


Report on the Activities 2000 to 2001

ICA Regional Women's Committee
for Asia and the Pacific

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International Co-operative Alliance
Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific
New Delhi

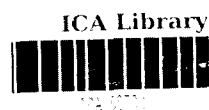
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**ICA Regional Women's Committee
for Asia and the Pacific**



**International Co-operative Alliance
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
New Delhi**



**Report on Activities
of
ICA Regional Women's Committee
2000-2001**

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Foreword

Historically in the Asian region, the male has always been taking leadership roles in the co-operatives and other sectors. To overcome this and to increase the participation of women in decision-making positions in co-operatives, the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has re-introduced gender integration programmes during 1991. A regional survey has been held and 14 country-specific reports and a regional overview was published.

On the basis of the prevalent situation in member countries, the ICA Regional Office held a Regional Consultation on gender issues in Colombo during 1992, followed by a Regional Women's Conference in Tokyo during March 1993. The Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union (JCCU) has been supporting the gender programme activities of the ICA Regional Office. They have also seconded the services of Ms. Akiko Yamauchi as Gender Programme Officer since 1994.

The ICA ROAP held two sub-regional workshops in Pune, India and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, followed by a conference in Bangkok.

I was fortunate in associating myself in all these activities since the beginning. I felt that it is essential to establish a Regional Women's Committee to improve the situation of women in co-operatives in this Region. With the active support of ANGKASA, Malaysia and its President, Royal Professor, Ungku A. Aziz, I made a motion to the ICA Regional Assembly held in Kuala Lumpur during 1996, to set up a Regional Women's Committee. The Regional Assembly unanimously approved and supported this motion.

With the financial and infrastructural support of ANGKASA, a pro-tem Committee was set up and I was nominated as the Chairperson, and the Gender Programme Advisor, Ms. Akiko Yamauchi, was the Secretary to the Committee.

With the support of the pro-tem committee members, ICA member organisations in the Region and the Gender Programme of the ICA ROAP, the first meeting of the ICA Regional Women's Committee was organised in Seoul, Korea, during October 1998. The first-ever Regional Women's Forum followed this meeting the next day. The Forum and the Committee meeting received enthusiastic support, both from women and men co-operators of the Region.

With the support of the ICA members and the members of the Committee, we have made headway and created a climate to position gender issues in

the agenda of the ICA Regional Ministerial Conferences in Beijing, in 1999. The office-bearers of the Committee have been meeting often to discuss and plan activities and programmes of the Committee. We have planned and held the Second meeting of the Committee successfully in Singapore during June, 2001. Again, this meeting was followed by the Second Regional Women's Forum in Singapore. This forum also received unprecedented support from member organisations and co-operators, especially the women co-operative members. The theme of the forum was 'Transcending Glass Ceilings and Glass Ladders in the new Millennium - Challenges to Co-operatives'.

During the past two years, the Committee organised a survey in member countries to find the legal and constitutional hurdles women face in assuming leadership and decision-making positions in co-operatives. We were also able to hold national-level women's fora in a number of countries in the region. We were also able to establish contact persons in several countries. There are 15 members in the Committee from ICA member organisations. I would request every member organisation of the ICA to nominate women members to the Committee.

The Secretariat has been issuing an electronic newsletter every month, giving information on the activities of the Committee. These newsletters are posted at the ICA Regional Office web-site at <http://www.icaroap.org.sg>. Another important achievement of the Committee was the preparation of a Training Manual for Co-operative Leadership Development for Women. The ICA Regional Office collaborated with the ILO Coopnet Programme to prepare this manual. The manual was recently validated at a workshop in Bangkok, which will be published and disseminated to the members of the ICA in the region. I am confident that the manual will be very useful to provide training to women leaders and potential women leaders, so that women co-operators are able to attain leadership and decision-making positions in co-operatives.

This booklet gives details on the activities of the ICA Regional Women's Committee for the past two years. I trust this booklet will be of use to the co-operative leaders, both men and women, to create enabling situation in their respective co-operatives for women to take more active leadership roles in the future.

I thank the members of the Committee, the member organisations and leaders, both men and women, in supporting the Committee actively and hope the support will continue.

Rahaiah Baهران
Chairperson

ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia and the Pacific

1. Organisation of ICA Regional Women's Committee

Historically in the Asian region, the male has been taking leadership roles for a for long, long time, even in co-operative organizations. The situation is still continuing. Therefore, understanding gender issues and bringing up women leaders are main subjects requiring attention in the Asian region.

