

**ICA/SCC/NCC PROJECT FOR
WOMEN'S CONSUMER EDUCATION
AND
INFORMATION THROUGH COOPERATIVES
IN SRI LANKA**

**An Experience in Enhancing Women's
Involvement in Cooperative Activity**

MRS. JAYANTHA C. T. BULUMULLE
Assistant Commissioner of Cooperative Development
(formerly Project Director)



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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE
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FOREWORD

The National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka initiated in October 1978, two Projects with technical and financial assistance from the Swedish Cooperative Centre—one Project was for the Training of Cooperative Teachers in Sri Lanka and the other was for Women's Consumer Education and Information through Cooperatives in Sri Lanka.

We at the ROEC New Delhi were most fortunate in that we were closely associated with these two Projects from the stage of their formulation to the final integration of Project activity with the on going activity of the National Cooperative Council. The Projects were National Projects in so far as Sri Lanka was concerned and also Pilot Projects for the South-East Asian Region serviced by the ICA ROEC, New Delhi.

We are indeed most happy that the two Project Directors were agreeable to rewrite their Terminal Reports to enable us to publish them in their present form, thus providing for the sharing of the experiences with a wider clientele of persons interested in these fields.

During the currency of these two Projects, which incidentally were terminated on 30.6.84, the ICA ROEC carried out several activities with the Projects as the focus to enable those interested from other countries in the Region to study in detail the activities of the Projects and the problems encountered and the progress made. We have also supported several Fellowships Programmes with the same objective. We are happy to note that several similar activities in so far as the Women's Project is concerned have been started in the Region. We do hope that these booklets will make available a mass of practical experience which we are sure will be of assistance to those contemplating similar activity in these fields.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the SCC for the generous support provided both by way

of expertise and by way of finance to these Projects. Had it not been for the initiatives taken at the Swedish end the Projects may never have seen the light of day.

We would like also to express our thanks to the Hon. Minister for Cooperatives in the Government of Sri Lanka and the Ministry Officials, the Commissioner of Cooperative Development and his staff and also the principal and staff of the School of Cooperation for their invaluable assistance. Special thanks are due for making available the services of the two Project Directors by releasing them from their substantive duties to head the two Projects.

The NCC Sri Lanka was the implementing agency and quite some strain was put on their resources and their staff in supporting the implementation of Project activities. Many thanks are due to them for their wholehearted support.

The Projects were implemented with close collaboration from and support of several MPCSS who soon recognised the value of the work being done and gave every encouragement and support to the Projects. Thanks are due to the Boards of Directors and the Management of these societies for all the encouragement provided.

The women members and the housewives involved in the Women's Project deserve a special mention for the keen interest and enthusiasm they displayed in making full use of the opportunities provided both to increase their awareness and also to get more involved with cooperative activity.

The Principal and staff of the School of Cooperation deserve a special mention as the School became the centre for most of the Project activity carried out at the National level. I am sure the many thousands who passed through the School in the six years of Project activity will carry with them fond memories of the very interesting time spent at the school.

Finally a special word of thanks to the Project Staff and in particular the Project Directors who at considerable sacrifice committed themselves wholeheartedly to make a success of the Projects. Theirs was a valiant effort and their commitment and dedication deserve the highest praise. To them we say thank you for the effort and the leadership provided and thank you also for making this publication possible.

We do earnestly hope that the experiences gathered in implementing the Projects in Sri Lanka will provide the necessary inspiration and guidance to initiate similar action elsewhere where appropriate.

With Cooperative Greetings.

R. B. RAJAGURU
Regional Director, ICA ROEC
New Delhi (India)

PREFACE

Little did I realise way back in mid 1978 when I was called upon to shoulder the responsibilities of the Women's Project as its Director, the enormity of the tasks facing me and my own inadequacies in several areas of knowledge and experience that seemed vital for the Project. But yet it was a challenge and I am sure that every member of the Team we eventually put together to work with the Project had the same sort of reservations as I had, but they all accepted the challenge and we all committed ourselves to dedicated work to achieve the objectives of the Project. It was hard work, often stretching into the wee hours of the night, traversing the length and breadth of the country, in sun and in rain, but we all enjoyed what we were doing and tried our best to influence others too to similar commitment. We are indeed, each one of us, the richer for this experience.

To all of us it was a continuing learning process, an experience in member relations and group dynamics, but since the approaches we adopted were participatory, the burden of providing new ideas and new approaches did not lie solely on us in the Project Team. Yet many were the instances when we were clueless and we had to innovate, playing by ear as it were, to cope with unfamiliar and totally new situations. But looking back over the many years of the Project, (in fact I came into work for two years and ended up working for almost five out of the six years of the Project), we feel that we have contributed in some measure to getting a focus on Women in cooperative, in keeping that focus in the forefront and in evolving programmes as would help women to have continuing interest in the affairs of their cooperatives. We certainly have not come to the end of the work in this field. But we have been able to set a process in motion and we are confident that this process will gather momentum and will keep on moving forward.

The Project was both a National Project for Sri Lanka and also a Pilot Project for the ICA ROEC and South-East Asia. This

booklet seeks to share our experiences with others concerned in this sector, both here in Sri Lanka and also elsewhere in Asia. It is our hope that the lessons we have learnt and the mistakes we have made will provide useful guidance to the many others working in this field.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank every single member of the Project Team for the wholehearted commitment with which they worked and for inspiring numerous others to similar dedicated service. We owe a deep debt of gratitude for all the support and encouragement, to the National Cooperative Council, the Hon. Minister for Cooperatives and the officials of the Ministry, the Commissioner of Cooperatives and his staff, the Principal and the staff of the School of Cooperation, Polgolla, the Director and staff of the Teachers Training Project, the Chairman and staff of the Cooperative Management Services Centre, the Swedish Cooperative Centre, the ICA ROEC New Delhi, the Project Direction Committee, several Government Departments and voluntary organisations, the Boards of Directors and staff of the Multipurpose Cooperative Societies we worked with, and most of all to the Women Leaders, the Women's Committees at all levels and the Education Officers of the Societies who maintained the necessary liaison with the Project and the large mass of the membership.

In conclusion I would like to dedicate this little booklet of our experiences to the Consumer Guilds in Sweden who first mooted the idea of supporting a Project such as ours and to the women cooperators in Sri Lanka, who have amply demonstrated that if there is proper motivation and direction and meaningful support, they can contribute most effectively to the development process and ensure a better quality of life both for themselves and for large mass of the people still living in want.

With all good wishes.

JAYANTHA C. T. BULUMULLE
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Sri Lanka

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List of Abbreviations used

A.C.C.D.	Assistant Commissioner of Cooperative Development
B.W.C.	Branch Women's Committee
C.C.D. & R.C.S.	Commissioner of Cooperative Development and Registrar of Cooperative Societies
C.M.S.C.	Cooperative Management Services Centre
C.E.O.	Cooperative Education Officer
C.I.O.	Consumer Information Officer
D.C.O.	District Coordinating Officer, NCC
D.W.C.	District Women's Committee
I.C.A.	International Cooperative Alliance
N.C.C.	National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka
N.W.C.	National Women's Committee, NCC
M.P.C.S.	Multipurpose Cooperative Society
P.D.	Project Director
P.D.C.	Project Direction Committee
R.O.E.C.	Regional Office and Education Centre, ICA New Delhi
S.C.C.	Swedish Cooperative Centre
S.I.D.A.	Swedish International Development Authority

Project for Women's Consumer Education and Information Through Cooperatives in Sri Lanka

I PROJECT ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND

01.01 The subject of women in cooperatives had not received much attention in Sri Lanka prior to the launching of this Project. As in many other countries in Asia, in Sri Lanka too, there were women who were members of various types of cooperatives. Sometimes they held positions of responsibility in the societies of which they were members, positions like those of President/Chairman of the Board of Directors/Management Committee, Secretary, or just simple elected member of the Board/Committee. But yet the numbers of such were few. There were also societies which had an exclusive membership of women or in some where they were in the majority, e.g., weavers cooperatives, dressmaking cooperatives, mat weaving cooperatives etc. In such societies the women ran their societies with the help of the concerned government departments and the Banks.

In so far as employment in the Cooperative sector was concerned, there were a large number of women employed at various levels, including those of General Manager or Credit Manager in a large size Multipurpose Cooperative Society (MPCS). Many however were employed in the secretarial and supporting services in the offices or as sales personnel in the shops run by the MPCSs. In many situations, the employees were also members of the cooperative in which they served.

*Ms Jayantha C. Tennakoon, now Mrs. Jayantha C. T. Bulumulle was the Director of the Project from its inception till 15.8.83 when she reverted to her substantive post in the Sri Lanka Administrative Service as Assistant Commissioner of Cooperative Development.

Yet in overall terms it could be said that women were not very visible in the cooperative scene.

01.02 The United Nations declared 1975 as "International Women's Year." The Regional Office of the International Co-operative Alliance, (ICA), held a Regional Seminar in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia in July 1975 on the subject of "The Role of Women in Cooperative Development". This Seminar was attended by cooperative women delegates from Sri Lanka. The Seminar had representatives from ICA London and also from the Swedish Cooperative Centre (SCC).

Among the many recommendations of the Seminar were the following:

7.2 As a follow up to this Seminar, national conferences on "the situation and role of women in cooperatives" should be called by member organisations within one year, i.e., before July 1976.

7.3 Member organisations should conduct at the earliest a survey in each of their countries to ascertain the present situation and role of women in cooperatives. These surveys should be completed within six months.

11.3 International Agencies like the ILO, FAO, IBRD, and other UN Bodies and Technical Assistance Agencies like SIDA, USAID, NORAD, DANIDA and CIDA should be approached to supply experts and technical assistance for conduct of feasibility studies relating to the setting up of cooperatives, particularly industrial projects for women.

11.4 Programmes which would qualify for assistance should be submitted to organisations like the SCC, which have been providing technical assistance to various Projects in the field of cooperative education for many years."

01.03 Follow up Action in Sri Lanka

Following on the recommendations of the Regional Seminar, the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka (NCC), held a

National Seminar in July 1976 on "the Role of Women in Cooperatives Development." This Seminar was very well attended and the women displayed much enthusiasm and interest, and were keen to find ways of getting involved in the mainstream of cooperative activity. The mainstream of cooperative activity in Sri Lanka was dominated by the MPCSS which formed a strong network of around 280 societies with over 8000 branches spread through the length and breadth of Sri Lanka.

(Details of the organisation and structure are given at Annexe I.)

Among the many recommendations of the National Seminar were the following:

- (i) that a woman should be nominated to the Board of Directors of each MPCSS;
- (ii) that women's committees be set up at all levels in the MPCSS;
- (iii) that a member of the women's committee should be appointed to the purchasing committee of the MPCSS;
- (iv) that one member from the branch women's committee should be elected to act as liaison between the women cooperators and the branch committee and with management.

There were also recommendations in regard to the need for special education and training facilities for women.

These ideas and aspirations were generally supported by the Ministry in charge of Cooperatives, the Department for Cooperative Development and the NCC. No steps were taken to nominate a woman representative to the Board of Directors of the MPCSS. However there was general encouragement from all sources to facilitate the setting up of Women's Committees at the District level, to pave the way to the formation of a National Women's Committee.

By October 1976 the District level Women's Committees were set up and by November 1976 a National Women's Committee was constituted under the auspices of the NCC.

01.04 The NCC/ICA/SCC Study

In early 1977 a study was undertaken by the NCC with the assistance of the ICA ROEC and the SCC on "the involvement of women in cooperatives in Sri Lanka, present position and future role."

The study group endorsed many of the recommendations made at the National Seminar and went on to identify further areas for attention.

Some of the Recommendations made by the NCC/ICA/SCC Study are given below:

- I. *The National Council of Women Cooperators*, which is at present only an Advisory Body be given a legal status.
- II. *Organisation of Women's Groups:*
 - (i) Special attention should be paid to the organisation of Women's Groups at the District and Primary level;
 - (ii) Women's Committees consisting of five members each, should be formed in all Districts, wherever this has not been done, and should be linked to the NCC District Education Centre to carry out activities in collaboration with these Centres;
 - (iii) Similar Committees consisting of five members each should be formed at the Primary level. Women's Committees at Primary level should have the same status as other Primary level Committees.
 - (iv) One member from the Women's Committee at the primary level should be nominated to the Board of Directors of the Society. (this procedure should continue for about 3 years)
 - (v) One member from the Women's Committee at primary level should be nominated to the Purchasing Committee of the MPCS.
 - (vi) At each Branch one woman cooperator should be selected to act as a liaison between women cooperators enrolled

as members through that branch and the women's committees at the primary level. This should be done to ensure that the Women's Programme reaches down to the grass root level thereby securing a good spread effect in an environment of difficult communication.

