

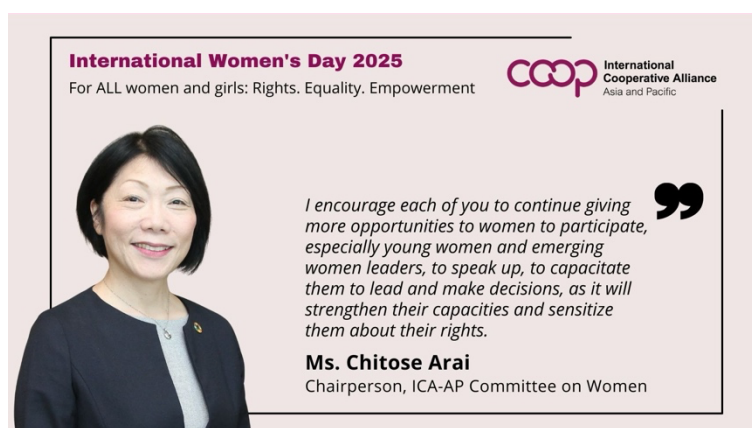
ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

Table of Contents

2025 International Women's Day Message From Ms. Chitose Arai.....	2
17th ICA-AP Regional Assembly Theme Announced.....	3
ICA-AP Updates.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Exciting News: Our Newly Revamped Website Is Live!.....	3
Regional Celebrations of the IYC 2025 Kicked Off in Tokyo, Japan	4
ICA-AP Regional Board Met in Tokyo, Japan.....	4
Exploring Japan's Cooperative Movement through ICYC's Lens	6
Coop Colloquium: Affordable and Sustainable Housing – Solutions Through Cooperative Models.....	9
Youth Leadership Exchange Program 2024: Bridging Borders Through Cooperatives	13
ICA-EU Updates	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Virtual Capacity Building Training on Cooperative Leadership for Social Impact	14
Country Snapshot – Saudi Arabia and Nepal	15
Member Updates	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Welcoming New Members.....	16
Coop Buddy: Australia's First AI-Powered Coop Chatbot!	18
Upcoming Events	Error! Bookmark not defined.

2025 International Women's Day Message From Ms. Chitose Arai



This year, the theme for IWD was “For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.” It called for actions that can unlock equal rights, power, and opportunities for all and a feminist future where no one is left behind.

Emphasizing the theme, Ms. Chitose Arai, Chairperson of ICA-AP Committee on Women, encourages cooperators to continue giving more opportunities to women to participate, especially young women and emerging women leaders, to speak up, to capacitate them to lead and make decisions, to strengthen their capacities, and to sensitize them about their rights. [Read more.](#)

NGO CSW69 Forum Parallel Virtual Event – Registrations Open



On 19 March 2025, ICA-AP and its Committee on Women will organize a virtual parallel event at the NGO Commission on Status of Women (CSW) 69 Forum on the topic, “Policy Actions Matter: Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific and Their Initiatives to Foster SDG 5 (Gender Equality)” under the theme “Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women”.

The event will showcase good case practices from the cooperative sector in Asia and the Pacific, highlighting gender-based policies and institutional mechanisms that have been put in place to advance women's empowerment in the cooperative sector. It will also showcase the initiatives taken by cooperatives in different countries to foster SDG 5 and the steps being taken to make these initiatives successful.

It will be held from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm IST. Interested participants can find all the program and registration details [here](#).

17th ICA-AP Regional Assembly Theme Announced



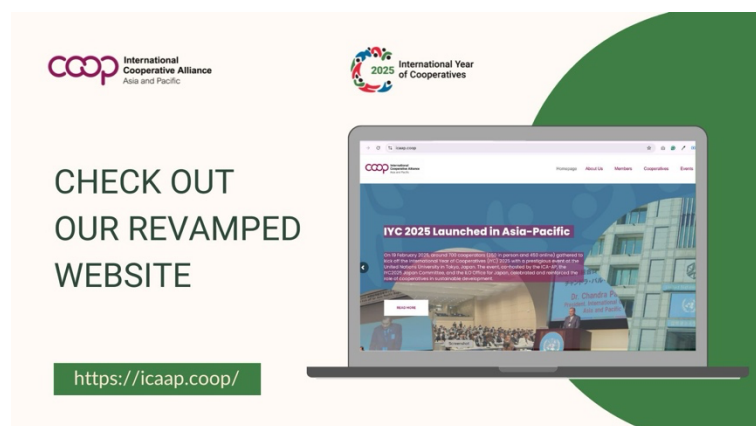
The ICA-AP 17th Regional Assembly and the elections for the new Regional Board will be held in Sri Lanka from 24 to 28 November 2025. The event is hosted by the National Council of Cooperatives in Sri Lanka (NCCSL) in collaboration with the country's broader cooperative movement.

