi Herofumi, Executive Director, IDACA, addressed the participants and IDACA staff in the closing ceremony. Mr. Baba Toshihiko, Sr. Executive Director, JA-Zenchu shared his concluding remarks through a video message and Ms. Naomi, a participant from Kenya, presented the vote of thanks. The programme concluded with distribution of participation e-certificates to all the participants by Mr. Kobayashi.

SPRING Final Capitalization Conference



Society for the Protection and Assistance of Socially Disadvantaged Individuals (SPASDI) along with Haliéus and other associates organized the Final Capitalization Conference of the SPRING on 19th January 2021. The virtual conference represented an occasion to share the project's results and define the way forward to continue strengthening the cooperative movement in Iran.

The project, [Strengthening CSO's Participation for a Responsible and Inclusive Agriculture Growth \(SPRING\)](#) was aimed at strengthening the rural cooperatives in the province of Bam through the promotion of inclusive processes of sustainable development (date producers' cooperatives and a women cooperative processing dates). The project supported the capacity of cooperatives to respond to the needs and aspirations of rural producers in the Bam area through product enhancement and

marketing services and extensive production services. At the same time, the capacity of cooperatives to participate and guide the creation of local development plans was strengthened. It involved public actors and other civil society organizations (CSO), in a cross-sector perspective, particularly with tourism and culture, given the historical and cultural value of the Bam area (the citadel of Bam is a UNESCO site).

The project, co-funded by the European Union through the CSO Programme, involved the organizations of Iranian agricultural cooperatives (CORC and CURACI) as associates, together with Legacoop, to ensure that the project moved within the framework of strengthening relations between the Italian cooperative movement and the cooperatives of the partner countries. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA Asia and Pacific, delivered a talk on “The synergic initiatives of the international cooperative movement at Regional level” in the event.

Source: <https://www.halieux.it/en/2021/01/13/7327/>

World Cooperative Monitor 2020 and Cooperatives in Asia and Pacific



The [2020 issue](#) of the World Cooperative Monitor (WCM) exploring the economic and social impact of the largest cooperatives and mutuals worldwide, was launched on 20th January 2021. The virtual event was attended by over 200 participants from around the world. The recording of the webinar is available [here](#).

48 cooperatives and mutual enterprises (CME) in the Top 300 ranking by Turnover/GDP per capita were reported from the Asia and Pacific region – Japan 26, New Zealand 7, India 5, Republic of Korea 4, Australia 2, Singapore 2, Malaysia 1 and Saudi Arabia 1. Six of these within the global top 10 rankings by Turnover/GDP per capita – IFFCO and Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation from India; Zenkyoren, Zen-Noh and Nippon Life from Japan; and Nonghyup (NACF) from the Republic of Korea! Per capita GDP is a metric that breaks down a country's GDP per person and is calculated by dividing the GDP of a country by its population. The ratio of turnover over GDP per capita measures the turnover of the Top 300 CMEs in terms of the purchasing power of an economy, relating the turnover of the enterprise to the wealth of the country.

CMEs from the Asia and Pacific region also achieved top sectoral ranks.

Agriculture and Food Industries

Among the rankings for cooperatives that operate along the entire agricultural value chain, six out of the top 10 were from the Asia-Pacific region. This sector includes both agricultural producers' cooperatives and consortia of cooperatives (or similar arrangements) that carry out the processing and marketing of agricultural goods for their members.

Rank 2018	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	TURNOVER/GDP per CAPITA
1	IFFCO	India	3,715,708.48
2	Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation	India	2,419,575.24
3	Zen-Noh	Japan	1,433,801.11
4	Nonghyup (NACF)	Republic of Korea	1,242,003.08
6	Kribhco	India	680,632.01
10	Hokuren	Japan	353,930.11

Industry and Utilities

Among the rankings for cooperatives that operate in industrial sectors, two out of the top 10 were from the Asia-Pacific region. This sector includes worker cooperatives in the construction sector and users' cooperatives in the utilities' sector, that is, cooperatives that are active in the management of infrastructure for public services such as electricity, natural gas, and water.

Rank 2018	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	TURNOVER/GDP per CAPITA
2	ULCCS Ltd	India	83,454.85
5	Osaka KOIKINAMAKONKURITO KD	Japan	30,312.25

Insurance

Among the rankings for cooperatives that operate in insurance sectors, four out of the top 10 were from a single country within the Asia-Pacific region. This sector includes mutual organisations and cooperatives owned and democratically controlled by their insured customers.