ICA-ROAP has taken several steps to tackle the subjects and improve the situation, in co-operation with its member organizations.

In 1992, the ICA ROAP organized a Regional consultation on gender issues in Colombo to sum up the national gender surveys and make recommendations for follow-up action. The JCCU hosted the first ICA Asian Women's Conference in Tokyo during March 1993 to work out national action plans and started to finance gender programme activities of the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. It then seconded the services of Ms. Akiko Yamauchi as a Gender Programme Officer at the ICA ROAP since 1994.

On the occasion of the ICA Regional Assembly held in Kuala Lumpur in 1996, Ms. R. Baهران's of Malaysia submitted a motion to establish an Asian Women's Committee, which was approved unanimously. The ICA ROAP organized two regional workshop, one in Pune, India and another in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, followed by a conference in Bangkok. The ICA ROAP also collaborated with the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum (AWCF) a Regional Women's Con-



A view of the Asian Women's Conference - Tokyo, March 1993

ference on women's participation in decision-making in Tagaytay City, Philippines.

These efforts had culminated at the ICA Regional Assembly held in Seoul in 1998 when the ICA Asian Women's Committee was set up and the first Asian Women's Forum was held. The Women's Forum proved to be very successful wherein more than 130 women delegates from countries in the region and elsewhere participated. In June 2000, a second Asian Women's Forum was held in Singapore, preceded by the 2nd meeting of the ICA Regional Women's Committee.

ICA-ROAP is conducting activities those were identified and approved by the Regional Women's women's committee in every field.

2. Activities Report Gender Integration Programme of ICA-ROAP

2.1 Activities organised by the ICA Regional women's committee

The women's committee has been requesting each and every member of the ICA ROAP to engage women leaders in decision-making positions in co-operatives.

To this end, in 1999 the women's committee conducted a survey through questionnaires, requesting member organisations to review co-operative laws, rules and co-operative by-laws with a view to find out about gender discriminations in co-operatives in the region. Many of the responses mention that women's participation in decision-making positions is still very low. Co-operative law is silent on gender in most countries and hence there is a need to develop policies at the national levels for more participation by women.



First women's Committee meeting - Seoul, Korea - October 25, 1998

The women's committee again surveyed the situation of women's participation in decision-making of women during the year 2001. The women's committee is persuading member organisations and member countries in the region to hold women's fora once a year, especially in countries where deepened understanding on gender issues is needed. Such for a were held in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Japan. It is heartening to note that this forum is participated even by male members and discuss gender issues.

The women's committee requested all ICA member organisations in the region to appoint/nominate a contact person, to liaise with ICA-ROAP on gender issues. This is aimed at making a network of 'contact persons on gender issues' in Asia and the Pacific region. Already, Member organisations from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Indo-



A view of the First Women's Forum, Seoul, Korea - 26 October, 1998

nesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Philippines, Korea, Japan and AWCF have nominated contact persons.

The Committee hope that other member organisations will also appoint/nominate contact persons very soon. The women's committee reiterate their request for such nominations.

2.2 Surveys on participation of women in decision-making during year 2001.

During the year 2001, the Regional Women's Committee conducted

surveys on women in decision making positions in co-operatives in the following countries:

- ANGASA (National Co-operative Organisation of Malaysia)
- DEKOPIN (Dewan Koperasi), Indonesia
- National Co-operative Union of India
- National Co-operative Council of Sri Lanka
- National Confederation of Co-operatives (NATCCO) Philippines
- Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union, Japan
- National Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Associations (Zengyoren), (Japan)
- Singapore National Co-operative Federation, Singapore
- Vietnam Co-operative Alliance, Vietnam

This survey studied the roles and the number of women on the board at national apex organisations, district organisations and primary societies during the year 2000. The survey compared the position with the situation of women's participation in 1992. According to the reply received from members, it was noticed that the participation levels of women in apex organisations have considerably increased.

The survey also noted that after the establishment of the Regional Women's committee, co-operatives at all levels are consciously promoting women to decision-making positions.