III. Consumer Activities

In all MPCSS

- (i) One member from the Women's Central Committee should be on the Purchasing Committee of the MPCSS to advise on the assortment and purchase of goods.
- (ii) The Women's Committee should undertake work in the field of Consumer Protection, i.e. quality control, random sampling and testing of goods etc.
- (iii) One or two members of the Women's Central Committee to act as liaison with the Members and the Board of Directors. (They can take up member complaints with the Board, make suggestions for the improvement of the sales in the store etc.)
- (iv) Small Banking Schemes be started in all sectors.

IV. Education and Training

Member Education and Training:

(i) Members, (ii) Committee members, (iii) Branch Liaison Women Workers should receive education and training in the following subjects :

Principles and practice of Cooperation,
Rights and Duties of Members,
Rights and Duties of Office Bearers,
Structure and functions of Societies,
Basic Economics (pricing policy, supply and demand, marketing mechanism etc)
Consumer Protection,
Cooperation and the Home—to show the relationship, between the cooperative and the home and how cooperatives can help people to achieve a higher standard of living. Subjects

such as Balanced Diet, Household Economy etc. should be combined with cooperative subjects.

In addition to the above committee members should receive training in:

Simple management techniques,
Board/Member relations and

Committee Members and Branch Liaison Women Worker's should receive training on

How to select a local leader (The UNDP Rural Women's Project in Kandy has worked out a system for selecting village women as leaders, hence their assistance can be sought)

How to Organise Women's Groups
How to Conduct Meetings.

V. Proposals for Implementation

To implement the above recommendations we propose that the following action be taken within the first year of implementation of a Women's Programme:

- (i) From the beginning proper records be kept on the progress of women's cooperative activities;
- (ii) The Lady District Secretary from the NCC and the Assistant Commissioners (Education and Extension) at District level will together with the National Council of Women Cooperators coordinate the Women's Education Programme;
- (iii) The National Council of Women Cooperators be considered the Advisory Body to NCC on Women's Cooperative Activities including coordination with other agencies;
- (iv) The National Cooperative Council takes into consideration the educational needs of women cooperators and

employ additional staff at District Centres to meet the increased educational needs.

(Names of the members of the study group are given at Annexe II)

01.05 Swedish Consumer Guild Proposals

The Union of Consumer Guilds in Sweden had decided to support a Project on Consumer Education for Women in a developing country. The Project would work towards involving women directly in cooperative activity and would also provide an opportunity for an exchange of experiences between the Consumer Guilds in Sweden and the Women in the Project Country.

The idea of the Consumer Guilds to assist a Project was supported also by the SCC. The SCC in consultation with the ICA ROEC, New Delhi and the NCC, Sri Lanka decided to locate such a project in Sri Lanka. The Project was to be in the nature of a national project for Sri Lanka and also a pilot project for the South and South-East Asian Region.

Around the time the Project idea was being mooted in SCC circles, Sri Lanka had taken several steps consequent to the Kuala Lumpur Seminar, designed to encourage greater participation of women in cooperatives. Women's Committees were functioning, if only in a rudimentary form at branch and society levels in some MPCSS and the National Women's Advisory Committee was getting into its stride. Another factor which stood in good stead for Sri Lanka was its smallness in size, making it possible to have a more visible spread effect and also the fact that the level of literacy among women was quite high, around 72% one of the highest for a developing country in the Region.

01.06 Status of Women in Sri Lanka

A brief reference to the status of women in Sri Lanka would be appropriate as this will help understand the background and social environment in which the Project had to work. Though generalisations generally tend to give a favourable picture only, it can yet be said that women in Sri Lanka have played important roles in the socio-economic and cultural fields and that they generally enjoy

an equal place alongside men, in many situations. They won the right to vote along with men in 1931 and since then many a woman has distinguished herself in many fields of public life. Traditionally woman plays the leading role in household and domestic matters often controlling family expenditure and at times contributing to family income. In the society at large it would still be the men who would play a dominant role.

In a socio-cultural situation of this nature it was inevitable that the aspirations of the women would be to get themselves involved in the mainstream of cooperative activity.

01.07 Commencement of the Project

The Project was officially inaugurated in October 1978, but in fact it became operative at the field level only from January 1979. The few months of 1978 were used to set up office and to recruit the necessary technical and supporting staff for the Project.

02. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

02.01 The Project Document agreed to between the ICA/SCC/NCC provided the broad framework within which Project Activity would be carried out, however the document itself was not something which had to be rigidly followed. It was the understanding from the beginning that there was to be sufficient flexibility to cope with the particular needs that would arise during the course of implementation.

The Project was to be, in the first instance, for a period of two years with options open for continuation of ICA/SCC support after necessary review or evaluation. In fact the Project operated as a Project with SCC funding until the end of June 1984. With effect from 01.01.83 however the Project was gradually integrated with the normal activities of the NCC.

02.02 The Objectives of the Project were

to educate the consumer, particularly the housewives of Sri Lanka in regard to the value of consumer information, nutrition, quality

consciousness and to create among them an awareness of the role that cooperatives can play in promoting and protecting consumer interests.

In order to achieve the above objectives the following activities were to be undertaken:

- (i) the provision of educational opportunities to the consumer in the fields of :
 - (a) nutrition,
 - (b) household economy;
 - (c) general economics for consumers.
- (ii) collection and dissemination of information related to knowledge about basic food and nutrition,
- (iii) Investigating the feasibility of running a Test Kitchen, Laboratory etc. for the purposes of consumer education;
- (iv) investigating and testing activities in the field of consumer goods and services and disseminating their results;
- (v) publication of news of consumer interest and production of information material of consumer interest to be used in the consumer education drive:
- (vi) promoting the association of housewives through consumer education and member relations programmes;
- (vii) to participate in the promotion of cooperative consumer activities.

02.03 Administrative Arrangements for the Project

The Project was a combined collaborative effort of the NCC, SCC and the ICA ROEC. External funding was to be done by the SCC while the NCC and the concerned MPCSS who were involved in Project activity would bear some portion of the local costs.

The NCC was the executing agency for the Project, while the ICA ROEC functioned in an advisory capacity with the SCC providing necessary technical support. The SCC made available the services of two expatriate advisors to the Project, one at the inception of the Project, for a period of four months and another

for a period of around one year during the second year of the project. The advice and guidance provided by the first of the expatriate advisors enabled the Project to get a proper sense of direction and purpose. (See Annexe III)

The administrative and supervisory control was in the hands of the NCC while periodic reporting was done to the ICA and SCC. The reporting included financial reporting on a monthly basis.

Funds required for the project from SCC sources were requested through the ICA ROEC who recommended remittances taking into consideration the programme of work envisaged and the balances lying with the Project.

The Project maintained its own Bank Account for which the Project Director was responsible. Remittances from the SCC were sent direct to the Project Bank Account with due intimation to the NCC/ICA ROEC.

02.04 The Project Direction Committee

A committee to advise the Project, periodically review performance and to identify special areas for Project attention was set up under the Project.

This Committee was constituted as follows:

1. The President, National Cooperative Council;
2. The President, Women's Advisory Committee of the NCC;
3. The President, Cooperative Marketing Federation of Sri Lanka;
4. Five women members from the MPCSS working with the Project, nominated by the NCC;
5. The Commissioner of Cooperative Development (CCD & RCS) or his representative;
6. The Principal, School of Cooperation, Polgolla;
7. A nominee of the NCC from among its Directors representing MPCSS;

8. A representative of the ICA ROEC;
9. The General Secretary of the NCC;
10. An expert from the Cooperative Movement;
11. The Project Director (who would function as Member Secretary)

02.05 The Project Office and Staff

Until 01.01.83 the Project Office was located in the premises of the Mahanuwera MPCSS, which was one of the MPCSS selected to work with the Project from the very beginning. Thus the office was most centrally situated to work with the first five MPCSS selected for the first Phase of the Project. Besides it was in very close proximity to the School of Cooperation, Polgolla, where most of the Central Level Workshops were held.

On 01.01.83 the office was shifted to the premises of the general office of the NCC in Colombo to facilitate the smoother integration of Project activity with the ongoing activities of the NCC.

The Project Staff was constituted as follows:

- A Project Director,
- An Expatriate Advisor (4 months)
- A Member Relations Officer,
- A Consumer Information Officer,
- A Secretary/Stenographer (English),
- A Clerk/Stenographer (Sinhala),
- A Driver,
- An Office Helper.

With the extension of Project activity from the initial five MPCSS to fifteen in the second phase and to thirty in the third, the staff of the Project was gradually increased to cope with the additional work involved. A trainee Director was recruited to eventually take over from the first Project Director who was on deputation from the Sri Lanka Administrative Service. Further

the number of Consumer Education Officers was increased by two (one Tamil Speaking) and Member Relations Officers by one. The staff was strengthened by the addition of an officer to handle accounts of the project and also to function as a Secretary.

02.06 MPCSS Consumer Education Officers

Each of the societies of the first phase of the Project was required to appoint a Consumer Education Officer, preferably a woman, with some experience in field work. All five societies appointed women to that post, either by direct recruitment or by deputing a woman officer already working with the society. The Project supported these appointments initially by paying 25% of the salary payable to such officer. The Consumer Education Officer was to be the Coordinator for all programmes at society level while she would be the liason between the society and the Project.

0.3 PHASED DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

03.01. Phase I. (Nov. 78/80)

In the first phase of the Project five MPCSS in the Kandy District, situated in close proximity to the School of Cooperation, Polgolla, were selected. When selecting societies for the first phase two fairly stable rural MPCSS, two not so stable MPCSS and one urban MPCS were selected. Some women's activities had commenced in some of these societies while most had selected their central level Women's Committees, though branch women's committees had not been elected in all the branches of a particular MPCS.

The Societies selected were :

1. Mahanuwera MPCS,
2. Wattedama MPCS,
3. Kundasale MPCS,
4. Teldeniya MPCS,
5. Harispattuwa North MPCS

All these were societies in the Kandy District.

(The island of Sri Lanka is divided into 26 Cooperative Districts for administrative purposes. Please see map.)

03.02 Phase II. (1980/81)

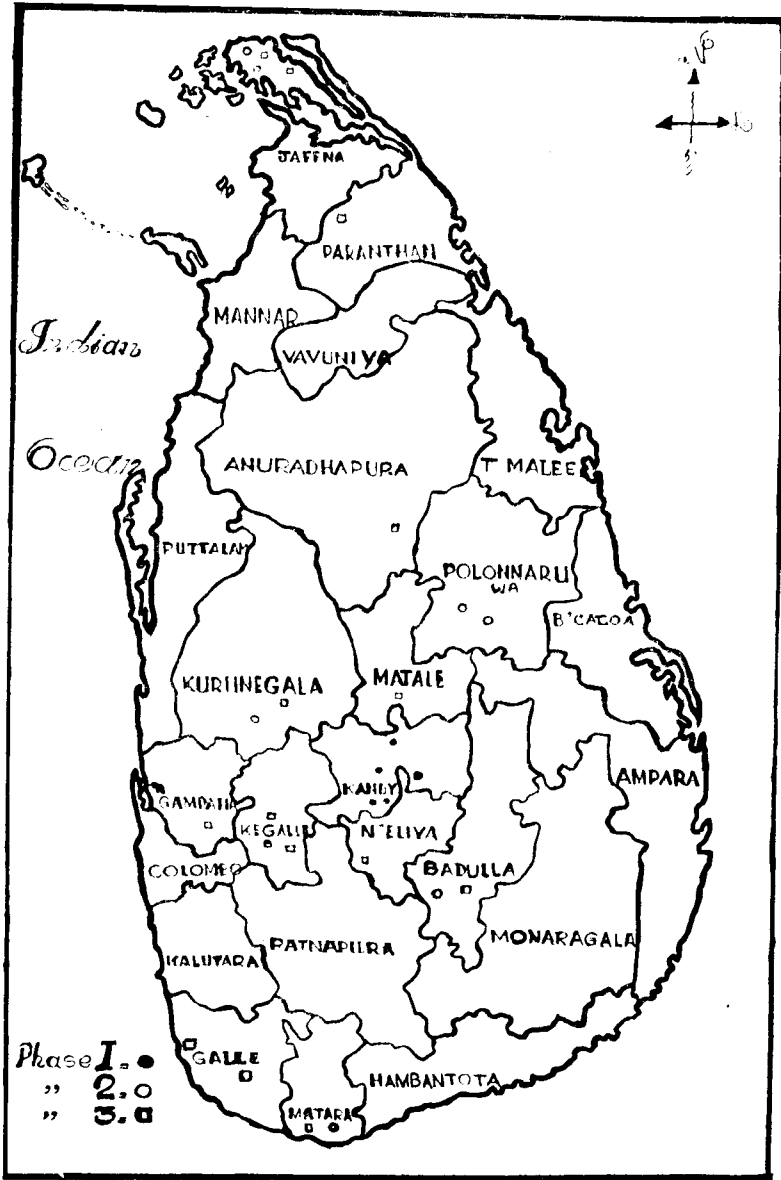
In the second year of the Project, it was decided to extend project activities to ten more MPCSS. Applications were called for from MPCSS interested in joining the Project. The MPCSS applying for selection should have set up their branch level women's committees and selected their Central level Women's Committee and would have to be recommended by the Assistant Commissioners of Cooperative Development of the District ACCD. The opportunity was used to forge closer links between the Project and the Cooperative Administration in the Districts.