Rank 2018	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	TURNOVER/GDP per CAPITA
1	Zenkyoren	Japan	1,484,625.92
2	Nippon Life	Japan	1,403,879.42
4	Meiji Yasuda Life	Japan	712,758.24
7	Sumitomo Life	Japan	602,722.44

Financial Services

Among cooperatives that operate in the financial services sector, one out of the top 10 was from the Asia-Pacific region. This sector includes cooperative banks and credit unions providing banking and financial intermediation services, democratically controlled by member customers (borrowers and depositors).

Rank 2018	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	BANKING INCOME (BILLION US\$)
10	The Norinchukin bank	Japan	2.59

Education, Health and Social Work

Among cooperatives which manage educational, health or social services, three out of the top 10 were from the Asia-Pacific region. These include consumer (user), producer (provider) and multistakeholder social and health cooperatives that provide high-quality, cost-effective community health care & social services.

Rank 2018	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	TURNOVER (BILLION US\$)
3	Naganoken Kosei Nogyo KR	Japan	0.90
5	Hokkaido Welfare Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives	Japan	0.77
6	Japan Culture and Welfare Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives	Japan	0.66

Other services

Among cooperatives that provide services other than those included in education, health and social work, including housing, cooperative business services, communications and transportation, 1 out of the top 10 rankings was from the Asia-Pacific region.

Rank 2018	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	TURNOVER/GDP Per CAPITA
1	Nihon Delica Foods Association	Japan	117,520.33

Regional Landscape

The 46 CMEs from the Asia-Pacific region in the Top 300 by turnover ranking (data reference year 2018) have a turnover of USD 423.85 billion, with the agricultural (17 enterprises) and insurance sectors (14 enterprises) dominating the list. The wholesale and retail trade (8 enterprises) followed by the financial service (4 enterprises) represent the third and the fourth biggest economic sectors. In terms of cooperative type, almost half of these are producer cooperatives (20 enterprises) mainly representing agricultural and retailers' cooperatives. Consumer/user cooperatives (16 enterprises) and mutuals (7 enterprises) mainly composed of consumer cooperatives and financial service cooperatives represent the other half. No worker cooperatives or multi-stakeholder cooperatives are included in the turnover ranking from the region.

#	RANK	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY	TURNOVER (BILLION US\$)	ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	TYPE
1	4	Zenkyoren	Japan	58.14	Insurance	producer
2	5	Zen-Noh	Japan	56.15	Agriculture and food industries	producer
3	7	Nippon Life	Japan	54.98	Insurance	mutual

4	10	Nonghyup (NACF)	Republic of Korea	41.41	Agriculture and food industries	producer
5	18	Meiji Yasuda Life	Japan	27.91	Insurance	mutual
6	19	Sumitomo Life	Japan	23.6	Insurance	mutual
7	29	The Norinchukin bank	Japan	15.69	Financial service	non coop
8	34	Fonterra Cooperative Group	New Zealand	14.15	Agriculture and food industries	producer
9	35	Hokuren	Japan	13.86	Agriculture and food industries	producer
10	44	JF Zengyoren	Japan	12.3	Agriculture and food industries	producer
11	65	IFFCO	India	7.45	Agriculture and food industries	producer
12	66	Korean National Federation of Fisheries Co-operatives (NFFC)	Republic of Korea	7.36	Fishing	producer
13	88	FJCC	Japan	5.75	Insurance	consumer/user
14	89	Zenrosai	Japan	5.72	Insurance	consumer/user
15	98	Fukoku Life	Japan	5.23	Insurance	mutual
16	106	Gujarat Cooperative Milk	India	4.85	Agriculture and food industries	producer
17	107	Nihon Delica Foods Association	Japan	4.6	Other services	producer
18	110	Korean Federation of Community Credit Cooperatives (KFCC)	Republic of Korea	4.38	Financial service	consumer/user
19	127	Asahi Life	Japan	3.59	Insurance	mutual
20	129	Co-op Mirai	Japan	3.54	Wholesale and retail trade	consumer/user
21	130	Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU)	Japan	3.46	Wholesale and retail trade	consumer/user
22	133	Kagoshimaken Keizai Nogyo KR	Japan	3.29	Agriculture and food industries	producer
23	149	Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd	Australia	2.84	Agriculture and food industries	producer
24	154	Aichi-ken Keizai Nogyo KR	Japan	2.76	Agriculture and food industries	producer
25	158	NTUC Income	Singapore	2.69	Insurance	consumer/user