The comparison of the average participation in the year 1992 and in 2000 are given as follows:

	Apex level	Regional/ Local level
1. Percentage of Women Leaders		
1992	2%	30%
2002	7%	32%
2. Percentage of Female Employees		
1992	23%	20%
2000	25%	26%
3. Percentage of Employees in Managerial positions		
1992	25%	11%
2002	31%	16%
4. Percentage of Female Employees in Managerial positions		
1992	2%	2%
2000	2%	11%

2.3 Meetings of the Regional Women's Committee

The Regional Women's Committee presently holds its meetings in conjunction with ICA Regional Assembly, every 2 years. Also, the Asia Pacific Regional Women's Forum is being held during this time.

During the year 2000, the Regional Women's Committee held its second meeting and also the second Regional Women's Forum during June, 2000 in Singapore. 120 delegates from 14 countries attended the 2nd ICA Regional Women's Forum. The Forum shared the common experience of being faced with the "glass ceiling" and "glass ladder" syndromes in organisations, especially in co-operatives.

Ms. Lydia Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of Vancouver City Savings Credit Union shared her experiences with VanCity co-operatives with the participants as to how her co-operative has eliminated the 'glass ceiling' and the 'glass ladder' syndrome. Later, the participants exchanged views and ideas with the help of five panelists from the Region. After panel presentations, the participants were broken into six discussion groups, where they came up with some useful suggestions and proposals for ways to break the "glass ceiling" and to make a "glass ladder" less slippery.

They suggested that co-operatives:

- provide support services to enable women willing to be elected to management positions in co-operatives. These support services could be in the form of facilities for childcare, while the women board member, for example, is attending a board meeting;
- be represented by one male and one female members together in local and international events to ensure gender equality;
- set up a quota system (as a temporary measure) that allows women to be represented on the board and in other key decision-making positions.
- organize and conduct training for their leaders, staff and members – both women and men – that aim to change their mindsets about the roles and status of women vis-à-vis men in society;
- address the needs of women whose poverty makes it even harder for them to climb the ladder. Their needs could be addressed through training, group formation, and provision of affordable credit and through social nets such as group insurance;
- also that a member of the women's committee attends the Asia Pacific co-operative ministers' conference and other major events,



Mdm. Rahaiah Baharen speaking at the 5th Minister's Conference in Beijing

to give proper importance to gender issues in these meetings.

With the efforts of the Chairperson, Ms. Rahaiah Baharen, the following sentence was included to the joint declaration of the Beijing Co-operative Ministers' Conference: "Removal of all legal and other barriers which limit equal participation of men and women in membership, leadership management and decision-making in co-operatives".

2.4 Activities of the Gender Programme of the ICA-ROAP during 2001

ICA-ROAP was able to finalise a manual on co-operative leadership training for women in collaboration with ILO Coopent. A validation workshop to validate the manual was held during August 2001 in Bangkok, Thailand and the manual was finalized. It is felt that this manual is extremely effective for women to participate in co-operative activities in decision-making positions in the future. The manual will be printed and disseminated to member organisations in the region, who will in turn conduct trainings for women leaders and potential women leaders.

ICA-ROAP was able to finalise a manual on co-operative leadership training for women in collaboration with ILO Coopent.

Also, the Regional Director has written to all members and specialized committees to promote the participation of women in each specialized committee of the ICA-ROAP to promote optimization of women's participation in the activities of the specialised committees. Furthermore, ICA-ROAP has established a 'Home Page', wherein proper representation is given to the ICA Regional Women's Committee. Now the women's committee members are able to exchange reports and views on gender activities.

2.5 The stage of our development

Of course we are still in the initial stage in the mainstreaming gender issues. We could see only very few women delegates in the Regional Assembly in Singapore in June 2000 but the Gender Programme of



A view of the Second Women's Forum, Singapore, June 2000

the ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia and the Pacific has made the following achievements:

- i. Founding of the ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia-Pacific.
- ii. Encouraging for networking among women leaders.
- iii. Successful holding of two ICA Asian Women's Fora.
- iv. Organizing national women's fora in several member countries.
- v. Positioning of gender issues in agenda of the ICA Ministerial Conferences and the ICA ROAP.
- vi. Preparing Training Manuals on Leadership Development for Women, in collaboration with the ILO.