Delegates will have the opportunity to participate in the 12th Asia-Pacific Cooperative Forum, as well as various thematic seminars and workshops organized by our committees. The Regional Assembly will focus on the theme ***“Cooperatives Build a Better World: Strengthening Resilience, Sustaining Investment, and Smart Communication.”*** These events will also mark the culmination of activities led by the Regional Office in observance of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025.

Stay tuned to <https://icaap.coop/> for more updates!

ICA-AP UPDATES

Exciting News: Our Newly Revamped Website Is Live!



We are delighted to announce the launch of our newly updated and improved website, unveiled during the Regional Board meeting in Japan last month. The revamped website features:

- A fresh design with modern aesthetics and seamless navigation.
- Streamlined resources for easy access to key information.
- A responsive, multi-device-friendly interface for a smooth user experience.
- Interactive features, including a dynamic membership map on the homepage.

We invite you to explore the new website at <https://icaap.coop/> and share your feedback with us!

Regional Celebrations of the IYC 2025 Kicked Off in Tokyo, Japan



On 19 February, the International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) regional office marked the official launch of the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) 2025 with a prestigious event at the United Nations University in Tokyo. The event, co-hosted by the ICA-AP, the IYC2025 Japan Committee, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Office for Japan, brought together 700 delegates (250 in person and 450 online), including various cooperative leaders, government representatives, cooperators, and youth participants, to celebrate and reinforce the role of cooperatives in sustainable development. [Read more.](#)

ICA-AP Regional Board Met in Tokyo, Japan



On 18 February, the ICA-AP Regional Board met in Tokyo, Japan, for its first meeting of 2025. This was held on the sidelines of the IYC 2025 Launch for the Asia-Pacific and Japan. Board members from India, China, Malaysia, Iran, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka attended in person, and those from Australia, Nepal, and Vietnam joined online.

Mr. Toshio Tsuchiya, President of the Japanese Consumer Cooperatives' Union (JCCU), warmly welcomed all the delegates. Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, ICA-AP President and the meeting Chairperson, expressed his gratitude to JCCU and the Japan Cooperative Alliance (JCA) for organizing the meeting and acknowledged Japan's leadership in the cooperative movement. He reflected on the official launch of the IYC 2025 at the ICA Global Conference in New Delhi, highlighting the New Delhi Declaration and his 11-point action plan to strengthen the cooperative movement. He emphasized the importance of regional activities for IYC 2025, including national celebrations in several countries and the Asia-Pacific launch in Japan. Dr. Yadav also discussed key strategic priorities, including cooperative growth, financial stability, and governance, while addressing concerns about subscription fees and upcoming regional board elections. He announced the launch of a new ICA-AP website and reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that the upcoming Regional Assembly in Sri Lanka drives meaningful progress for the cooperative movement.

Key agenda items of this meeting included a discussion on election procedures for the upcoming Regional Board elections, updates on IYC 2025 activities and launch event, ongoing EU collaborations, launch of the ICA-AP revamped website, ICA-AP strategy, and a presentation on the preparations for the ICA-AP Regional Assembly in Sri Lanka in November 2025.

The Board approved the agenda and confirmed the minutes of the previous board meeting held in November 2024 in India. The Chairperson of the ICA-AP Committee on Women and Committee on Youth Cooperation presented an update on the activities undertaken and plans for the future. The board appreciated the work done by the youth and women committees.

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, ICA-AP Regional Director, reported on ICA-AP activities undertaken after the last board meeting, membership, and the subscription status. The newly revamped website of ICA-AP was launched. Mr. Iyer shared updates on the ICA's strategy development and plans to firm up the ICA-AP strategy. He further updated the board on key initiatives undertaken by members in the region to celebrate IYC 2025 and the regional office's upcoming plans.

The National Council of Cooperatives in Sri Lanka (NCCSL) presented updates on preparations for the ICA-AP Regional Assembly and encouraged board members to facilitate active participation from their countries. Mr. Iyer outlined the broad theme and program for the event and announced plans for a dedicated event website. The Board also approved the revised election procedures.

The Board members had fruitful discussions, and the next regional board meeting will be held in July 2025 in China.

Exploring Japan's Cooperative Movement through ICYC's Lens



The office bearers of the ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC) recently visited Japan, gaining valuable insights into the country's cooperative ecosystem and the pivotal role youth play in driving sustainable cooperative enterprises. From engaging with university cooperatives to exploring worker-led initiatives, the visit reinforced the importance of youth participation in the cooperative movement.