26	161	Co-op Sapporo	Japan	2.67	Wholesale and retail trade	consumer/user
27	177	NTUC Fairprice Co-Operative Ltd	Singapore	2.37	Wholesale and retail trade	consumer/user
28	183	Foodstuffs North Island Limited	New Zealand	2.31	Wholesale and retail trade	consumer/user
29	184	Co-op Kobe	Japan	2.3	Wholesale and retail trade	consumer/user
30	190	Foodstuffs South Island	New Zealand	2.17	Wholesale and retail trade	consumer/user
31	191	Zespri	New Zealand	2.15	Agriculture and food industries	producer
32	193	Miyazaki-ken Keizai Nogyo KR	Japan	2.09	Agriculture and food industries	producer
33	196	Tawuniya	Saudi Arabia	2.04	Insurance	consumer/user
34	199	Hospital Contribution Fund (HCF)	Australia	1.98	Insurance	mutual
35	208	National Credit Union Federation of Korea (NACUFOK)	Republic of Korea	1.85	Financial service	consumer/user
36	215	Japan CO-OP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF)	Japan	1.73	Insurance	consumer/user
37	217	Bank Kerjasama Rakyat Malaysia Berhad	Malaysia	1.71	Financial service	consumer/user
38	224	Farmlands Trading Society	New Zealand	1.66	Agriculture and food industries	producer
39	225	Silver Fern Farms	New Zealand	1.65	Agriculture and food industries	non coop
40	231	U Co-op	Japan	1.6	Wholesale and retail trade	consumer/user
41	255	The Kyoei Fire & Marine Insurance Co	Japan	1.47	Insurance	non coop
42	270	Kribhco	India	1.37	Agriculture and food industries	producer
43	272	Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co Ltd	Australia	1.35	Agriculture and food industries	producer
44	280	HBF Health	Australia	1.27	Insurance	mutual

45	287	Alliance Group	New Zealand	1.22	Agriculture and food industries	producer
46	295	OSAKA KOIKINAMAKONKURITO KD	Japan	1.19	Industry	producer

Each year, the WCM builds upon the research and data collection of the previous years, continually refining and improving methodology and data collection strategies. There are many challenges in comparing organisations across countries with different legal frameworks and standards. Working with partners and federations from across the globe, the team is able to construct a scientifically robust and informative report.

Member Updates

NFUCA Appoints New MD & CEO – Mr. Ichiro Nakamori



Mr. Ichiro Nakamori officially replaced Mr. Shinichi Maita's as the Managing Director and CEO of the National Federation of University Cooperatives Association (NFUCA), Japan on 19th December 2020. Mr. Nakamori has a vast experience with students and university cooperatives. A cooperater since early-age, he joined the NFUCA Student Committee in 1994, followed by Kyoto University Coop in 1995. In 2007, he was appointed as the Executive Director of Kyoto University Coop; followed by Executive Director of Business Association in Kyoto in 2015 and later in wider Kansai-Hokuriku region. During the transition period, he has learned a lot about NFUCA's international activities through ICA and ICA Asia Pacific and is very keen to contribute to the friendship with the fellow cooperatives.

JCA Gets New MD – Mr. Masahiro Higa

Mr. Masahiro Higa replaces Mr. Toshihiko Baba as the Senior Managing Director, Representative, Japan Co-operative Alliance (JCA).

SNCF Appoints New Chairman - Mr Tng Ah Yiam



Mr Tng Ah Yiam has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF). Previously SNCF's First Deputy Chairman, Mr Tng takes over the Executive Council position from the late Mr. Kwek Kok Kwong.

Mr Tng will continue to work closely with the board and management of SNCF to promote and develop the strategic direction of the Singapore Co-operative Movement, which has been rooted in Singapore for over 95 years. Today, 64 affiliated co-operatives are serving the needs of more than 1.4 million members in Singapore by providing affordable daily essentials, education and training, healthcare, financial services, recreation, and employment opportunities, as well as increasing inclusion of the less advantaged, such as the elderly and vulnerable.

Mr. Tng is also the Chief Procurement Officer at FairPrice Group, comprising NTUC FairPrice Co-operative, NTUC Foodfare Co-operative, Kopitiam and NTUC Link.