2.6 Milestones of ICA Regional Women's Committee Activities

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Oct. 1998 | Inaugural meeting of the ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia and Pacific
First ICA Regional Women's Forum in Seoul
Theme: <i>Enhancement of Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-making in Co-operatives.</i> |
| March 1999 | Office Bearers meeting(Thailand) |
| Oct. 1999 | Office Bearers meeting(Malaysia) |
| May 2000 | Office Bearers meeting(Malaysia)) |

June 2000 Second meeting of ICA Regional women's committee for Asia and Pacific
Second First ICA Regional women's Forum
Theme: *Transcending Glass Ceilings and Glass Ladders in the New Millennium.*

March 2001 Office Bearers meeting (where?)

August 2001 Validation Workshop for Co-operative Leadership Development Manual for Women.

**2.7 Program of the Second ICA Regional Women's Forum
26 June 2000 - Singapore**

The theme of the 2nd Regional Women's Forum was:
"Transcending Glass Ceilings and Glass Ladders in the new Millennium - Challenges for Co-operatives".

09.00 – 09.50 Inauguration of the Regional Forum
Welcome address by Ms. Nichole Tan NCF Women's Committee Chairson
Welcome address by Ms. Rahaiah Baheran, Chairperson of ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia and the Pacific.
Address by Mr. Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific.



Second Women's Committee meeting in progress

Inaugural Address by Mrs Yu Foo Yee Shoon, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Community Development and Sports, Singapore.

09.50 – 10.20 Refreshments

10.20 – 11.00 Speaker on the main theme :

Ms. Lydia Johnson, Regional Manager VanCity Credit Union, Canada

Theme: "Transcending Glass Ceilings and Glass Ladders in the new Millennium – Challenges to Co-operatives in the new Millennium".

11.00 – 12.30 Panel Discussions

Panelists :

Mr. Paul Sinnappan, Credit Union Promotion Club of Malaysia

Ms. Rahaiah Baheran, Chairperson, ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia and the Pacific.

Ms. Teresita M. de Leon, Regional Coordinator for Asia and Pacific, ILO Coopnet/ Coopreform Programmes.

Mr. Takeyoshi Fujioka, Executive Director, JCCU, Japan



Another view of the Second Regional Women's Forum

Ms. Kamakshi Balakrishnan, Working Women's Forum, India

Moderator: Ms. Lota Y. Bertulfo, Regional Coordinator, AWCF

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 **Group discussions by participants**

Discussion on impressions and points from the main theme and panel discussion.

"What is your experience in your Co-op concerning about "Glass Ceilings and Glass Ladders"

"What effort do you make to overcome "Glass Ceilings and Glass Ladders"

"What do you think Co-op should do to "Glass Ceilings and Glass Ladders"

15.00 – 15.30 Refreshments

15.30 – 16.20 **Presentation of Group Discussions**

16.20 – 16:30 **Conclusion by Ms. Rahaiah Baهران**

16:30 Closing



Validation Workshop for Leadership Development Manual in progress - Bangkok, August 2001

Appendix

1. ICA Regional Women's Committee Office Bearers

1998-2000

- Chairperson : Ms. Rahaiah Baهران
Vice- Chairperson : Ms. Remeshwari Ramachandra
Vice- Chairperson : Ms. Hatuko Oomiri

2000-till date

- Chairperson : Ms. Rahaiah Baهران
Vice-Chairperson : Ms. Preema ShantiSooriyarachchi
Vice-Chairperson : Ms. Hatuko Omori

2. Members of the ICA Regional Women's Committee

1. Sen. Hajah Rahaiah Baharen *Chairperson*
ANGKASA
Lot No.6, Jalan SS6/3, Kelana Jaya
47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
2. Ms. Sasimas Punnarat
Co-operative League of Thailand
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3. Ms. Pasti Tarigan Tahpubogon
BKWK - C/o. Dewan Koperasin Indonesia (DEKOPIN)
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5. Ms. Young Ja Lee
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6. Dr. Mrs. Parvin Maroofi
Central Organisation for Rural Co-operatives of Iran
753, Valli-e-asr, Tehran 15948, Iran
7. Ms. Nguyen Thi Loan
Vietnam Co-operative Alliance
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Hanoi, Vietnam

8. Ms. Takeshima Aiko
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Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo,
Japan
9. Ms. Sadako Ishiwata
Chairperson of Women's Association (ZENGYOREN)
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Japan
10. Ms. Ayako Ueno
National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural
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Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102,
Japan
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STATEMENT ON THE CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY

Definition

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Principles

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their service and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6th Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives.

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7th Principle: Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities by promoting policies approved by their members.