A Landmark Event: Launching the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) 2025

A key highlight of the trip was the grand launch of the IYC 2025, co-hosted by the ICA-AP, the IYC 2025 Japan Committee, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Office for Japan at the United Nations University of Japan. Youth representatives from the National Federation of University Co-operative Associations (NFUCA) and ICYC, through their presentations, underscored the importance of integrating young leaders into the cooperative movement. A full report of the launch event can be read [here](#).

The IYC 2025 will continue to celebrate and promote the cooperative model throughout the year, emphasizing its role in inclusive economic development, social equity, and sustainable solutions to global challenges.

ICYC's Visit to University Cooperatives: A Model for Youth Engagement

ICYC, along with delegates from ANGKASA, visited the Tokyo Metropolitan University, and we had the opportunity to explore the Student Cooperative and University Cooperative Store, which are entirely managed by students. Mr. Ichiro Nakamori, Managing Director & CEO of NFUCA, gave an overview of the University and provided a brief on the student cooperative committee. NFUCA has around 213 members, out of which 205 are university coops, five are intercollege coops, two are business associations, and one is a federation (Co-op Kyosai). There are 1,565,091 individual members, out of which 85% are students.

The University Coop has programs created by students to support student life on the campus, including:

1. **Dietary Support:** Promotes healthy eating habits with a comprehensive food menu. They organise various fairs while focusing on nutrition education to encourage better eating habits.
2. **Living Alone and Daily Life Support:** This program is dedicated to assisting students in finding accommodations upon enrolment and supporting them throughout their academic journey.
3. **Educational Research and Study Support:** It offers a diverse array of products and services aimed at supporting the educational and research endeavours of faculty members and researchers.
4. **Learning and Growth Support:** It provides various courses at the university, including how to use a computer, driver's license acquisition, language training, job hunting support, and preparation for civil service examinations.
5. **Healthy and Safe Living Support:** These include initiatives to prevent auto accidents and alcohol-related incidents, conducting health checks, and providing dietary and lifestyle counselling.

Visit to Japan Cooperative Alliance (JCA)

We visited the Japan Cooperative Alliance (JCA) to understand the overall status of cooperatives in Japan. Mr. Kenki Maeda, General Manager, gave a brief on the structure of JCA and its work.

JCA is an apex body of cooperatives, established in April 2018 with a mission to function for the development of the cooperative sector, which contributes to creating better life and work in sustainable local communities. Mr. Maeda provided insights into Japan's inter-cooperative collaborations, spanning multiple sectors, including Agriculture, Credit Unions, Fisheries & Forestry, Consumer Cooperatives, and Worker Cooperatives. JCA currently has around 624 member organisations as their members who are categorized in three levels – National Level Federations, Prefectural Agriculture Coops, and Primary Cooperatives.

JCA's main objective is to create better life and work in sustainable local communities which works towards promoting Inter-Cooperative collaborations, Advocacy, Policy Proposals, and Education & Research.

Visit to Japan Workers' Cooperative Union:

At the Japan Workers' Cooperative Union (JWCU), we explored the transformative role of worker cooperatives in supporting marginalized communities. Mr. Osamu Nakano, Secretary General, JWCU and Chairperson of CICOPA-AP, Vice President of CICOPA, shared insights on CICOPA-AP and JWCU.

CICOPA is an international organization of cooperatives in industrial and service sectors, established in 1947. The principal objective of cooperatives in the industrial and service sectors is to serve members' employment and business activities. It has three regional

organizations: CECOP (CICOPA Europe) with 25 organizations in 14 countries, CICOPA Americas with 11 organizations in 9 countries, CICOPA Asia Pacific with 12 organizations in 9 countries, and CICOPA Africa with 3 organizations in 3 countries.

Mr. Nakano also gave a brief on the JWCU, a national federation of worker cooperatives in Japan since 1979 with 45 member organizations. They have 450 business centers with 17,000 workers and a 37 billion Yen turnover.

There was a presentation on the Central Workers' Cooperative (CWC), the biggest worker coop in Japan, established in 1987. Currently, CWC has 10,000 workers, with 70% women workers, and their main objective is to provide childcare, elderly care, care for people with disabilities, operation of public facilities, cleaning service, logistic service, community farming and forest management, and renewable energy business.