On his new appointment, Mr. Tng said: *"Co-operatives have come a long way, helping to improve lives since its early days by tackling social issues and supporting members through difficult times. Our co-operative values such as mutual help and co-operation are even more relevant in this current climate. Besides working together with our co-operatives to create more value, opportunities and impact for our members and the broader community. I also look forward to continuing Kok Kwong's work in advocating for collaboration and youth engagement to help businesses and upcoming generations embrace and embody the unique business model of co-operatives to do good and do well."*

Mr. Ang Hin Kee, Chief Executive, SNCF, said *"Mr Tng has much to offer to the co-operative movement from his many years on the ground addressing community needs as a co-operator. I look forward to Ah Yiam's leadership in his new role as we steer the co-operative sector to adapt and thrive in these volatile times. The embracing of co-operative principles such as self-help and mutual assistance will also enhance the cohesiveness of society and to build one that is more caring and inclusive, something that we need in these disruptive times."*

SNCF Organizes Creathon 2021



Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) organized the finale of Creathon 2021 on January 17 and 18. Back for its second run, Creathon, the only cooperative social enterprise business challenge in Singapore is an idea accelerating event aimed at triggering innovative thinking, entrepreneurial spirit, and business development in youth. It challenges participants to conceptualise and develop solutions using the cooperative business model, to help address any particular social issue of today.

This year's competition saw a record participation of 104 teams, up from just 40 teams last year, competing across three categories: School Category (aged 13-17), Institute of Higher Learning Category (aged 17-23) and the Open Category (aged 17-35). The Institute of Higher Learning (IHL) Category is introduced this year to cater to IHL students.

The **winner of the Open Category is Urban Origins**, a five-person team led by Suzanna Farid Tang. Their business plan revolves around a co-operative platform dedicated to all local food sources in Singapore by being a marketplace that aggregates local urban farm produce, agri-food tech products, upcycled food, alternative protein and home-based Food and Beverage businesses, for consumers.

The **winning idea in the IHL Category came from ITE College Central (IHL Category)** who presented their plans to create a mobile app platform to support ex-offenders by connecting them with job opportunities and offering them free IT and resume writing workshops that are conducted by volunteers and counselling services.

Raffles Girls' School (Secondary) emerged the winner of the School Category. The team presented the idea of a food delivery service that aims to alleviate the food waste problem by using soon-to-expire ingredients and turning them into affordable, nutritious meals.

Mr Ang Hin Kee, Chief Executive Officer of SNCF said: *"I am heartened to see so many youth taking up the challenge to come up with innovative solutions to help address the social challenges that we are facing in our society. Seeing the exchange of ideas also paints a good picture on the concerns of the next generation – from reducing food waste and promoting sustainable living to looking after the mental wellness of youths and supporting vulnerable groups such as the elderly and single mothers. More importantly, we get to hear from them on new ways to tackle social and economic issues and impact the community in a positive and sustainable way."*

Judging the finals were Tines Anabarasan, committee member of A Good Space Co-operative and a co-founder of SerendipET, a social enterprise which offers experiential learning programmes for all demographics and psychographics; Leow Teck Sim, Chairman of Ngee Ann Polytechnic Consumer Co-operative and Chairman of Campus Co-operatives Sector; Russ Neo, Founder of Social Collider, a collaborative, co-working, and co-innovation community for impact organisations; and Kristy Ho, Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

Participating youth also had the opportunity to gain entrepreneurial and business advice through talks, workshops, and mentorships with affiliated cooperatives such as Agape Energy Efficiency Co-operative, social entrepreneurs such as the founders of Infinite Transports and Inklus, and SNCF. They also networked and connected with like-minded individuals with a strong entrepreneurial spirit and exchanged ideas with one another.

The recording of the Creathon 2021 Finale can be viewed on [SNCF's Facebook page](#).

Source: SNCF

#ANGKASA50



In 2021, ANGKASA is celebrating its 50th anniversary with the theme, “Championing Cooperative Aspirations.” This is a big milestone for the Malaysian cooperative movement on the momentous Golden Jubilee achievement.

ANGKASA was established through consensus achieved at the 2nd Malaysian Cooperative Congress and was officially registered on 12th May 1971. A year later, ANGKASA became a member of the ICA in April 1972. Even before ANGKASA as an organization became a member, Malaysia was already among the first member countries of ICA in the Asia and Pacific region.

ANGKASA is planning a celebratory campaign throughout the year, as part of which, a documentary #ANGKASA50 will be created.

Congratulating them, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, said, “Congratulations to ICA and ICA-AP member ANGKASA, Malaysia as it celebrates #ANGKASA50! “Championing Cooperative Aspirations” reflects past, present and future! We are delighted to have Malaysia as a member from 1960 and ANGKASA since its inception in 1971! Our best wishes!”

Cooperative Tourism Promotion Bureau



The Cooperative Tourism Promotion Bureau, established by the National Co-operative Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL), commenced its operations on 1st January 2021, providing a new experience for the cooperative movement in Sri Lanka.