When selecting the ten additional societies for the second phase from among those applying and recommended by the ACCD we used the experience we had gathered by working with the first five societies to decide which of those applying were suitable and would benefit by joining the Project at that stage. We used several criteria like the Board of Directors and Management outlook and support to women's activities, the willingness to fund programmes, the willingness to appoint an Education Officer, the presence of active women's committees and leadership etc.

Further, since ours was a Pilot Project, we had to gain a variety of experiences by working with societies operating in different socio-cultural settings. Further since Sri Lanka has several ethnic groupings it was necessary to include societies from all ethnic groupings so that the Project could be a meaningful experience.

The societies selected were :

	District
6. Hiriyala MPCS	Kurunegala
7. Bulathkohupitiya MPCS	Kegalle
8. Kirindiwela MPCS	Gampaha
9. Hanguranketa MPCS	Kandy



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10. Palugasdamana MPC	Polonnaruwa
11. Hingurakgoda KPCS	Polonnaruwa
12. Kotapola MPC	Matara
13. Tellippallai MPC	Jaffna (Tamil Speaking)
14. Uva Paranagama MPC	Badulla
15. Homagama MPC	Colombo

The societies selected included several from the dry-zone colonisation areas and also one from the Tamil speaking district of Jaffna.

By this selection the Project had paved the way to extend its activities to 9 out of the 26 Cooperative Districts in the island.

03.03 Phase III (81-82)

Over the few years of Project operation it had been able to gain recognition and support from several quarters. During the second phase of its operations the NCC had received applications from over fifty MPCSS requesting that they too be included in the Project. While the clamour for extending Project activity grew stronger the Project staff was finding itself fully stretched in coping with fifteen societies widely dispersed over the country. Further the staff had remained in numbers at the same level as when the Project commenced. In view of the growing interest in Project work the NCC in consultation with the Project Advisory Committee and the Department of Cooperative Development decided to extend Project activity to a further fifteen societies of which fourteen would be MPCSS and one District level Credit Cooperative Society.

The Project would thus be working with 30 societies in 13 Cooperative Districts. The Staff of the Project was increased by the addition of two Consumer Education Officers, one Member Relations Officer and one Translator.

The Societies selected were :

	District
16. Harispattuwa South MPC	Kandy

17. Warakapola MPCS	Kegalle
18. Uda Palatha MPCS	Badulla
19. Alaveddi—Mallakam MPCS	Jaffna (Tamil Speaking)
20. Valli East MPCS	Jaffna (Tamil Speaking)
21. Nallur MPCS	Jaffna (Tamil Speaking)
22. Matara MPCS	Matara
23. Calnewa MPCS	Anuradhapura
24. Baddegama Talikade Majuwana MPCS	Galle
25. New Rattota MPCS	Matale
26. Punakari MPCS	Paranthan (Tamil Speaking)
27. Kegalle District Thrift and Credit Society	Kegalle
28. Ridigama MPCS	Kurunegala
29. Negombo MPCS	Gampaha
30. Ambalangoda MPCS	Galle

0.4 APPROACH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGIES OF INTERVENTION

04.01 Staff development and Orientation

Prior to the commencement of the Project, I as Project Director (PD) designate had the opportunity to be exposed to the work of the Consumer Guilds in Sweden, to attend a meeting of the ICA Women's Committee held in Copenhagen, to observe some Consumer Protection activities of the Danish Consumer Cooperatives, to attend a meeting of the ICA Consumer Committee and to discuss some subject areas of interest for the Project with the IPPF in London. Closer home, I had an opportunity to study the women's activities carried out by the Cooperatives in West Bengal.

This exposure and orientation gave me adequate time to understand the dimensions and the possibilities of the Project we were to undertake. By the time I was called upon to take up the responsibilities of the Project I had already worked in the

Department of Cooperative Development as an Assistant Commissioner for almost five years. This new experience coupled with the experience I already had in Cooperative Development work gave me the confidence so vital to venture into new and unfamiliar areas.

Of the other technical staff one was deputed from the NCC and one from the Department of Cooperative Development. Both these officers had quite some experience working with cooperatives. The third officer was recruited from outside with wide experience in the field of Nutrition, Family Health etc. but little or no experience working with cooperatives.

The subject area of Consumer Information and Education, which was a specific area of interest of the Project however happened to be one where none of us were very knowledgeable, but one in which we all had to make determined efforts to improve our competence.

It was evident to all of us from the very beginning that the Project was to be an effective and continuing learning process and that through this learning process we would attempt to influence the learning processes of those with whom we were to work.

We were indeed most fortunate in that there were numerous opportunities available to us to improve our knowledge and competence. The staff had the following programmes open to them to improve their effectiveness. :

1. Learning, teaching and education (training programmes conducted by the Teacher Training Project NDC/ICA/SCC).
2. Training in the production and use of Audio Visual Aids. (TTP).
3. Planning and Preparation of Work Programmes. (Cooperative Management Services Centre, CMSC.)
4. Adult learning (TTP)
5. Methodical Preparation of Reports and their Presentation (also typing) —TTP

6. Training in Home Gardening. (Department of Agriculture).
7. Training in the use of office machines. (TTP)
8. On the job training through involvement in our own Workshops.
9. Learning about Soya Bean and preparation of food from Soya. (Soya Bean Project).
10. Participation at Conferences and Seminars :
 - (i) Experts' Consultation on Member Education (1979, ICA, Sri Lanka).
 - (ii) Regional Seminar on Better Living through Co-operatives, (1979, ICA, Japan)
 - (iii) National Seminar on Better Living through Cooperatives (1980, Sri Lanka)
 - (iv) Regional Seminar on Enhancing Women's Participation in Cooperatives (ICA ROEC/NCC, 1980).
 - (v) National Seminar on Better living through Cooperatives.
(A seminar especially for the Presidents, General Managers Women Leaders, and Education officers working with the Project)
 - (vi) National Seminar on Better Living Activities through Coöperatives (ICA/CLT, 1981, Thailand)
 - (vii) Kandy District Women's Seminar on the occasion of International Women's Day 1981.
 - (viii) UNICEF workshop for establishment of a Project for Children's Welfare 1981.

Special mention must be made about the very valuable support and guidance we received from the officers of the Farm Women's Extension Programme of the Department of Agriculture. Their support to us was a continuing one both by participation in our Programmes and also by helping to orient our staff to work at field level.

05. PRELIMINARY FIELD APPROACH

05.01

Many of us who have worked on programmes are aware of the uncertainties and mental reservations one encounters in trying to get the programme launched and in getting it off the ground. I am sure to many of us who met in the first PDC, what the Project could do and how it could be done were all too hazy. We certainly had the objectives of the Project before us, but we were somewhat uncertain as to what initial steps to take however we were all aware that much would depend on our first approaches.

05.02 You Tell us Approach

As mentioned earlier the societies that were selected for inclusion in the first phase had already gone through the processes of electing at least some Branch Women's Committees and also their Central Women's Committee. We could assume therefore that the society itself was positive and that there was sufficient enthusiasm among the women about improving their position in the society. On the basis of these assumptions we took the following steps.

- (i) A residential Brain Storming session was held at the School of Cooperation over a period of six days. The session was attended by the members of the Central Women's Committees of the five societies, the Education officers and the Project Staff. This session indeed was both lively and valuable. We from the Project broadly explained what the Project was about and then left it to the leaders to identify the areas of interest, to determine priorities, to indicate possible approaches that would be effective in the village situation, to discuss the problems likely to be encountered and also to exchange the limited experiences they had gathered so far in setting up women's committees and in designing meaningful work programmes for them.

The session was a tremendous learning experience for us in the Project staff and also an encounter which helped

the women leaders to get their own roles into correct perspective.

- (ii) The Brain Storming session was followed by a series of village level meetings organised by the Central Women's Committees in collaboration with the Branch Women's Committees and the society management. All the village level meetings were attended by all the Project staff. These meetings were attended both by women and men at the village level as also by some of the local branch committee members, society staff and some members of the Board of Directors of the MPCs. May be that many of them came out of curiosity, especially the men, perhaps they wanted to know what the women were upto. It is also possible that they thought that they may have expected some monetary benefits from the project.

We from the staff, as was done at the Brain Storming session broadly indicated the intentions of the programme and left it to the meeting to discuss the issues as they saw them and to identify possible areas for action. I am sure there were very many who were disappointed as this project did not show promise of immediate monetary gains or concessionary loans or subsidies or any such. But yet there were many, both men and women who saw some meaningful potential in the project and who were enamoured of playing a continuing role in a long term programme.

05.03

These first experiences of ours revealed the following :

- that the women were keen to find a role for themselves in the cooperative set up,
- that they were keen to increase their awareness and knowledge in subject areas like Nutrition, Family Health, Family Welfare, Household Economy etc.,
- that they expected the project programme to provide avenues for increasing family income.

- that they expected tangible results in the short run – time was of the essence-time spent at meetings, discussions, all meant that something was getting neglected or delayed in the domestic situation. Something worthwhile must be at least vaguely visible,
- that the men very often emphasised the need for the women to find avenues for supplementing family income.

Another important factor that we from the staff as also those from society management recognised during the course of these meetings was that there was a need to conduct as early as was possible a Bench Mark survey which would be helpful in the immediate and would also be a useful point of reference in the future.

COMMENTARY

I have decided to add this commentary at this point of the narrative as it has relevance to all people oriented approaches.

When we were going through the series of village level meetings and discussions, we came into severe criticism from some bureaucratic quarters that we were wasting time, money, effort and resources and that we should get on with the job. These comments were something like this. After all we know what the problems are, we know what the women want, we know what we have to do. The Project document is quite clear in what is intended and what has to be done, why waste time asking people at the village level for their views, so why not just get on with the job.

To us who had really got involved at the village level discussions, this was meaningless criticism, because we learnt so much, we constantly adjusted our positions and outlook, and above all we involved the women and the men in a group process of awareness increasing by sharing views and opinions. Even if eventually the items of interest that emerged may have been those which we ourselves had identified, they now became their decisions and hence they had a greater commitment to see that their ideas were given a reasonable chance of being tested.

From subsequent happenings we know that what is most

important in an approach which has to be participatory is that we must get the groups in the thinking and contributing process from the very inception, and once the rapport is established between the facilitators and the groups concerned, it is so much easier to make headway.

There are obvious lessons we can learn from already existing bureaucratic approaches, where the activity or the programme is considered to be something external and hence there is little commitment from those involved.

Another lesson we learned from these meetings is that had we gone to the people with a focus on an income generating activity in the first instance, then our main objective of increasing awareness among the women would have been side tracked as they would concentrate on the task of income generation and not be bothered about all the other things we were concerned with.

There are many instances in many countries where because of a government plan for assisting the weavers for example the functionaries get some women together and get them organised into a textile weavers cooperative and try to look after input supply and marketing also through Departmental or other external sources and end up with an organisation with no life or character and with those participating having not exercised their thinking capacities in any other sector other than that pertaining to keeping the weaving function operative.

I believe our Project has demonstrated that what is really necessary is to stimulate and motivate women to play a useful role and once the women recognise the fact that in fact they can be useful contributors in the effort for a better life, matters like supplementing family income emerge from their own conceptions.

05.04 Bench Mark Survey

Sometime after we concluded the village level meetings and while we were working on the programmes which we had initially drawn up, we conducted a field survey on a sample basis.