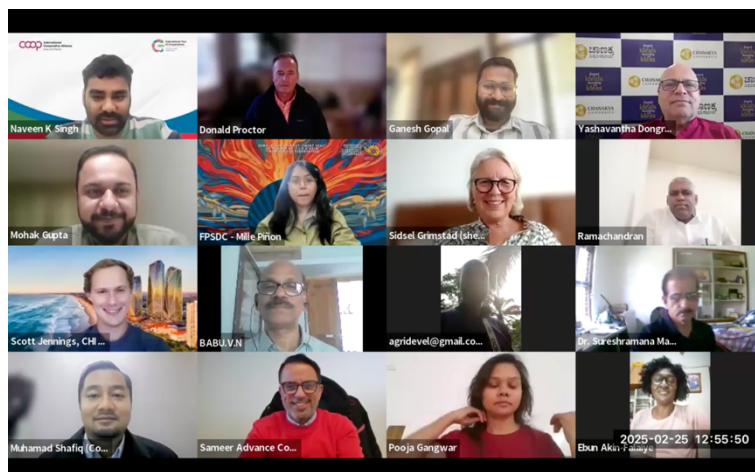
We also came across Creators 440Hz, a cooperative formed by young creatives in film-making, graphic design, and website development, which demonstrated the power of youth-led cooperative entrepreneurship. Their success highlights the potential for small, youth-driven cooperatives to thrive when supported by strong cooperative networks.

This visit was not just about learning—it was about taking action. During our trip, ICYC successfully:

- Secured NFUCA and JWCU's commitment to nominate youth representatives to ICYC, expanding our youth network.
- Strengthened partnerships with key cooperative organizations in Japan. Engaged in meaningful discussions on youth leadership, sustainability, and entrepreneurship.

As we continue strengthening youth engagement within the cooperative movement, this visit reaffirmed the need for greater awareness, education, and leadership opportunities for young cooperators. By expanding networks and fostering collaboration, we can ensure a thriving future for youth in cooperatives across the Asia-Pacific region. Check out the teaser on ICYC's visit to Japan [here](#). Stay tuned for more updates on ICYC's initiatives and partnerships!

Coop Colloquium: Affordable and Sustainable Housing – Solutions Through Cooperative Models



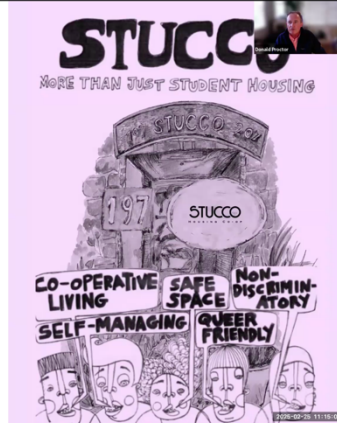
On 25 February 2025, the ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research (ICCR) organized the 12th Coop Colloquium in collaboration with Cooperative Housing International (CHI) and Development Alternatives (DA). It focused on Affordable and Sustainable Housing and brought together experts, policymakers, researchers, and cooperative leaders from around the world to explore how cooperative housing can be a sustainable and practical solution to the global housing crisis. It served as a platform for sharing best practices, innovative models, and policy recommendations for housing cooperatives.

The session began with a video message from Ms. Julie LaPalme, Secretary General, CHI. She highlighted the critical role of cooperative housing in addressing the global housing crisis and emphasized the importance of knowledge exchange and collaboration among cooperative housing organizations worldwide.

Dr. Sidsel Grimstad, Vice-Chairperson of ICCR, welcomed participants and outlined the objectives of the discussion. She spoke about the increasing challenges of affordable housing, particularly in urban areas, and how cooperative models provide sustainable, community-driven solutions that integrate economic, social, and environmental aspects. Dr. Grimstad reinforced that cooperative housing is more than just providing homes; it's about fostering inclusive, self-sustaining communities where members collectively manage and maintain their housing, ensuring long-term affordability and resilience against housing market fluctuations.

The colloquium featured four prominent speakers who shared their perspectives, research findings, and practices on cooperative housing systems from different regional and sectoral viewpoints.

Since its inception STUCCO members have focused on promoting an inclusive culture, maintaining priority for people on low incomes, keeping rooms available for students in crisis, and having a lot of fun.

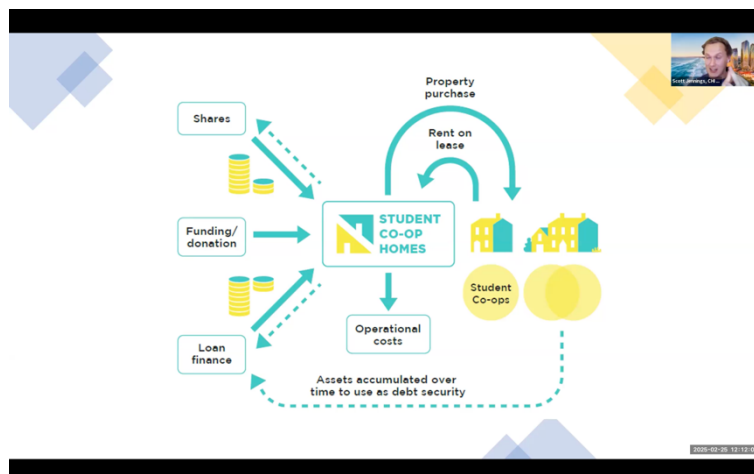


Mr. Donald Proctor, an experienced architect and housing consultant from Australia, spoke about the student cooperative housing model as a means to provide affordable accommodation for university students. He presented the case of STUCCO, a student housing cooperative in Sydney, which has successfully provided low-cost housing to students while fostering a strong sense of community ownership and self-governance for students of the University of Sydney. He explained the operational structure of student housing cooperatives, where students manage the facilities, take collective responsibility for maintenance, and make decisions democratically. The benefits of such a model include lower rent, stable accommodation, and enhanced social support networks running successfully as a wonder for over three decades. However, he also noted challenges such as securing initial funding, legal recognition, and administrative sustainability given the transient nature of student populations.