According to Mr. Sarath Weerasiri, Chairman, NCCSL, "It is a program implemented under the "SMART office concept." The Bureau plans to launch co-operative development promotional activities in Sri Lanka as well as programs for foreign cooperators and tourists providing them with innovative tourism experiences linked to the local cooperative movement. The Bureau will provide the following key services –

1. Promoting services, products and market opportunities related to the tourism sector in the cooperative movement in Sri Lanka.
2. Establishing the tourism industry based on the cooperative movement in Sri Lanka for Foreign cooperators and tourists.
3. Implementing Tourism Knowledge Sharing Programs.
4. Implementing "Cooperative Educational and Cooperative Experience Sharing Programs" by local cooperatives based on their foreign cooperative exposure.
5. Printing and distributing various publications related to the cooperative tourism sector.
6. Guiding and supporting the establishment of new service delivery sectors in the tourism industry.
7. Focusing on income-generating methods related to the tourism sector for cooperative members.
8. Prioritizing the establishment of a high-quality cooperative tourism sector in the region in collaboration with international travel cooperatives and other cooperative organizations.

As the initial steps, networking with the cooperative tourism sector companies in the Asia-Pacific region shall be facilitated. The membership of the Coop Tourism Promotion Bureau will be granted to the relevant cooperative societies and the members will receive the following benefits.

1. All visits to the country by the NCCSL will be made only through the relevant member organization in the country.
2. Providing special facilities and opportunities to the representatives of the relevant member organizations when they visit Sri Lanka. Example: providing free accommodation, transportation, and low-cost travel services, etc.
3. Facilitating cooperative education programs in the country.
4. Promoting bilateral cooperative products.

Also, member organizations will be provided with affordable and quality services as required.

New Member: Matara District Cooperative Hospital Society Ltd.

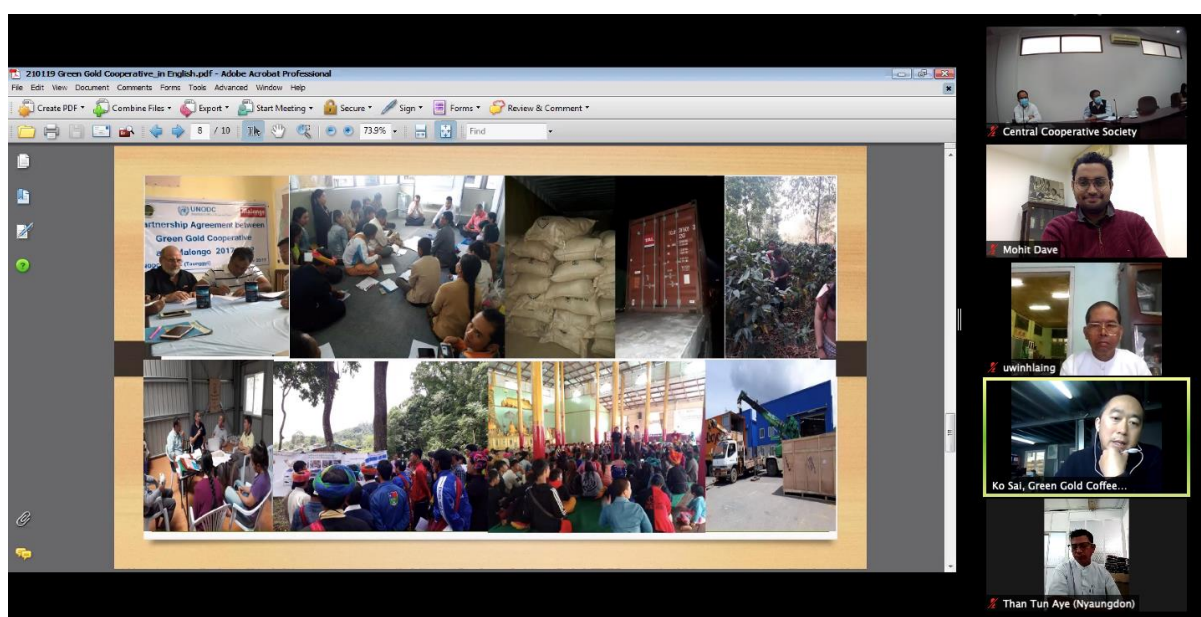
Matara District Cooperative Hospital Society Ltd. from Sri Lanka has joined ICA in January 2021.