The field survey was to be a participatory effort and was to be used as one of the means in our approach to leadership development.

With the assistance and guidance of the Cooperatives Specialist Member of the PDC, who was an Associate Professor in the University, a questionnaire was drawn up with the women leaders participating and they were trained to conduct interviews and to record information.

The survey was to be a sample survey. We selected 300 families living in the area of operation of 15 of the branches of the five MPCSS on the basis of 3 branches per society. The women leaders of one society were to conduct the survey in respect of the branches of another society. In all 282 housewives and households were interviewed by the leaders.

The survey tried to ascertain the awareness of the household and in particular the housewife in regard to the following :

1. Consumer Information
2. Basic foods and nutrition
3. Market prices of goods in everyday demand.
4. Environmental health and preventive measures.
5. The MPCSS and the way in which it worked.
6. The need for pure drinking water.
7. Means of supplementing family income.
8. Consumer protection.

The results of the survey were duly collated and a report prepared by the Associate Professor.

The survey revealed besides other things that there was a wide information gap in respect of many areas at the housewife level that there was a keenness among those interviewed to know how they could improve their living standards, that women would be interested in participating in programmes which would help them improve their living conditions, that they would participate in programmes which would increase their general awareness of things and situations,

that the women could be properly motivated and leadership developed if the Project used the strategy of satisfying their felt needs for information and active involvement and participation.

05.05 Target Groups

Our preliminary approaches had provided us with a wealth of information and also widened our own horizons and perceptions. On the basis of the knowledge available we identified the following Target Groups with whom the Project would be continuously concerned.

1. Central Women's Committees (CWC) and Branch Women's Committees (BWC) and later the District Women's Committees (DWC) and the National Women's Committee (NWC).
2. The general membership of the society with greater emphasis on the women members.
3. The Management level persons of the MPCSS which included the members of the Board of Directors, the members of the Branch Committees, the General Manager and his staff, especially the Purchasing Officer, and the Branch Manager.
4. The staff of departments/organisations working with the Project, e.g., concerned staff of the Cooperative Department, the central, district and field level staff of the NCC, and others.

The Target Group covered a wide spectrum of people of different levels of the social structure, different levels of literacy and different age groups. The methodologies of intervention would have to be flexible enough to be adjusted to the different levels and target groups.

We identified our main task as one of developing a member relations programme with a special focus on women. We had to find suitable ways and means of maintaining the interest of the women, of motivating them to continuing involvement and collaboration. We had to identify activities that would sustain their

interest and also help in developing leadership. The women had to be convinced that they have a role to play and that the role was one that would contribute to increasing awareness, development and a better quality of life. This then was the challenge before us and we were determined that we would succeed.

05.06 The Assumptions we made

1. We would work towards the involvement of women in the mainstream of cooperative activity. We must avoid getting side tracked. We would go in for exclusive women's cooperatives only where such would help a specialised activity. But as our focus was the MPCs, if such activities could be undertaken by the MPCs itself then we would support that.
2. We would adopt integrated approaches wherever possible, not work in isolation with the women only. We would enlist the support of all those concerned both within the MPCs and outside.
3. We would not teach a set syllabus as such. We would try to help the women to learn about things which they found interesting while at the same time keeping the objectives of the Project in focus.
4. All approaches would be on a participatory basis-- learning by doing and seeing. The Project staff too would be deeply involved in this learning process.
5. All learning was to be shared, what the women leaders learnt at a particular workshop or a visit or a discussion at the central level would have to be taken back to the village level and shared with the members of the Branch Committees and others.
6. We would work on the assumption that the Project staff would work as facilitators and coordinators. Where specialised knowledge was required these would be drawn from available sources.

7. We would change our strategies of intervention depending on situations. In the first phase when we were working with five societies in a very limited geographical area we would get involved in activities at all levels in a MPCs, but as the number of societies increased and the area extended to many districts in the island direct involvement of the Project staff would be limited to a few levels while the main work at the village level would be done by the women leaders themselves, occasionally supported by Project staff involvement.

8. (i) There was a need for an Image and Identity. This was a pioneering attempt and we felt that a symbol as a rallying point would be of help. In consultation with the women leaders we evolved a LOGO for the Project-the logo was that of a clay lamp with a lighted wick, symbolic of knowledge, awareness and of course light, the dispeller of darkness and ignorance.

Clay lamps are used in many temple ceremonies and religious functions, hence the logo was acceptable to all.

The logo of the clay lamp with the lighted wick was set in a yellow triangle on a cloth of orange and this in time became the backdrop against which the various workshops, conferences etc. would be held.

(ii) Very soon the women leaders were talking of compiling a Project song, but in fact we were not able to get down to it. Yet the Cooperative Song was used on all occasions of commencement of activity. In many societies at their various functions they would invite the women's committee to render the Cooperative song.

(iii) The Project staff set itself the disciplines of keeping appointments agreed to, of punctuality, of orderly conduct, of being neatly and unostentatiously dressed.

- (iv) All activity would commence with appropriate religious observances. Residential workshops would be used not only for specified learning by the women leaders, but as also occasions for developing their leadership qualities, tact and understanding, sociability and the capacity to get on with others and to respect others point of view and in general to enable persons to get on with one another and of working together for the common good.

These residential workshops in time provided an element of inter-personal and inter-society competitive spirit which acted as a great incentive for further striving.

- (v) We would make each event and each activity one where all those participating would long remember and also would be proud of.

06. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE PROJECT

06.01. Introductory Meetings

Mention has been made earlier about the preliminary approaches made by us in respect of the societies in the first phase of the Project. This practice was continued in respect of all societies which were included in the project. Familiarisation meetings were conducted in the first instance to introduce the objective and scope of the Project, which meetings were generally attended by the women's committees of the MPCs at all levels and also by the management and staff of the MPCs. These meetings at each society before actual Project activity commenced helped us to get to know the officers and the leaders better while from the MPCs angle the Board of Directors and all others were able to understand their respective roles and their obligations. There was therefore a general understanding of the Project and an acceptance of the Project activity as a part of their on going activities.

06.02. Monthly Workshops

The monthly workshops conducted at the School of Coopera-

tion became the principal activity for learning and sharing and for leadership development. The workshops were residential and were carried out over two or three days each month. These meetings were attended by the members of Central Women's Committee in each MPCS, the Education Officers of the concerned societies, the District level Coordinating Officers of the NCC, and at times the Extension officers of the Department of Cooperative Development.

When the Project activities were extended to additional societies during the 2nd and 3rd phases, monthly workshops were conducted separately in respect of the leaders of the societies included in each phase.

The workshops combined a variety of activities during its three day duration. Activities would include such items as lectures, discussions, practical work on assignments, preparation of visual aids and demonstrating their use, role plays, out door assignments and study tours, preparation and presentation of reports and the Record Books maintained by the leaders.

It must be mentioned here that there is a recurring problem that arises in respect of leadership training, and the dependence for the spread effect on the sharing to be undertaken by the leaders. I believe that this is inevitable in a democratic set up, but it certainly does slow down the extension work to quite some extent. The problem arises from the fairly frequent changes in the leadership which takes place at the society level. The elections to the central committees are held annually and this leads to change. We are hopeful that those trained but not in positions of leadership will continue to work in this sector, but the process involves more and more workshops to train the new leaders.

In some societies even the Education Officers were changed frequently thus making the task of continued activity difficult.

These are aspects one has to accept and any Project would have to make adequate provision for such eventualities.

06.03. Society Level Workshops

During the first phase of the Project, the Project staff also got involved in these society level workshops. But basically, the society level workshops were to be conducted by the leaders and education officers who had been trained in the monthly workshops at the School of Cooperation. Mention was made earlier about the process of sharing of learning and this was the forum for such sharing at the society level.

We from the Project were quick to realise that extension work, imparting knowledge and experiences to others does not come easily to many persons. During the first phase we were able to help out as the number of societies was small and the distances to be covered were short. As the Project work extended to a large number of societies, this deficiency was becoming all the more evident and all that the Project could do was to conduct one day field level workshops, which were attended by the leaders as well as the branch committees and the branch women's committees. It must be admitted that a one day workshop has its own limitations and can never be as effective as a two or three day residential workshop.

06.04. District Level Workshops

During the course of 1980 when Project activity had been extended to 9 districts, societies other than those included in the Project were clamouring for Project assistance to further their efforts in the field of women's education and involvement. To encourage those societies and to establish links with them, even though the staff of the Project was fully stretched, we organised one day workshops at District level for the benefit of those societies which were outside the Project. These workshops were attended also by the National Women's Committee Representatives as well as those from the District Committees. The organisation of these workshops was left in the hands of the District Level Women's Committees, the respective education officers and the coordinating officers of the NCC. Thus by supporting these district level workshops we were able to set in motion a process whereby the initia-

tives for such action passed on to the District Women's Leaders themselves.

When in 1983 the Project office was shifted to the premises of the NCC in Colombo, it became necessary for the Project to work with a large number of MPCSS which were not included in the thirty in the Project. The process started with the conducting of District level Workshops stood in good stead as it was now possible to involve the leaders of these societies too in District level Workshops. Further by this time the NCC had improved the facilities available at their District Level Education Centres. Thus it became possible for us to conduct District level residential workshops using these improved facilities.

06.05. Village Level Workshops

The ultimate target group which had to be reached through Project activity were the housewives and others at village level. The workshops at this level were generally conducted in collaboration with the Branch level committees of the MPCS and the branch manager and his staff. In each branch committee area there would be the Branch level woman leader and it was she who was responsible for the village level work. She would already have been exposed to training either at the central level or at other training classes and she would be assisted by other trained leaders and also by the society Education Officer. The village level workshops would be arranged taking into consideration the various seasonal activities like transplanting, harvesting etc. which would mean that the women would not be free to attend workshops at that time. But it has been found generally that the housewives do attend unless there are very good reasons which prevent them from participation.

Some of the village level women leaders had even adopted a system of home visits where they would discuss matters of concern in the home of the housewife. The leaders kept notes of the discussions and tried their best to monitor progress and keep the interests of the housewife alive.

When the Project focussed attention on Savings Campaigns, home visits became all the more meaningful and fruitful.

It has to be recognised that women's groupings at the village level are a fact, even though the percentage of households meaningfully involved may still be a fraction of the total potential. It is these groupings that have to be carefully nurtured and motivated, and much would depend on both the Women leadership at all levels and also on the encouragement and support that the MPCS management and staff provide to the women's sector.

06.06. Subject areas covered in workshops

I have mentioned earlier that we were not approaching the field on the basis of a set syllabus. There were some areas of common concern to all involved, but depending on the particular needs in a given area and also depending on their own capacities and the support they got, a wide variety of subject areas have been covered. The following listing may yet be incomplete :

1. *Basic Nutrition and Balanced diet.*

- child nutrition and child care.
- nutrition and the pre-school child.
- meals with soya bean.
- malnutrition, its causes and prevention
- breast feeding
- nutrient values of various food items—the Food Pyramid.

2. *Health and Management*

- essential features of a village level health programme—the role of the community
- environmental sanitation
- mental health,
- family welfare programmes
- improvement of kitchens
- prevention of accidents in the home
- first aid
- how to preserve food
- points to consider when buying food items
- household budgeting

3. *Cooperation*

- Cooperative principles
- how cooperation can help solve village level economic problems
- cooperative society bye-laws—member rights and duties, the role of branch committees, the board of directors, the general body meeting etc.
- Credit sales of consumer goods
 - Savings, Rural Banks and their functions
- shop management, shop display, shop cleanliness
- assortment of consumer goods—what should the shop sell.

4. *Consumer Protection*

- Introduction to the Consumer protection law—the rights of the consumer
- the importance of consumer associations the role of women's groups
- food adulteration - simple testing methods
- preliminary exercises in introducing consumer information

5. *Home Gardens*

- home gardens and their uses (distribution of plants and seeds)

6. *General*

- how to organise a village meeting
- income generating activities—bee keeping, poultry and livestock,— hair styling, flower making.
- sewing
 - development of rural banks.
- crime prevention
- child protection
- training rural women for leadership.

As mentioned earlier not all these subjects were covered by all the groups, there would be wide variations depending on various factors. However as a result of the exposure of the women to these areas of knowledge the following have emerged in some societies.

1. organising creches and nursery classes,
2. conducting basic English classes,
3. conducting typing classes,
4. training in handicrafts,
5. running canteens and catering services through the women's committees,
6. savings campaigns and competitions,
7. involvement of the women in cultural and social activities.