Dr. Waleed Alzamil, an Associate Professor at King Saud University and an experienced Urban Planner, presented his research on sustainable policy frameworks for the transition toward cooperative housing in Saudi Arabia based upon his findings of research in different countries such as India, Indonesia, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. He emphasized that while cooperative housing remains a relatively underdeveloped model in the region, there is a growing need for its implementation to address the rising cost of urban housing. He outlined key challenges such as the lack of government incentives, rigid regulatory frameworks, and limited public awareness about cooperative housing as a viable option. He proposed a sustainable policy framework integrating economic, social, and environmental factors. His recommendations included reforming urban legislation to encourage cooperative housing, allocating land specifically for cooperative housing developments, and strengthening international collaborations to adopt best practices from countries with successful cooperative housing models.



Sustainability specialist Mr. Mohak Gupta, Assistant Program Director, DA, provided insights into the intersection of sustainable construction and housing as community-oriented solutions with community ownership in the form of SHGs and cooperatives. He discussed the role of worker cooperatives in the construction sector and how they can contribute to developing environmentally responsible and affordable housing. Mr. Gupta shared case studies of successful housing projects that integrate local materials, energy-efficient designs, and participatory construction methods. He also emphasized the need for government policy support in scaling such models, including incentives for green building practices and financial mechanisms that support cooperative housing developments. He highlighted the role of cooperative worker guilds in addressing the twin challenges of employment and affordable housing by training local artisans and construction workers to develop sustainable housing solutions, thus creating self-sufficient communities.



Dr. Scott Jennings, a board member from CHI, provided a global perspective on cooperative housing models, highlighting examples from Europe and North America. In some countries, cooperative housing accounts for up to 20% of the housing stock, playing a significant role in the housing market. Dr. Jennings emphasized that cooperative housing is not just about affordability but also ensures security of tenure and democratic control. He highlighted successful policy interventions in Zurich and Vienna, where cooperative housing has thrived due to favourable land policies, long-term municipal partnerships, and access to cooperative financing models. Advocating for stronger knowledge-sharing networks, Dr. Jennings stressed the importance of global collaboration among cooperative housing organizations to exchange best practices and innovative financial models. He also shared his experiences with student

housing cooperatives in the United Kingdom and provided insights into the current ecosystem of student housing cooperatives across the globe.

Several common themes emerged from the discussions, providing key takeaways for policymakers, cooperative leaders, and researchers:

1. The Need for Policy and Regulatory Support: One of the primary challenges in expanding cooperative housing is the lack of supportive policies in many countries. Speakers emphasized the need for reforms in land allocation, taxation policies, and financing mechanisms to facilitate cooperative housing development.
2. Sustainability in Housing Cooperatives: Integrating sustainable building practices into cooperative housing developments can address environmental concerns while ensuring long-term affordability. Examples from India and Australia demonstrated how cooperatives can incorporate renewable energy, efficient land use, and eco-friendly construction materials.
3. Student Cooperative Housing as a Model: The success of student housing cooperatives in Australia and Europe showcased how cooperatives can effectively address housing affordability issues while fostering community engagement and shared governance.
4. The Role of International Collaboration: There is a growing need for cooperative housing organizations to collaborate at the international level to share experiences, knowledge, and best practices. Learning from successful models in different regions can help address challenges and improve the implementation of cooperative housing projects globally.
5. Community Participation and Democratic Governance: Cooperative housing is unique as it promotes community-driven development, where residents collectively own and manage their housing units. This participatory approach enhances social cohesion and ensures that housing remains affordable in the long term.

The colloquium concluded with a call to action for cooperative stakeholders to actively engage in policy advocacy, capacity building, and international networking to advance cooperative housing as a sustainable solution to the global housing crisis with more extensive and intensive research in cooperative housing systems. The discussions highlighted that while challenges exist, cooperative housing offers a resilient and inclusive alternative to conventional housing markets.

Participants expressed interest in continued discussions and knowledge exchange, with some suggesting regional forums dedicated to cooperative housing. There was also a proposal to organize a dedicated symposium on housing cooperatives within the Asia-Pacific region to further explore region-specific challenges and solutions.