Matara District Cooperative Hospital Society Ltd. is a consumer cooperative. They provide training, development and strengthening of the Hospital Cooperative Network. They were formed to provide practical hospital services for the benefit of rural poor marginalized communities. They aim to guide members on how to maintain their health and correct livelihood, grant medical facilities and sanitary services to members and their dependents as well as to non-members. Grant health insurance, family health advice, self-development advice and savings services to members. They provide various services such as maintenance of hospitals, pharmaceuticals, research facilities, import and production equipment and instruments, constructing hospitals, etc.

There are now 111 members from 32 countries in the Asia and Pacific Region.

ICA-EU Updates

Roundtable Discussion on Fairtrade with Cooperatives



The #Coops4Dev team in Asia and the Pacific organized a virtual Roundtable Discussion on “Fairtrade with Cooperatives” on January 21, 2021 with the Fairtrade Network of Asia-Pacific Producers (NAPP). The discussion was to facilitate exchange between members of the ICA-AP and Fairtrade NAPP in Myanmar and stimulate collaboration among stakeholders to promote cooperatives and fair trade at multiple levels.

Mr. Mohit Dave, Programme Manager, ICA-AP initiated the discussion by welcoming the participants. He said that cooperatives facilitate collective voice and negotiation power with key players across the supply chain for fair returns to their members and communities. The current situation demands that we join forces to shorten value chains, improve product traceability, and adopt environmental-friendly practices. Collective efforts can foster participation and social dialogue across broader policy domains at the national and regional level. Strengthening cooperation between cooperatives and like-minded people-centered enterprises can create more inclusive and transparent supply chains and result in mutual benefits for both producers and consumers and accelerate a shift towards sustainability across the supply chain.

Mr. Ranjith Kumar, Regional General Manager (South & Central Asia), FT-NAPP, in his remarks, narrated the background of the organisation and its importance, while also discussing the programmes and services offered by FT-NAPP. He said that cooperatives and community-based organisations may often lack access to specific skills, knowledge and financial resources while being embedded in complex local, cultural and market contexts. To fully enable the potential of inclusive and ethical value chains, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, the challenges that cooperatives are facing, need to be understood and addressed through an appropriate enabling environment, including legislation, institutions, capacity building and funding mechanisms. If achieved, cooperation among cooperatives can provide a viable alternative to cooperatives facing high trade costs and limited market access; and enhance partnerships and collaboration across countries in the region. This, in turn, can improve the livelihoods of many men, women and youth running cooperatives and the communities where they are operating.

Mr. Sai Han Myo Aung, General Manager, Green Gold Cooperative shared the experiences of his cooperative with FT-NAPP. It is now empowered with knowledge, skill and entrepreneurship due to the training received on certification and branding, standardization of agricultural practices, and making the product market compatible.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Dave said that the past several months have been challenging for consumer and producer cooperatives, across the Asia-Pacific region. While many continue to battle against various challenges on the ground and at the market front, cooperatives must evolve, move past the challenges, focus on renewed strategies to build their resilience and ensure lasting recovery.

ICA-AP and Fairtrade-NAPP have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to explore areas to collaborate to empower farmers and workers with entrepreneurial skills and to strengthen their position in the value chain.

Research Watch

Legal Framework Analysis

The national reports of seven countries - Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Philippines were completed. Overall, 21 national reports, including the above and Australia, Bhutan, Fiji, India, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Vanuatu, and Vietnam are now available on the website and can be accessed at [#coops4dev](#).

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.

Five national reports on key figures for Australia, China, New Zealand, South Korea, and Sri Lanka, were completed and are available on the [#coops4dev](#) website. Overall, mapping reports for 14 countries are available on the [#coops4dev](#) website including the reports for Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Myanmar, Nepal, PNG, Vanuatu, Iran and the Philippines.

Youth Research

The global thematic research on youth, 'Bridging the Gap Between Youth and the Cooperative Movement' is completed and will be launched soon (early March TBC) by the ICA. This research was designed and conducted jointly by all the ICA Global and Regional offices - Cooperatives Europe, ICA-

Africa, Cooperatives of the Americas, and ICA Asia and Pacific. The research includes findings on five thematic areas - employment, education, inequalities, engagement, and entrepreneurship from 20 surveyed countries. In Asia and Pacific, youth from within and outside the cooperative movement in Iran, Indonesia, India, Philippines, and South Korea were surveyed in 2019.