(In one society alone on the request of the women's committees several rural banks have been opened to provide facilities to women both in savings and in income generating activities.)

06.07 Special Activities of the Project

I. Special subject matter training classes.

On the request of the Women Leaders arrangements were made to conduct special courses on the following areas :

<i>Assisting Agencies</i>	
— Preparation of food from soya	The Soya Bean Project
— conducting nursery classes	Sarvodaya
— First Aid	St. Johns Ambulance/Red Cross
— Agriculture (various aspects)	Dept. of Agriculture
— English classes (spoken and written)	Several sources.
— Consumer Protection	Ministry of Trade
— Food Testing	Colombo Municipal Council Food Analysis Department.

II. Sewing

I believe it was inevitable that our Project too provided some training in this interest area which is of great significance at the village level. With mass media invading even the villages it is not unusual for the village women to want to dress better, but of course they can hardly afford the prices charged for dressmaking in urban workshops. A request was made by the women leaders of the first phase in 1979 that this was an area in which the Project should provide some training. With the assistance of the officers of the Rural Development Department the Project made arrangements to teach scientific dressmaking at society level with one class per week being held over a period of ten months. The training involved both theoretical and practical lessons and one of the requirements to pass the examination was that the learner should also teach at the village level and produce the samples from her pupils for examination by the instructress. A common examination was held, both theory and practical and those who were successful were awarded a certificate from the Project. The first Examination was held in 1980 with 76 appearing for the exam and with 57 successes.

In 1981 when the project had been extended to a further 10 societies, Sewing classes were conducted in similar fashion and an Examination held with 240 taking the exam and the number passing being 185.

In 1982 sewing classes were conducted in the societies that joined in the 3rd phase of the Project and we had 251 taking the exam and 233 passing.

In each MPCs the girls who secured the first three places in order of merit were selected as leaders to conduct sewing classes in the MPCs area, and the society provided some compensation for their efforts.

(Full details are available at Annexe-IV)

III. Construction of wells under ICA's Buy a Bucket of Water Programme

The ICA Women's Committee, as ICA's contribution to the

International Year of the Child, launched a campaign to raise funds to assist developing countries to provide clean drinking water in areas where this was a serious problem. UNICEF had indicated that there were over 50 million children in the developing countries who had no ready access to clean drinking water. The Consumer Guilds in Sweden decided that their collections under this programme would be made available to the Project, to enable the Project to carry out a meaningful programme in association with the women's committees. 1979 was the first year of the Project and this proposal came as a great boon to us as it whipped up a lot of enthusiasm and gave an opportunity to the women's committees to visibly demonstrate their capacities and their effectiveness.

It was agreed between the Consumer Guilds in Sweden and the Project that there would be a common 'flag day' in the two countries and funds would be raised for the project by the sale of ICA's Buy a Bucket of Water Flags.

In Sri Lanka Flags were sold by the women's committees in the areas where wells were to be constructed, as also in other areas. The local sales were able to raise Rs. 5908/-. The Consumer Guilds in Sweden raised Rs. 158,800/- and a further sum of Rs. 23574.69 was made available to the Project through ICA London.

The programme included the construction of new wells or the upgrading of sources of water already in use so that those would be more hygienic.

The conditions laid down by the Project for support in this sector were as follows :

- (i) Buy a Bucket of water flags should be sold in the area by the Women Leaders.
- (ii) the land on which the well was to be constructed should be gifted to the society.
- (iii) the women's committees along with the Boards of Directors and other staff and members of the society should arrange

for voluntary work by the beneficiaries and others in the construction process.

- (iv) the society with the assistance of appropriate technical personnel should work out the cost estimates and send same to the project office through the Women's Committees.
- (v) construction processes should be properly supervised by technical persons and also by the Women's Committees and the society.
- (vi) funds for construction would be made available after the Project staff had visited the site.
- (vii) the society and the women's committees would have to make suitable administrative arrangements to see that the well was properly maintained and looked after.
- (viii) the well should be accessible to all persons living in the area and who wanted to use it.

The Project gave priority to the construction of wells in inaccessible areas where there were generally only concentrations of 20 or 30 families, and they had to walk long distances for their water. Five village schools in the area had no access to water. Support was provided to construct five wells for these schools.

In all 26 wells were constructed which served over 650 families and over 4500 school children.

Our figures show that it has cost the Project about USD 300 per well and a total of USD 7800/- to provide access to clean drinking water to the numbers mentioned above.

It must be recorded with great pride that this special activity not only enhanced the image of the women's committees and of the Project but also helped in strengthening the ties between the members and their societies.

(For more details see Annexe V.)

IV. Study Tours

As a part of the leadership development and awareness

increasing strategy we exposed both women leaders and the education officers to new situations by organising study tours to several areas of relevance and interest. The following study tours were undertaken :

1. Visit to the Exhibition run by the Medical Faculty of the University, Paradeniya.
2. Visit to the Model Village run by the Department of Health at Ampitiya,
3. The Soya Bean Project and its Model Kitchens.
4. Farm Women's Extension Programme, Department of Agriculture,
5. The Poultry Farm run by the Department of Agriculture at Kundasale,
6. Model Kitchens constructed by the Department of Agriculture at Gannoruwa.
7. The children's ward at Kandy General Hospital to observe malnutrition and to study child nutrition,
8. Visits to the NCC, the Chamber of Commerce, the Orchid Growers Cooperative, Consumer Associations at Kotte and Kollupitiya, the Food Testing Laboratory of the Colombo Municipal Council, Police Headquarters and Central Information Centre.
9. Visits to see the Improved Kitchens
10. Visits to the successful projects carried out in Jaffna by the cooperative societies there. All the participants of the 1982 National Seminar on Better Living joined in this visit.

V. Savings

This is an area in which women's committees have been able to achieve much success. Savings promotion in many developing countries is an important task of the Government. This was also an important task of Cooperatives at one stage in the development of cooperatives. In the early stages of development there came into being the Thrift and Savings Cooperatives where the emphasis was on Savings. With the emphasis on increased production and

also with increasing inflation and the cost of living many of these Thrift and Savings Cooperatives in time were converted to Credit Cooperatives where unfortunately the focus was more on credit and the Savings were only a token effort to enable borrowing. In Japan on the other hand, as I was able to see when I participated in ICA's Regional Seminar on Better Living Activities through Co-operatives, there was great emphasis on Savings especially through Women's Activities.

When therefore the subject of Savings through women leaders' effort was mooted we were happy to note that there was very great enthusiasm among the women. This was specially so in the MPCSS in the Jaffna District in the North, where various schemes were devised by the Women Leaders to promote savings. Some of the devices used were to have monthly lottery draws for savers, competitions etc. In some societies the success was so good that women leaders were able to get more Rural Banks set up within the MPCSS. The Rural Banks of the MPCSS were used to promote the Savings campaigns.

VI. Distribution of Tri Posha

In the battle against malnutrition, the Government has a special programme in collaboration with CARE to make available nutrient fortified foods to infants and expectant mothers. There were several snags being encountered by the authorities both in regard to the identification of the needy and also in regard to the proper distribution of the fortified foods which were available in packeted form and had a tendency to go into the wrong hands. Discussions between the concerned authorities, the CCD & RCS and the Project resulted in this important task being undertaken through the Women's Committees of 10 MPCSS situated in areas where malnutrition was fairly acute. Apart from being able to arrange for equitable distribution the involvement of the MPCSS and the Women's Committees in this task has greatly facilitated our work in connection with Nutrition and Family Health.

VII. All Island "Do You Know Contest"

The women leaders in their approach to sharing of knowledge

had for quite some time resorted to inter group competition to accelerate the learning process. In many situations one group would be pitted against another in trying to see how much one has learnt or whether what has been learnt was correct. This approach was keenly supported by those participating. One often had situations when even the Members of the Board of Directors being pitted against members of a women's group to test the knowledge about the rights and duties of the Board etc. I am sure many a board member spent very uncomfortable moments during these competitions, but all were agreed that this approach had tremendous value in the learning process.

It was therefore inevitable that the Project should encourage this enthusiasm and take competition to a higher dimension. After some trials at district level, sometimes in connection with Cooperative Day Celebrations we decided that we should hold an all island competition trying to assess the knowledge shared through the various activities of the Project.

The competition began at the MPCS level to choose the teams that would be pitted against each other in the inter society District level stage of the islandwide Do You Know Competition. The winners of the Inter society competitions at the District level were pitted against those successful in the other districts at a National Competition held at the School of Cooperation at Polgolla. The competition evoked keen interest among all the women's committees and was a singular success. Each competition, whether at the society level or the district level or at the national level, had attractive rewards to the winners and sometimes to the losers too.

Overall one could say that the competition did encourage the women's committees to put in their best effort to consolidate what they had learnt, and winners or losers they all gained by the knowledge which they now have.

VIII. Income Generating Activities

The Project we initiated was primarily concerned with increasing the awareness of the women, both in regard to consumer affairs as also other matters as would motivate them to get more

involved in the mainstream of cooperative activity. I have mentioned earlier that the emphasis on increasing awareness etc. was a good thing as this helped the women to look beyond the narrow focus of an activity which would bring additional income only. This emphasis resulted also in more and more women enrolling themselves as members in the cooperative and for more and more women to seek positions of responsibility like Branch Committee member or even member of the Board of Directors, through open election. I believe this spirit will be maintained even into the future.

However it must be mentioned that a point is reached in programmes mainly concerned with sensitisation or awareness increasing when the women leaders are confronted with requests for at least some support for some activities that would help increase family income. Our work in the area of encouraging such activities like home gardening, bee keeping supply of day old chicks, arranging for the supply of milch cattle and such like activities were in response to the growing emphasis by the women in this sector. But in many situations the women at the village level were not satisfied with activities which would only have long range effects in improving family income. In many places women ventured into such activities like running canteens or catering services, preparation of snacks and sweet meats for daily sales through improvised outlets, promotion of handicrafts, etc. In fact in the Northern District of Jaffna, several MPCSS made accommodation available in their sales points for the women to arrange for the sale of their numerous products on an ongoing basis. My own view is that efforts at increasing awareness need to be supplemented by support of such income generating activities which emerge from the women themselves and where there is a ready market for the goods produced by them. I would think that it would be appropriate even for a Project like ours to provide adequate funding for a Revolving Fund to support the efforts of the women in this sector.

In view of the increasing demand for this kind of support, as our own Project had not provided for such funding, we with the support of a few selected MPCSS working with the Project, formulated a separate Project to support Income Generating



Project Inauguration.



The Hon'ble Minister for Cooperatives, a constant source of support and encouragement.



Learning by doing—women leaders at the Workshop.





Sewing becomes popular.



Products on display to ICA Regional Councillors for South-East Asia.



↑

Your knowledge in challenge—Do you know contests' at various levels.

↓





Clean drinking water in abundance and happiness all round.





Benefits from the "Buy a Bucket of Water" programme.





ICA assists a national programme.



The Government Agent, Jaffna, provides the leadership.



Workshops are fun—so is sharing experiences....



Activities. The SCC through the ICA assisted us financially to carry out a feasibility study on the Project Proposal. The feasibility study was undertaken by the CMSC. The Project Proposal has now been sent on to the ICA with a request for external assistance in this sector. The Project envisages approaching the problem on the basis of three programmes.

Programme I

Development of identified skills which have potential for use in income generating activity. The skills to be developed would differ from one society area to another depending on the available skills and the potential for use.

Programme II

Assisting those who have developed their skills to commence income generating activity either on their own or through the cooperative in the area.

Programme III

Where an MPCS sees the potential to use the skills developed as an ongoing activity of the society, the society would itself use those trained to develop activity in this area.

The Project however would continue to have a large component of education and awareness increasing content in it, but would also ensure some element of employment and increased income.

We are hopeful that we would be able to get Donor Funding for this Project soon.

IX. Conferences, fellowships, study visits etc.

(i) National Seminars

With the gradual expansion of Project activities to several Districts there was increasing interest among the societies not included in the Project to get themselves involved in Better Living Activities which would strengthen the relationship between the member and the society. Two National Seminars were organised, one in 1980

and the other in 1982 by the NCC where the Project was able to share the experiences with a large number of representatives from several cooperative societies. The Project assisted the NCC to quite some considerable extent both in organising these Seminars and conducting them.

The Project was called upon also to share its experiences at several conferences and seminars conducted by the NCC and by the Department of Cooperative Development.

(ii) Regional Seminars

The Project was the focus of attention of two Regional Seminars organised by the ICA ROEC in 1980 and in 1982. The subject areas covered by the two seminars were, "Enhancing Women's Participation in Cooperative Activities" and "Organisation of Women's Committees - their position in law".