In light of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025, this colloquium reinforced the significance of cooperative housing in building sustainable communities and addressing pressing housing concerns worldwide. The ICCR reaffirmed its commitment to supporting research and dialogue in this area, ensuring that cooperative housing continues to be recognized as a vital component of sustainable urban development.

Youth Leadership Exchange Program 2024: Bridging Borders Through Cooperatives



The third edition of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Youth Leadership Exchange Program (YLEP), hosted by the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), unfolded from December 1–7, 2024, in the serene hills of Himachal Pradesh. Bringing together 13 young leaders from across the ICA member countries, the program offered a week-long immersion into India's cooperative ecosystem, blending education, cultural exchange, and leadership development.

The journey began in New Delhi, with participants traveling to Dharamshala, where they were welcomed with traditional Himachali caps at the Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies office. The inaugural day set the tone with visits to Kangra Central Cooperative Bank, where discussions on credit systems and cybersecurity took center stage, and Malan Co-op Agri Service Society, a village-level cooperative lauded for integrating public services like public distribution system (PDS) stores and credit unions into rural life.

Day three highlighted cultural resilience at the Tibetan Handicraft Cooperative Society in McLeod Ganj. Run by Tibetan refugees, the cooperative not only preserves traditional carpet-weaving and tailoring but also supports its members through housing and childcare. A lunch at Hotel Tibet, another cooperative venture, introduced delegates to authentic Tibetan cuisine, followed by explorations of Bhagsu Temple and the vibrant McLeod Ganj Market. The day closed with a bonfire and Himachali folk music, underscoring the blend of learning and cultural camaraderie.

As the delegation travelled to Kullu via Mandi, a stop at HP Milkfed's dairy cooperative revealed the intricacies of milk processing and marketing. Participants savoured Himachali

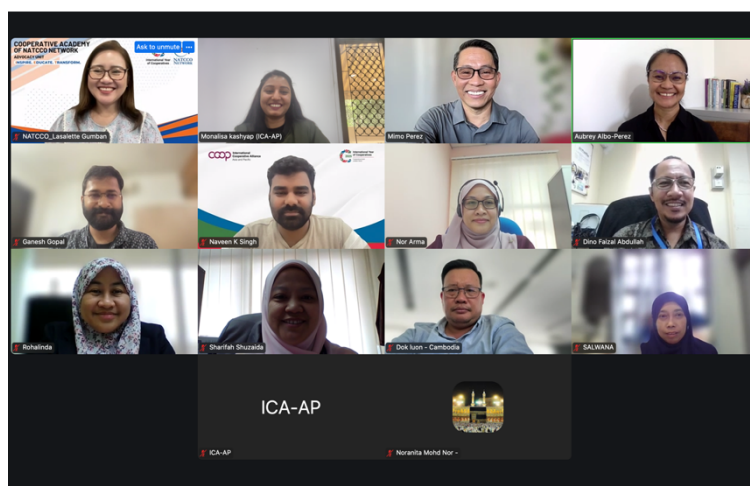
Dham, a traditional meal, before diving into Kullu's handloom sector. Visits to a government sheep farm and Kullu Valley Regional Marketing Cooperative Society showcased wool production and self-reliant business models, while BHUTTICO—a weaver-owned cooperative—demonstrated the full cycle from wool testing to retailing exquisite garments. The final cooperative visits in Manali focused on challenges and innovations. At an agricultural cooperative grappling with outdated technology, delegates brainstormed revival strategies while the Lahaul Potato Growers' Cooperative Society illustrated how vertical integration transformed local farming. Evenings were reserved for cultural immersion, including dips in Vashisht Hot Springs and market explorations.

The program concluded with reflections on cooperatives as a force for equitable development. Against global challenges like climate change and inequality, YLEP 2024 equipped young leaders with practical insights and forged cross-border networks. Participants departed with not only knowledge of India's cooperative diversity, from credit unions to handicrafts, but also lasting connections to peers worldwide.

Check out the teaser video of YLEP-India Chapter [here](#).

ICA-EU Updates

Virtual Capacity Building Training on Cooperative Leadership for Social Impact



On 27 February, under the ICA-EU Financial Framework Partnership Agreement 2 (FFPA 2), ICA-AP organized a virtual capacity building training on 'Cooperative Leadership for Social Impact' as part of the broader theme – 'Empowered Leadership, Thriving Cooperatives: Strengthening Governance for Better Tomorrow' aiming to equip cooperative leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complex challenges of the modern world.