Youth Snapshot

ICA-AP is currently working on preparing sectoral/ thematic snapshots for the region. The snapshot on **Youth in Cooperatives in Asia and Pacific** is complete and can be accessed [here](#). This snapshot provides one-stop information on youth-based initiatives of ICA-AP, case studies on youth cooperatives in the region, and activities and programs on youth undertaken by the cooperative movement in Asia and Pacific.

Tête-à-Tête with RedRoot



Red Root from the Philippines is one of the [#coopyouth](#) Replication Project winners! It is a youth-led cooperative pioneering in Virtual Events Platform. It consolidates youth partners, stakeholders, and event industry suppliers to cater to events, both Virtual (Phase 1) and Physical (Phase 2). It is envisioned to become the go-to events platform for organizers/managers, talents, technology and logistics provider, catering service and more!

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 you came together as a team?

The core team had already been working together under RedRoot Artists Cooperative for more than seven years. For the larger part of those seven years, we've done an assortment of projects from branding and investor communications for build-operate-transfer projects, to Information and Education Campaigns for conservation, various profiles for tourism, how-to videos and websites, and most recently we've been modernizing museums in the Philippines. We've introduced holograms, 3D projection mapping, and animated videos with greenscreen. We're working with a very diverse and dedicated team and because we've been able to travel around the Philippines and nearby countries for our projects, we were also quite lucky to have met some like-minded individuals. The current network of young cooperators, young heritage and event enthusiasts joining the replication project was all borne from years of exposure and networking by Red Root.

How did you get to know about the ICA Youth Replication Project and how was your experience?

We got to know about the ICA Youth Replication Project at the Global Youth Forum 2020 in Kuching, Malaysia. Initially, the idea generation was difficult because we were finishing up a museum back then. When the lockdown happened in March 2020, there were major setbacks in our operations that made us think of ways to pivot our business. We temporarily closed the company for 6 months while the core team was voluntarily working from home. In June, we were invited to become the Philippine local partner for the first edition of the Platform Coops under The New School, Mondragon University and other global partners. The course enabled us to create concepts, build a team, prototype, and develop a business plan and communication strategy.

*We listed down the things that excite us, skills that are easy for us but hard for others, and the common needs of our target stakeholders (eg. necessity, safety, mental health, entertainment, companionship, training/education, customer service, access to business financing, etc.). After we consolidated all the ideas, we chose to **prioritize** the items/ opportunities/ resources that we could utilize at the moment and had the potential to be scaled-up. We also **reallocated** our tangible/ intangible assets that were not utilized because of the pandemic and could be monetized by reallocating from a different perspective. We **repurposed** our personal projects/ programs that can be transformed, recreated or transitioned to the platform coop. We then identified our stakeholders and the benefits of our proposed project. Since the deadline became a bit tight because of lockdown mobility restrictions, our time was spent simultaneously on business planning and product development.*

Were you expecting to win?

The team was quite confident with our capability, but we also recognized how challenging winning would be. We had met young cooperators from the Asia-Pacific region during the 2nd ICA-AP Cooperative Youth Summit in Cebu and we knew back then how challenging it would be to compete with other countries. We were hoping to win and were quite ecstatic to be chosen among the many competitive entries.

What is the concept of your project?

Our big idea is to transform the gig economy of events into a full-blown sustainable cooperative endeavor. We're building on our experience as a youth cooperative, both the good and bad, and identifying effective strategies that can help jumpstart this new replication project. It has been our experience that being young in business in this country is quite challenging if you do not have the right connections and the capital. Even today in the cooperative sector, being relatively younger has always been a challenge in dealing with serious cooperative projects - it seems that big cooperatives only trust younger cooperators with meagre projects rather than financially sustainable ones. Growth has been slow because of the lack of support from our local sector. As a team, Redroot has been lucky to work with some private and government institutions who did not shy away from our perceived immaturity and has helped propel and sustain our organization to new heights. Given the strides set by the international community as well as the current global challenge, the sector in the Philippines is slowly embracing the significance of innovation and technology. As forerunners of this, we are in a great vantage point to help pave the way to new cooperative models.

We'll be organizing various youth-led initiatives for young cooperators belonging to big coops as well as those who work on institutions that frequently need events. We will group them into consultancy

providers, hardware/ tech providers, content development/ talent providers, and support providers. Each cluster will have core representations in identified pilot areas. For now, due to the digital events, we are fronting one of the Redroot's initiatives and technology to make virtual events more immersive. We are using a mixture of open source and commercial technologies to make events simulate face to face interactions, provide 3D and 360 previews, as well as networking activities. This will all be supported by a web platform prototype to help match event buyers with providers. The platform is also envisioned to provide mentorship and training facilities to standardize new members' competency. For the first few months, we'll be doing a mix of sponsored and commercial projects from our existing network with redroot core members taking the lead and training/ consolidating members from all over the country.