The Project assisted the ICA ROEC in the organisation and the conduct of these Seminars while study visits were made to MPCSS working with the Project to study women's activities at the village level.

(iii) Fellowship Programmes

The Project assisted the ICA ROEC in successfully carrying out two Fellowship Programmes which were designed to give an opportunity for functionaries working in the area of women's involvement in cooperatives to study at first hand the activities of the Project so that they themselves could formulate projects to suit their own situations. We had Fellows from Thailand and India and we are happy to note that in both these countries special Projects with a focus on women have been started.

(iv) Swedish Cooperators Visits

The Union of Consumer Guilds in Sweden made arrangements for three groups of their members to visit Sri Lanka and to visit our Project. The Project made the necessary local arrangements to enable the visitors to visit Sri Lanka villages and gain a first hand knowledge about rural life and about the work done by the Project.

It must be mentioned in passing that in time a visit to the Women's Project was a 'must' on the itinerary of many a visitor, both from Cooperative sources as also from University and Voluntary organisations.

X. Education materials : Dissemination of information etc.

(a) It would be evident from the narrative so far that a large number of intermediaries were involved in reaching the village level in the process of sharing of knowledge and information. The people involved in this chain of communication would be the Project staff and their supporting resource persons, the women leaders at the Central level in MPCSS, the Branch level leaders, the National Women's Committee members, the District Level Women leaders, the Education Officers of the various MPCSS, departmental staff involved with the Project and may be many others. Face to face communication and sharing of knowledge between the Project staff and the leaders was limited to only a fraction of those involved in the chain of sharing. Even where the leaders who were directly involved in the Programmes conducted by the Project Staff, there was always the possibility of not clear understanding and possible errors in communication. To ensure that the correct message, the correct information reached the ultimate target group, viz. the housewives and women members at the village level, it became necessary for the Project to launch on a programme of producing various types of education materials which could be used at all levels.

We have produced the following types of education materials :

- (i) Handbooks in both Sinhala and Tamil on practically all the subject areas covered in our discussion sessions.
- (ii) Subject matter manuals in the two languages,
- (iii) Leaflets also in the two languages to be given as handouts both at workshops and also at other conferences etc.
- (iv) Flip Charts on Nutrition, Cooperation.
- (v) Group exercises devised for discussion sessions on Co-operation, Consumer Protection.

The Project has also prepared sets of slides on

- Nutrition
- Consumer Protection
- Home Gardening

The Karnataka State Consumer Association of India has made available to us a film on Consumer Protection. They have also gifted to the Project several Food Testing Kits for use in our training programmes.

The Swedish Cooperative Centre has in collaboration with the Project produced a film depicting Project activities.

(A complete list of the guides, handbooks, manuals, leaflets produced by the Project are given at Annexe VI).

(b) The Food Pyramid

The concept of using the Food Pyramid for more effective discussions on health, nutrition and balanced diet programmes was introduced to us by the Consumer Guilds in Sweden. In the early days of the Project the SCC provided us with the services of an expert from Sweden, who in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Plan Implementation and others concerned with nutrition education in Sri Lanka, evolved a Food Pyramid as would be appropriate to accommodate the local food habits.

We have found the Food Pyramid to be a very useful visual aid in our discussions on Nutrition and Balanced Diet. In fact the Pyramid became so popular that we issued the Food Pyramid in the form of a Project Calendar for the year 1980. The Calendar helped to popularise both the Food Pyramid and also the Project.

(c) Dissemination of Information

We were working in an area which was new and yet unexplored through cooperative effort. Specially was this so in regard to Consumer Information and Consumer Protection. Our monthly workshops and other field programmes were not adequate

to disseminate information over a wide spectrum of people, besides we had to let others know what the Project was doing and what successes we were achieving.

In September 1979 therefore we put out our first Women's Education Bulletin. This was issued in Sinhala as we were still working only in the first phase and we had not developed adequate contacts with the Tamil speaking societies. By 1981 however we were putting out a monthly Education Bulletin in Tamil also published in Jaffna. By this time we were issuing 4500 issues monthly in Sinhala and 500 in Tamil. We also built into the monthly bulletin a system of feedback from our readers by incorporating a crosswords puzzles in the bulletin with prizes awarded to correct responses. The number of crosswords received by us was considerable, indicative of the wide circulation and actual reader involvement.

With the shifting of the Project office to the NCC, as a first step in integration with the normal activities of the NCC, the Project bulletin was dispensed with and one page in NCC'S monthly news paper was allocated for women's activities. We are hopeful that the NCC will take all necessary steps to ensure reader contact and feedback.

(d) Supporting Agencies/Departments etc.

Mention has been made of the fact that we worked this Project with a very small staff. However we were able to get continuing support in our programmes from a large number of organisations and departments. It was their support and input that made it possible for us to have a wide and varied coverage of interest areas which helped to meet the multifarious expectations of the women's groups. We owe our sincerest thanks to each and every one of those institutions and organisations for their ready and willing support. I am listing below the names of those on whom we have depended on very heavily.

1. The Department of Agriculture

-- Farm Women's Extension Programme

- Soyabean Project
 - Livestock Division
 - Botanical Gardens
 - Home gardens division
 - In service Training Division
2. The Teachers Training Project—ICA/SCC/NCC
 3. The Ministry of Trade --Consumer Protection Division
 4. Sri Lanka Bureau of Standards
 5. The Cooperative Management Services Centre
 6. The Ministry of Health
 7. The Department of Livestock Production and Health
 8. The Food Analysis Department of Colombo Municipal Council
 9. The Department of Small Industries
 10. The Department of Rural Development
 11. The Ministry of Plan Implementation
 12. The Ministry of Education
 13. St. John's Ambulance Brigade
 14. The Sri Lanka Women's Bureau
 15. The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
 16. The Sri Lanka Family Planning Association
 17. The Sri Lanka Industrial Development Board
 18. The Marga Institute
 19. C.A.R.E.
 20. The Ministry of Food and Cooperatives
 21. The Department of Cooperative Development
 22. The National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka
 23. The Swedish Consumer Guilds
 24. The Swedish Cooperative Centre, the Swedish International Development Authority
 25. The ICA HQ and ROEC, New Delhi.
- To all of them a big THANK YOU from the Project.

7. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED/THE LESSONS WE LEARN

Reading this document so far one may be left with the impression that it was all smooth sailing for the Project, that we had perhaps chosen a very auspicious hour to launch the Project and that we have had nothing but successes all the way. This kind of assumption I believe will never be true of any Project and to my own way of thinking that would have been the greatest disincentive to action on the contrary I think it would be fair to say that we had to gain ground inch by hard fought inch and that the struggle for recognition and for progress was hard and sometimes bitter.

7.01 A Project cannot work in isolation. There are so many interlinking threads that stretch across so many pockets of power that unless there is a general acceptance of the Project not only in words but also in deeds, any Project would find the going heavy. We have had our share of obstacles and disappointments from many sources. But it is our experience that the only remedy in such situations is devoted and hard work which eventually delivers the goods and makes converts of the nonsupporter or the unbeliever.

This applies in equal measure, or for that matter, with greater relevance to the implementing agency. A Project means hard work and generally there are some additional incentives built into the structure of the Project to compensate for the hard work that has to be done and sacrifices one is compelled to make. These perquisites are often matters of dispute which sometimes leads to nonsupport from those working in the regular cadre of the implementing agency. To my mind, this kind of misunderstanding can be overcome if the Implementing Agency will quite early in the life of a Project keep the Management and staff fully informed of the nature and scope of the Projects, the special benefits that are being made available to the Project Staff and periodically provide opportunities to the agency staff to get involved with some of the Project Activities. Further I would think that it would be a healthy habit to get the Project Directors to be involved in discussions at the Board level when matters pertaining to the Project are discussed.

Another matter of great consequence pertaining to the implementing agency is the matter of staff. I believe a Project generally suffers in this respect and especially so where the expertise required to service the Project is not available from within the cadres of the implementing agency itself, and also where the Project is not a self-terminating one. In such a situation I think it is very necessary for the implementing agency to take an overall look at the Project and where continuity of project activity is an in built nature of the Project take appropriate action well in time to ensure effective performance in the long run. In regard to our project the kind of expertise that was necessary was not available from within the NCC cadres itself. Some staff therefore had to be recruited on a contract basis while others had to be obtained from the Department on deputation. As those on contract were on yearly contract basis and as even after three years of Project activity, the NCC had not taken any visible steps to expand the cadre and absorb those on contract, at the first opportunity for permanent employment outside, left the Project thus depriving the Project and NCC of the experience and expertise they had gathered over the many years working with the Project.

Another matter of relevance in so far as the implementing Agency is concerned, in respect of a Project such as ours, where continuity of activity had to be ensured, was the important aspect of integrating Project Activity with the on going activities of the Agency itself. I would think that the whole process needs careful planning and programming backed by an ongoing dialogue with those already working with the agency to ensure smooth transition and acceptance. It is also my view, that even after the activities of the project have been taken over by the Agency, there is a need for the activity to be carried out from the Agency maintaining the special focus and identity, so that these activities continue to get the support that is necessary until the programme gets entrenched in the system as an integral part of the Agency's activities for which the necessary funds have been provided through the annual budget.

7.02 MPCs Level Problems

A Project, such as ours, has to be worked in collaboration

Food Pyramid
adapted
by the
Cooperative Women's
Consumer Education Project,
Sri Lanka

FOOD PYRAMID

It is important to have a nutritionally adequate diet daily. A proper diet ensures a healthy life. The food we take should supply (1) nutrients that furnish energy; (rice, bread, potatoes and other starchy foods), (2) nutrients that build and maintain body tissues; (dried fish, meat, fish, pulses) and (3) nutrients that regulate and protect body functions; (leafy vegetables, mango, papaya, pumpkin). The Food Pyramid will help you to prepare a balanced diet containing the various necessary nutrients.

Explanatory Notes :

(1) The base of the pyramid shows the basic foods you must take daily. An adult would benefit from the following diet :

- (i) Rice 6-1/2 ozs;
- (ii) Slice of bread or a preparation from 2 ozs wheat flour;
- (iii) 1-3/4 ozs coconut milk or equivalent scraped coconut or 6 tea spoons of coconut oil;
- (iv) 1/2 oz dried fish;
- (v) 4 tea spoons of dried milk powder;
- (vi) 4 table spoons of pulses (dal, soyabeans etc.);
- (vii) 2 cups of green leaf (prior to cooking).

This basic meal gives you the necessary proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates and minerals. But to enrich your diet further, you should take some foods from (2) the middle of the Pyramid.

(2) In the middle of the Pyramid, you will see a variety of fruits and vegetables. Some of these need to be cooked; but most can be taken fresh. It should be noted that vegetables must be lightly cooked to get the best benefits.

(3) At the top of the Pyramid you will see foods which help to build and maintain body tissues. If you can afford it, limited quantities of these foods would be adequate and will add variety to your diet. If however your diet includes the various items shown at the base of the Pyramid, then those at the top are not that vital.



with the selected MPCSS, for after all, the activities would be a form of member relations programme for the Society. One of the major problems encountered in the very early stages of the Project was to get accepted and supported by the top management of the MPCSS and the staff at all levels. This can very well be understood in the very initial stage where there was no awareness either of the programmes or the way in which the project was going to work, but we have had situations where support was lukewarm for personal reasons. We have had situations where the Education Officers who were trained by the project and who were required to work with the project were either burdened with other duties making it impossible to attend to essential Project work or were transferred to other posts with no reference to the Project at all.

Another aspect that is worth mentioning is the aspect of finance. No activity can be successfully carried out unless backed by adequate funding. It must be admitted that not all MPCSS were that affluent whereby Budget was no question, but yet even where there was an understanding that adequate financial support would be made available, there was often some reservation and reluctance to release funds, perhaps the question at the back of their minds may have been, is all this expenditure necessary, what does the society get out of it?

Fortunately for us the enthusiasm with which the women leaders worked at tremendous sacrifice to their own leisure and their own domestic and other responsibilities and the satisfactory results they were able to demonstrate in the short run were such that we were able to surmount many of these difficulties and get our work programme firmly entrenched in the normal activities of the society, supported by separate budget provision.

7.03 Problems Relating to Leaders

1. These leaders were those elected by the membership. But yet some of them were lacking in leadership qualities and were also not easily amenable to change. Being democratically elected leaders we from the project, could not ignore them. We could not select others and train them without causing serious tensions.