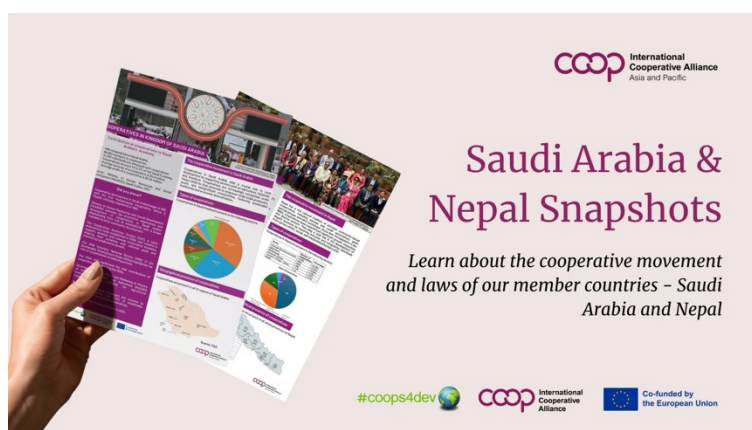
The core objectives of the training were to 1) Present the leadership skills that create social impact by identifying key leadership skills necessary for driving social change and promoting cooperative values and principles amid the BANI world; 2) Present ways to develop a culture of excellence, innovation, empathy and inclusivity; 3) Create actionable plans for leadership

development by developing personalized plans for enhancing leadership capabilities within participants' respective cooperatives, focusing on continuous improvement and capacity building.

The training was facilitated in partnership with the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO), the biggest federation of coops in the Philippines in terms of geographical reach, membership, financial capacity, and array of services. The training session began with greetings and introductions led by Ms. Monalisa Kashyap, Program Coordinator. She set the context by mentioning the completion of the previous two trainings in November and December 2024 and introduced the theme of this final training. Ms. Daisybelle Cabal, COO of NATCCO, warmly welcomed all participants. The session explored how cooperative leaders can drive meaningful impact while balancing economic and social goals. It also addressed how they can uphold and embody the cooperative identity in a highly competitive landscape. Additionally, the discussion focused on the essential skills needed to lead with purpose, create a lasting legacy of excellence, and demonstrate servant leadership. Participants from various countries, including Bhutan, Jordan, Malaysia, Cambodia, and the Philippines, took part in the training program.

Mr. Mimo, Ms. Aubrey, and Ms. Lasalette facilitated an engaging discussion using a series of warm-up questions. Later, they discussed the concept of the BANI Framework, the leadership qualities needed to be cultivated in the BANI world, leadership skills for social impact, and building a culture of excellence, innovation, empathy, and inclusivity. After the session, a leadership development action plan template was presented and discussed with participants. They were then asked to complete and submit the document as a post-training assignment.

Country Snapshot – Saudi Arabia and Nepal



Originally developed in 2019 under the ICA-EU FFPA 1, the country snapshots offer an overview of the cooperative landscape, policy developments, and key contributions to the economy in each country. In Phase 2, we are creating snapshots for new countries and updating the existing snapshots with new insights and recent developments.

Saudi Arabia – A new member country was added in 2024 with the admission of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (HRSD), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as an associate member. We are pleased to present the snapshot showcasing:

- Key statistics – 489 cooperatives with 68,801 members and 14,332 professionals
- Legislative updates – Including the Law of Cooperative Associations (2008) and 2021 governance reforms
- Case studies – Featuring Asir Poultry Producers Cooperative Association (CAAPP), Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Al-Zulfi (MCSZ), Digital Transformation Cooperative Association (Raqm), and Sleysla Cooperative
- Saudi Arabia's role in the global cooperative movement, including insights from the ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024 and GCC Cooperative Development Forum.

Read the full snapshot [here](#).

Nepal – The recent updates in the Nepal snapshot include:

- The contribution of cooperatives in Nepal and key statistics
- Implementation of Cooperative Rules 2019
- New case studies featuring Nepal Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd., Mechi Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd., Milijuli Kalinchowak Saving & Credit Cooperative Ltd., and Chandragiri Savings and Credit Cooperative Ltd.
- Major events and initiatives such as National Cooperative Congress, Leadership Bootcamp, and participation in regional consultations and trainings promoting cooperation among cooperatives.

Read the full snapshot [here](#).

Member Updates

Welcoming New Members



Meet our newest members who joined us in 2025.

Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) from India joined as a full member. As a multi-state federation with over 13,354 individual members, BBSSL plays a vital role in seed production, processing, storage, marketing, and distribution, ensuring the availability of high-

quality seeds to farmers. Additionally, they are committed to conserving traditional natural seeds, supporting biodiversity, and sustainable agriculture. By joining ICA, BBSSL aims to expand its network within the global cooperative community, exchange knowledge, and collaborate with international cooperatives for mutual growth.