As the cooperative grows, new opportunities and specializations will be evaluated if it will be handled in the current events cooperative or if it will also become another replication project focused on niche industries.

What is your plan of action now?

We are registering the platform cooperative initially as a youth advocacy cooperative. The main reason for doing so is to help identify key interests that could be a sustainable business run by the youth. The main endeavor will still be focused largely on events and securing a good value chain from existing demands accessible to the pioneering members. Our next phase is to create an IT backbone to support reservation/ ordering forms for various event-related sub businesses. We are hoping to get clients ready from March to May 2021 and have the website started from May to June 2021 as more data comes in.

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

The cooperative model, we think, is the best business model. It helps democratize the means of production and if the principles are followed religiously, it can be an avenue to prevent exploitation. We've seen that cooperatives can be the future for a sustainable global economic model. We need to create a supply chain and value chain that truly serves everyone's interest.

As for the challenges that we encountered, being young, we are gifted with both the energy and drive to pursue innovations but sadly we lack the resources. The "trust" factor is often associated with age, hence, we face the reluctance of older board members in other cooperatives to trust us with significant resources. But as we experienced, if you have a professional approach, are systematic, and exceptional in delivering your services, then everything falls into place. As young people, we just need to grab every opportunity that we encounter, I believe that visionary companies in the private sector like 3M, HP, Johnson and Johnson, or Mondragon in the cooperative sector have started with the passion and energy of youth-directed in the right path. Continuous innovation coupled with grit will surely pave the way for us to help inspire change in the cooperative movement.

COOPATHON 3.0 First Runner-up: Mycoons

MYCOON from India, the first runner-up team of [Coopathon 3.0](#), is led by three engineers with expertise in sustainable development, mechanical engineering, and business development. 'Myco' is a Greek word for mushroom and 'Coon' is a vernacular word for mushroom in Kerala, a state in

Southern India. Their innovative model is to grow biomaterials using agriculture residues and fungal mycelium and create employment for the local youth in the production process.

Coming from engineering backgrounds, it was easy for them to manufacture the biomaterials which are completely natural and biodegradable, but they also wanted to create sustainable impact through their business. The products have great potential in the construction industry as a sustainable alternative to wall and ceiling panels and plywood, and in the packaging industry as a replacement for Styrofoam. 'Coopathon came at a time when we were keenly looking for a platform to share our innovation', said Advait, Team Leader, Mycoon.

Watch Advait explain more about their initiative and plans in this video.

Announcements

World Cooperative Congress – Moved



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 33rd World Cooperative 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.

Regional Forum for Cooperative Housing Organizations



ICA Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) in collaboration with Cooperative Housing International (CHI) is organizing a regional forum on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 for an online discussion with cooperative housing organisations in the Asia Pacific region.

This networking and information exchange aims to strengthen the cooperative housing movement across the region while introducing them to the work of CHI and of the ICA-AP. You will learn about cooperative housing in the Philippines, Malaysia, Pakistan, Australia, and others followed by an open forum for housing groups to have engaging discussions. Join us to learn more about the growing coop housing movement and be inspired to bring some new housing solutions into your community.

Featured Speakers:

Mr. Mohamad Ali Hassan (Malaysia) - [ANGKASA](#)

Ms. Errum Sharif Bhajji (Pakistan) - Karachi Housing Union

Ms. Eugenie Stockmann (Australia) - [Co-operation Housing](#)

Ms. Sam Subida (Philippines) - [Federation of Peoples' Sustainable Development Cooperative](#)

Hosts:

Ms. Julie LaPalme - [Cooperative Housing International](#)

Mr. Balu Iyer - [ICA Asia-Pacific](#)

To attend the webinar, [register here](#).

Upcoming Events

- Webinar: Collective Entrepreneurship through Cooperatives – **9th February 2021**
- Online Training: Strengthening Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives and Farmers' Organisations in Asia & Africa - **February – March 2021**
- Consultations on Identity
- ICA-AP Regional Board meeting – **23rd February 2021**
- 14th ICA-AP Online Regional Assembly – **24th February 2021**
- Announcement of winners of the Short Film Competition on Cooperatives by ICEI: **February 2021** (TBC)
- Regional Forum for Cooperative Housing Organisations in Asia and Pacific – **9th March 2021**
- Virtual Global Youth Forum (GYF) 2021 – **March 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**