2. Some leaders were good leaders, but they did not have the capacity to share the knowledge they gathered at the workshops with village level leaders and members.

3. Some leaders were quite possessive about the experiences and knowledge gathered. They did not like to share the knowledge. Perhaps the additional knowledge gave them a sense of superiority over others.

4. Because of the socio-political differences which subsist at the village level, even though the women leaders themselves did not get involved in these issues, yet the very background from which they came placed them in a disadvantageous position.

5. Some showed interest in the project at the initial stages because they thought that there would be personal economic benefits accruing from this.

6. Some were status conscious—they thought that being elected to the Central Committee would enhance their public image.

7. There were some even among those who were really interested, who could not attend the workshops etc. regularly because of their pressing obligations elsewhere as housewives and mothers. As a result they could not equip themselves adequately with the knowledge necessary to play the leadership roles.

8. There were instances of obstructionist activities by those who failed to get elected to the Central Committee—they used various means to prevent others from attending workshops etc

9. In the traditional rural situation, it is easier for an outsider to carry out adult education programmes of this nature—the traditional villager could not take on this role—besides they tend to place less value on what their own people would tell them.

Problems Affecting Leaders in their Leadership Roles

- (i) The society staff and even the management in some situations did not lend support and were at times indifferent.

May be this attitude was due to:—

- (a) their fears that when the membership came to know of

their rights and privileges, all types of problems may arise in the society;

- (b) the fear that if women were trained and they took on leadership roles, this would affect the status quo;
- (c) the long period of absence of member education programmes gave the staff and management virtually a free hand and there were fears that these privileges would get eroded;
- (d) specific fears arising out of the belief that increased member involvement may lead to exposure of activities which were not above board;
- (e) in many situations the staff and management tended to look on project activity as an outside activity—and in some situations also as an additional burden;
- (f) Some societies were faced with economic problems which caused them to look at the new activity with concern;
- (g) the women's committees were outside the bye-law and thus were accepted only on a level of tolerance.

(ii) *General*

- (a) Disputes and disagreement between society officials in the performance of their duties affected the leaders in the performance of their roles;
- (b) various organisations had to work together when implementing project activities—disputes between institutions also had their deleterious influence;
- (c) the general expectation was to see quick economic results following on project activity and absence of such led to indifference;
- (d) in certain other situations where people were involved in voluntary activities, their organisations paid an allowance or honorarium and they expected this from our project too;
- (e) the difficulties faced by some wage-earning leaders to participate regularly in the programmes unless the programmes were conducted at night or on holidays.

Similar situations arise during cultivation and harvesting seasons;

- (f) as people don't understand the significance of subjects like Nutrition, people don't show much interest—another factor of significance is that changing dietary habits is a very difficult exercise.

I have enumerated in some detail some of the problems pertaining to the leaders, their roles and the environment in which the project had to operate. What has been mentioned is mostly the negative side and this should not give the impression that these problems were of a universal nature. We have had excellent leaders who were quite conscious of their roles and also of the sensitivities around them and also who have forged ahead with tact and careful planning and programming. My intention in making reference to these was in the first instance to highlight the fact that, even persons with long experience from governmental sources working at village level are rarely confronted with these issues. They approach the problem from a vantage point of authority under the law and even if these sensitivities do exist they rarely become issues. In our approach, we start from a position of being outside the bye-law and we resort to a participatory method which is more close and personal and hence give rise to these situations.

We at the project became quite alive to the situations affecting the progress of the project and had to take stock of the position and devise new approaches to overcome the problems faced.

1. We felt that we had neglected the important aspect of developing leaders and leadership qualities. We were concentrating too much on imparting knowledge on subject matter and this deficiency had to be overcome.

Our workshop programmes therefore were changed to include in depth discussions on leadership, leadership qualities, the responsibilities and duties of leaders.

2. These discussions were supplemented with exercises in group dynamics, role plays etc, more or less compelling

each leader to take on responsibilities under various conditions and situations.

3. Whenever possible, I took time out with the leaders at the workshops to discuss their individual problems and to help and encourage them with advice and guidance. Where their work was affected due to unfavourable situations with management or other levels, I initiated discussions with management to find suitable solutions. The fact that we would back up the leaders gave them enough courage to proceed.
4. We also resorted to highlighting achievements and commenting on poor performances in a general way, at our regular workshops. We also resorted to the practice of discussing individual field note books of the leaders, commending good performances. All this helped in introducing a spirit of healthy competition and furthermore of the urge to achieve.
5. We also made our residential courses more systematic with time being spent also on working towards proper attitudinal changes and also the elimination of unpleasant behavioural patterns. Group living and group exercises helped the leaders to learn by observation and more or less unconsciously work towards their own improvement. These residential courses also helped the leaders in preparing their own visual aids which helped them to face an audience with confidence and get the message across with confidence.

The project activities that we were carrying out at the field level also provided ample opportunities to the women leaders to improve their performance and their confidence. Project activities included such activities as improvement of kitchens, organising shramadana (voluntary work) campaigns to clean up the retail branches and to improve goods display encouraging home garden development, organising of consumer pressure groups at branch shop level etc. These were activities which certainly provided a challenge to the leaders as their achievements would both be visible and also quantifiable. These opportunities and challenges brought

out the best in our leaders in organisational abilities, in planning, programming and in getting others motivated and involved.

From the project point of view also, we were provided the opportunity to see for ourselves how these activities helped to increase participation and how the leaders themselves were accepted, tolerated or rejected at the village level.

In late 1979 and early 1980 the societies in phase I proceeded to elect members to their branch committees. The qualities of the leaders were really put to the test as the elections rejected the non-performers or those, though keen, could not adequately communicate. Those who were good leaders were re-elected with considerable support.

Then again late '79 and early '80 gave us yet another opportunity to see how far our efforts have resulted in motivating the women. Elections to the branch committees of the MPCs and subsequently the elections to the Boards of Directors of the MPCs were also conducted. The enthusiasm displayed by the women members to contest along side the men for the available seats and the way in which they campaigned were matters of great delight. About 150 women from the five societies in phase one contested with 27 finding places in the Branch Committees and only Two at Board level. (For more recent details please see Annexe VIII).

Project Evaluation

The Project during the course of its functioning was subjected to two Evaluations, one by an internal team and one by a team supported by the SCC. Both evaluations have been very positive about the activities and achievements of the Project. Given below are some observations made by the SCC supported evaluation team.

I. Dissemination of Information

Dissemination of information has been done through village meetings, visits to the homes of members, hospitals, Maternity Clinics and Schools (for educating the older children and the

teachers of these schools) Information materials such as pamphlets, flip-charts, slides and posters have been distributed to the women leaders and societies; also a monthly Women's Education Bulletin has been issued.

Also, there have been radio programmes and newspaper articles and even a calendar showing the Food Pyramid. A film on the Project's activities was made by the Swedish Cooperative Centre and shown in various places; both in Sweden and Sri Lanka.

II. The Role of Cooperatives

The second part of the objective of the Project is the creation of an awareness of the role that the Cooperatives can play in promoting and protecting consumer interests.

As a preliminary to creating an awareness of the role that Cooperatives can play in promoting and protecting consumer interests, women members have been educated in regard to the rights and duties of members of Cooperatives. A considerable involvement of women in Cooperatives has resulted from the education, as will be seen from the fact that women have been elected to several of the Branch Committees of Multi-Purpose Cooperatives; for example, 44 out of 306 branch committee members in the Mahanuwara MPCS, 33 out of 376 in Kundasale, 17 out of 198 in Teldeniya, 14 out of 378 at Harispattuwa and 13 out of 315 in Wattedgama are women. Moreover at Wattedgama one woman has been elected to the Board of Directors while two women came close seconds at Peradeniya and Kundasale.

These figures relate to the Societies of Phase I. Project activities in the cooperatives of Phase II have been started only in 1980, that is, after the Annual General Meetings of these Societies were held in late 1979 for the election of their Boards of Directors.

Women members have been given an education in respect of the bye-laws of the Multi Purposes Cooperative Societies and also made aware of the role that cooperatives have to play in regard to Consumer Protection.

A significant development in this direction is that one male member of each Branch Committee of the Tellippalai MPCs is resigning in order to make way for the election of a Woman Member.

We appreciate that this aspect of the objective of the Project is difficult of attainment in so short a time.

III. Special Aspects

A. *Change in Attitude*

The following developments show a change in the attitudes of women towards their Cooperative Societies :

- (a) Increased participation of women in the General Meetings of these societies.
- (b) Women have offered themselves as candidates for office in these societies and a fair number have been elected to the Branch Committees of these societies. One woman has even been elected to the Board of Directors of a society.
- (c) They have shown greater interest in the management of their retail shops. There are more women members as customers at the Cooperatives than before.
- (d) More women have participated in sports activities held to celebrate International Cooperative Day.
- (e) Women have offered their services voluntarily to clean up the shops and to arrange the goods for their better display.
- (f) They have shown a more helpful attitude towards the solution of management problems such as finding suitable persons for security services.

B. *Impact of Project Activities on Cooperative Societies*

- (a) There has been a marked impact of the activities of the Project on the Cooperative Societies and their general membership as will be seen from the fact that there has been an increase in the number of women members in all the societies under the project. There has also been an

increase in the number of women members at decision making level, at the Branch as well as the District and the National levels.

- (b) As a result of demands by the women members of these societies, there has been an increase in the number of Rural Banks in the societies covered by the Project.
- (c) There has been a marked increase in the Savings of women in some societies; for instance over one thousand savings accounts have been opened by the women members of the Tellippalai Society during the year 1980. The other societies which have shown increases in this respect are Hingurakgoda, Kundasale, Uva Paranagama and Harispattuwa.

There has also been an impact on some of the Societies in the neighbourhood of the societies which come under the project; for example the Nallur and the Neervely Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies have taken up similar activities as a result of seeing the progress made by the neighbouring Tellippalai MPCS. Then again for the first time a woman member has been elected to be President of a District Branch of the National Cooperative Council and she is also a representative of that Branch in the General Body of the National Cooperative Council.

C. Involvement of Women

Annexe VII hereto gives the details of the number of women directly involved in the activities of the Project. In addition, over 950 village meetings have been held with an average attendance of 25.

D. The Food Pyramid

The Food Pyramid was used very successfully in all the societies by the Education Officers and the Women Leaders as a means of communication and dissemination of nutrition information and education. In fact, the Schools in the neighbourhood of the societies in the Project also have adopted it. They were highly satisfied that it gave a clear picture of the food recommended.

They found it to be an easy method of demonstration and one that would be easily grasped by people of all ages. One project centre mentioned that this may be further clarified by using food stuffs that are locally available.

E. Impact on Consumer Awareness

The members of Phase I find the problems of the consumer and consumer protection not as easy to grasp as the rest. Therefore, more work should be done on this subject. Some of the Phase II societies have been started only a short while ago and these have still to be taught this subject. New policies adopted by the Government in regard to consumer items including matters relating to imports and exports too should be conveyed to the consumers through the Women's Committees. As the market is flooded with consumer goods of various standards the need of a Food Testing Laboratory to increase consumer awareness is widely felt.

IV. The Relevance of the Project for Similar Projects Elsewhere

It is possible to make use of the experience gained from this project for similar projects elsewhere, but it should be related to the conditions of the country concerned.

Hence, a Bench Mark Survey on the Socio-Economic and Nutrition position and the problems and needs of the women of the area should be carried out and target groups identified before launching this type of project.

7.04 The Lessons we learn

Here I shall indulge in some random comments which have relevance to some of the problems we have faced and which comments may become useful at future occasions.

1. I am of the view that before a society or a country launches into a Project of this nature it would be most useful to do a Bench Mark preliminary survey, involving at least some of the people the Project will be working with. This has the

advantage of early familiarisation and also would serve as a point of reference for monitoring achievements and progress.

In our own Project we did, a short while after the commencement of the Project, conduct a survey and publish a document in this regard. We at the Project, were not able on our own to carry out meaningful field studies in the area after a few years to see how things stood. But I think the NCC should have developed within itself the capacity to carry out surveys and assess the impact of the programme, using the information available in the original survey document.

I believe it was at an ICA ROEC sponsored Sub-Regional Workshop on Strengthening NCO performance that recommendations were made, besides other matters, on the need for NCOO to develop a research and planning wing within their organisation. This I believe would be most desirable, especially when the NCO will be involved in Project activities of one kind or another.