The [Saigon Union of Trading Co-operatives](#) (Saigon Co.op) from Vietnam joined as a full member. With 26 cooperative members representing 1,000 individual members, Saigon Co.op operates a vast retail network of 800 stores, including supermarkets, hypermarkets, and shopping malls. As one of Asia's top 500 retailers, they play a crucial role in distributing quality goods to cooperative members and consumers through diverse retail formats, including TV and online shopping. Founded through capital contributions from its cooperative members, Saigon Co.op strengthens Vietnam's cooperative movement by negotiating better prices, training staff, and facilitating access to markets for its members. Their commitment to import-export activities and production investment further enhances cooperative trade. By joining ICA, Saigon Co.op aims to expand global cooperative relationships, exchange knowledge, and adopt innovative technologies and best practices. Their membership will also help introduce Vietnam's cooperative movement to the world while contributing to global cooperative development.

General Cooperative Union (GUCOOP.PAL) from Palestine joined as a full member. Representing the Palestinian cooperative movement, GUCOOP.PAL brings together five sectoral unions – Agricultural, Housing, Credit & Savings, Consumer, and Crafts Cooperatives – supporting nearly 20,000 individual members across the country. Their mission includes providing advisory, legal, and technical services; promoting cooperative awareness; facilitating cooperative formation and funding; and working with the Cooperative Work Authority to propose relevant policies and regulations. They joined ICA to further cooperation between cooperatives.

[Kollam District Co-operative Hospital Society Ltd.](#) No. Q 952 from India joined as a full member. Established to provide affordable and high-quality healthcare to needy members, vulnerable communities, and the unorganized sector, the hospital has grown into one of Kerala's leading super-specialty hospitals and India's largest cooperative hospital. With a strong membership base of 10,000 individuals and 100 healthcare institutions, the hospital operates with 500+ beds, 1,600 staff, and 160 doctors. Its commitment to affordability is reflected in its 30% lower treatment costs compared to nearby hospitals, with an additional 30% discount for economically disadvantaged patients. Looking ahead, they are working toward their vision of establishing an Integrated Health City in Kollam. By joining ICA, they seek to exchange knowledge on cooperative policies, legislation, and healthcare management, engage in inter-cooperative collaboration, and participate in training programs to enhance their capacity.

We welcome them to the ICA-AP family and look forward to their active participation!

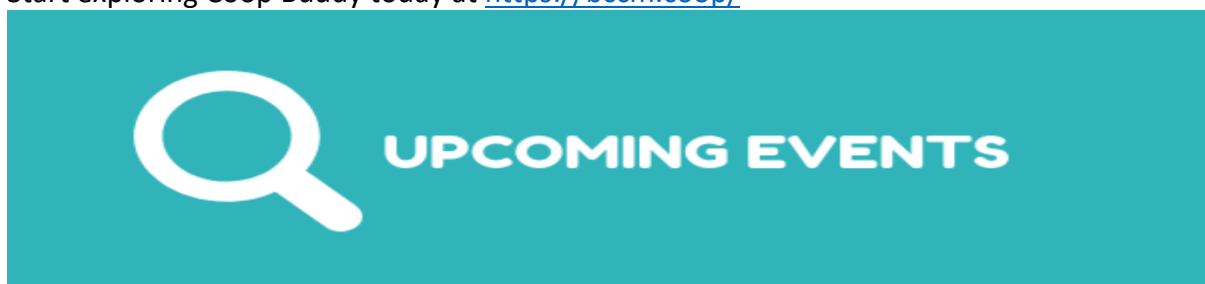
Coop Buddy: Australia's First AI-Powered Coop Chatbot!



Picture Credit: BCCM

As part of its commitment to cooperative education, the Business Council of Cooperatives and Mutuals (BCCM), our member and national apex in Australia, has launched the country's first AI-powered chatbot to provide instant guidance on planning, setting up, and running successful cooperatives. Coop Buddy, inspired by a successful pilot in New Zealand with Cooperative Business New Zealand (CBNZ), is now live on the BCCM website. You can find it on the bottom right of every page of BCCM's website to get answers for all your queries related to cooperatives in Australia.

Start exploring Coop Buddy today at <https://bccm.coop/>



- Virtual Parallel Event at NGO CSW 69 Forum – 19 March 2025
- International Day of Cooperatives – 5 July 2025
- ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting in China – 23 July 2025
- ToT on climate change and action for women cooperators by ICA-AP Committee on Women in Indonesia – July 2025 (TBC)
- Cooperative Entrepreneurship: Shaping a Sustainable Future in PNG – 19 to 21 August 2025
- Asia-Pacific Research Conference in Sri Lanka – 23 to 25 November 2025 (TBC)
- ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting in Sri Lanka – 24 November 2025
- 17th ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Board Elections in Sri Lanka – 24 to 28 November 2025