2. Staffing a project is at best a tricky job. Projects of the kind that we were involved in are those supported by outside sources and which are of a continuing nature, with a lifespan beyond the actual project period. There is always the tendency when external funding is available to think of recruiting a new staff at all levels, and often the pressure is to recruit them at scales of salary which are often better than those prevailing for similar posts in the parent institution itself. Little attention is paid to the time when the staff has to be absorbed into the parent organisation and the anomalies that would arise.

Apart from the anomalies, one serious question that has to be faced right from the very beginning is whether the parent organisation can absorb the new staff who would be trained in the project and who often are recruited on a contract basis. If there is no adequate planning and funding then the same fate that our Project faced would have to be faced, where officers with commitment and long experience left the Project for permanent jobs elsewhere because the parent organisation had not taken even the

initial steps necessary for them to have confidence about their future with the organisation.

Another aspect of concern is the fringe benefits that are generally provided for working in Projects. The fringe benefits include extra monetary allowances and when the time comes for integration of project activities with those of the parent organisation, there is a lot of internal resistance as integration would mean a loss in allowances etc.

This I believe is quite a sensitive issue and one that has to be approached with utmost care.

3. While working with the Project, though we were a NCC Project, all too often we felt that we were treated sometimes with suspicion and sometimes as outsiders by the NCC itself. I believe it is necessary for the parent organisation to, from the very beginning, establish fora for discussion and easy communication between the project and the staff of the parent organisation. The misunderstandings and the resistance that one encounters at various levels could be overcome.

This would apply equally also at Board and Policy making levels. Systematic reporting and discussions should be arranged to avoid misunderstanding and decisions based on hearsay information. The project itself would feel encouraged by the interest and confidence shown by the Board and the higher levels of management.

4. The institutional framework and the systems adopted to continue with project work after integration is I believe an aspect which deserves much attention. In our own Project I believe the process of integration was not difficult, but the arrangements for continuing activities I believe run into snags, mostly of a financial nature. I think it would have been useful for the NCC to have carried out a series of consultations at District level with the MPCSS carrying out Women's work to map out a strategy after integration. These consultations could have been carried out about six months before actual integration and emphasis laid on one of the most important aspects which has bearing on continuing field

level activity viz. Finance. Once the last date of external financing was known a commonly agreed plan between the NCC and the MPCSS could have been worked out taking into consideration what each party could afford to sustain the programme. It is to be hoped that the NCC would resort to a general Conference even at this stage to ensure continuing activity.

5. I think it is necessary to make some reference to women's own perceptions and aspirations. As regards our project, I think that the assumptions we made and the methodologies we followed paid off in the long run. It was evident at the preliminary familiarisation meetings we held at the village level, that there were many women who were only concerned with means to supplementing family income. Perhaps they were encouraged by their husbands, perhaps they and their husbands, believed that that was the only role for women and if a project did not promise some immediate gain then there was no use for it? Perhaps this outlook may have been the reason behind many women dropping off after the first meetings.

Our approach to the women and the men who came in for the discussions was quite open and frank—and we did emphasise the aspect of awareness increasing as against the immediate possibility of an increase in income. I believe in time the women began to realise that there was value in this approach, that they had a bigger role than just income earning, that there are many ways to better quality of life other than by the generally accepted one of increased income. I believe also that the husbands and the concerned families accepted the fact that life styles improve if e.g., one is able to take adequate preventive measures to ensure good health for the family that a wholesome meal is not one that the family could on their levels of income afford only occasionally, that there was drudgery in the women's work in the home and that if you would, at little cost, improve the kitchen environment you came home to a wife who was less nagging or one who was not tired from household chores. Even outside of the home, within the operating framework of the MPCSS themselves I am sure that in time, even though reluctantly there was acceptance that a women's group expressing opinions and points of view or acting as a pressure

group, leads to better performance at least in some of the societies we worked with.

In these and many other ways I believe that the Project has been able to demonstrate that women have a role to play and that they can be integral partners in the development process.

I am of the view that if we started off the Project with a primary focus on income generating activities, perhaps the women may not have consciously striven to increase their general awareness and realised that they had other roles to play.

In the Sri Lanka situation as mentioned elsewhere, there is generally no open discrimination against women. In the MPCSS themselves there were women as Branch Committee Members, members of the Board of Directors and at least one President. In some MPCSS even the General Manager is a woman. But yet women's involvement in the democratic process of society operations was generally low. Besides there could be pockets of resistance to women getting more involved in cooperative affairs, for personal or other reasons.

In our approaches we have found that responses are better if we could win the confidence of the generality of the people involved including the staff and management. One could not work on the basis of confrontation or on a hypothesis of victimisation or discrimination. One had to demonstrate both the intent and the will and this would generally lead to the easing of tensions and the gradual disappearance of existing or imagined barriers. This approach has paid off not only in situations where society staff or membership and management were concerned, but also in situations where government staff and the department or the NCC and its staff itself was concerned.

6. Having said the above there is one particular area which needs special mention and also emphasis—and that is the area concerned with recruitment and training of staff for field level work based on participatory and group oriented approaches. In the developing countries employment is always at a premium. Consequently there are various pressures brought to bear on those

recruiting resulting in the selection of persons who may not be the best available. There were several cases that we came across in the MPCSS when it came to the selection of the Education Officers for the society. One has to accept that not all persons are inclined to work on a participatory basis, our general approaches being generally authoritarian, hence arises the need for good recruitment or else a programme may be in jeopardy.

A connected matter of great relevance and importance is how do we train persons to work with people as facilitators rather than directors and controllers?

It has been found that orientation through class room exposure alone is totally inadequate. The skills have to be developed on the job itself, working with people and picking up the ropes from those already on a wave length with the people. The training of the facilitators must include exposure to aspects of adult learning group dynamics and leadership development. We were fortunate that about the same time as our Project the ICA/SCC/NCC Teachers Training Project was on going in Sri Lanka and they arranged a series of training programmes in the above areas for the benefit of those working with us. These training exposures were of tremendous help to us in orienting our field workers for effective work. As the programme is of an going nature it is most necessary to devise suitable systems to keep the programme supplied with well oriented personnel on a long term basis.

8. WHAT OF THE FUTURE

801. I have been asked on many occasions whether ours too was some sort of Feminist or Women's Lib movement of sorts. My emphatic answer has been a definite 'no'. The socio-cultural situation prevailing in the Sri Lanka village situation would hardly lend itself to support such approaches. The average family is very closely knit nuclear family with the work at village level being done on a shared basis, even if the woman has an extra burden in respect of domestic work and child rearing. The need therefore is to help women realise that there are many roles they can play and each such would help them to contribute more and will help to enrich the quality of life.

8.02. The Project has worked in the country for over five years. In a sense it can be said that our work is just beginning. During the last few years of the Project activities were taken on to several MPCSS, but as yet it has not been possible to initiate activity in all the MPCSS in the country in an effective and meaningful way. All this would mean that we have to change our strategies, get more persons trained as facilitators, get more financing to support the programme and make all efforts to keep the initial momentum we have gathered going on without any serious set backs. This would also mean getting more and more other institutions and voluntary agencies to support the effort so that it becomes one generally supported.

8.03. There is the special area of Consumer Education and Consumer Protection where much has to be done. To my mind this has to be approached on several fronts. The Government, after the introduction of the Consumer Protection Law has set up a fairly involved machinery to support the setting up of Consumer Associations and to gear up the machinery of redressing grievances. In so far as the cooperatives are concerned there is an urgent need, for a combined concerted effort to be made to get the Policy makers and Society management to accept the role they must play in ensuring adequate protection to the consumer. There must be a conscious approach by the cooperative sector to buying and selling quality goods, and of setting up their own machinery for production/processing and packaging some of the items in popular demand to ensure purity of the goods. Perhaps it is now timely to start working on a food testing laboratory in the cooperative sector or at least for cooperatives to initiate the practice of getting the goods they buy tested at least occasionally. I believe it is timely also to set up the machinery necessary for cooperatives to begin to recognise the food testing done by the women's committees and adjust their buying sources accordingly. In the effort for ensuring consumer protection in the Sri Lankan situation, especially in the cooperative sector, I am of the view that much has to be done from the supply side, though of course this does not mean that the consumer himself has no role. But the MPCSS should realise that they express the combined consumer interests of the membership

and hence a large responsibility vests with the members' own institution, viz. the MPCS.

In our approaches at the village level, we have often encountered the situation that as purchases of the village household are often made in such small quantities and often bought loose and the person who goes to the shop is most often a child of say ten or twelve that the very processes necessary to safeguard consumer interest become difficult. However through our rudimentary testing programmes we have been able to alert the women and the MPCSS authorities to the presence of adulteration and the need to be more vigilant in purchases. But we have not been able to get to the level where women's groupings at the village level developed a group consciousness at a level where we could come to the next step of assuming the role of an effective pressure group. I believe this is an area in which much more effort has to be made, to give the necessary confidence to the groups that they can be effective pressure groups within the MPCS structure. This would also mean that we have to work towards the grouping together of the various women's groups at the Branch level so that we have an effective consolidated women's group at the MPCS level for the purpose not only of Consumer Protection but to act as a pressure group on matters that affect the women in particular and the community in general. The pan-society groupings can be federated at District and National levels so that they become a powerful pressure group who could be a spokesman on many matters. Whether the National Women's Committee could assume this role one cannot say and much would depend on the way the National Women's Committee sets about viewing their own role and on the way they exercise their influence in the proper quarters. Upto now the NWC has been mainly concerned with strengthening its structure and has been concentrating on education. There is much that the NWC has to do.

8.04. We have had commendable successes in our Savings campaigns. This is an aspect which has to be promoted, but this alone to my mind would not be adequate. We must now go on to meaningful use of the savings within the village context itself so that the benefits of investment will be for the village in the first

instance. There is also the need to use the savings judiciously in building up social insurance schemes which would ensure some minimum benefits to those saving in addition to the return of their monies with the due interest. Many credit cooperatives today are taking a dynamic view in this field and are making provisions for funding which could be used for social benefits for those involved.

8.05. We have had some success with the improvement of kitchens making the cooking environment less exacting and cooking itself less of a drudgery. However we have as yet to work in the field of raising the awareness of the women to the energy problem, help them to introduce more fuel efficient cooking hearths, and perhaps work towards community approaches to biogas production and use. In many a village situation especially when it comes to firewood, it is difficult to get the women and men to realise that there is an energy problem and firewood is not an inexhaustible supply, but this is an effort that has to be consciously made in the interest of the environment and ecology, if not for other reasons.

8.06. Our efforts have helped to set up at the village level in some situations at least some of the facilities available at the urban level, e.g., opening creches for working mothers, nursery classes, typing classes, basic English classes, flower making etc. There is much more to be done and the efforts to be supported with expertise and technical advice.

8.07. In the field of Income Generating activities some progress has been made in some society areas but it is likely this aspect would become one of increasing interest. It is therefore necessary to have a more systematic approach developed. The Project itself worked on the formulation of a new project to support such activity. We are hopeful that this project will find the necessary support as it will help in strengthening activity in this sector.

8.08. The development of leadership at the local levels has been a continuous effort of the Project, and it has not been an easy task, nor can we rest satisfied that we have been able to achieve much in this field. This to my mind is an area where efforts would have to be continued and more and more opportunities be given to the

younger emerging leaders to play effective roles to build up their confidence and capacities.

8.09. We are of the view that through this Project we have been able to demonstrate some new approaches which have been effective in the field of member relations and strengthening the links between the member and his society. This we have done by concentrating on the women mostly. I am of the view that the NCC and others concerned should take steps to assess the efficacy of those approaches and see whether they with suitable modifications and with different areas of emphasis could not be used in approaches to improve the member relations between the large mass of the members who are males and the society concerned. We would think that this would be a necessary exercise in an area which has for long not been given much attention.

8.10. As a pilot project for South and South-East Asia we have been able to share our experiences with the women leaders of many countries in the region, both through the Regional Seminar held by the ICA ROEC with the Project as a focus, also by the fellowship programmes worked by the ICA with our collaboration, by the exchange of information about the project through pamphlets booklets etc. and by presenting papers on the project at other regional activities. We are hopeful that the women leaders in other countries could draw some useful experiences from our efforts for their own use and that there would emerge in each country in the Region some programmes at least designed to increase the awareness of women and designed to help them to play a wide variety of roles in the community.

8.11. We would hope that efforts made in this sector, will lead to a more effective and a more member responsive cooperative at each level where both men and women can have equal access to opportunities and where they can effectively contribute to the acceleration of the development process so that the quality of life for those concerned can improve visibly in the shortest possible period.

THE MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY (MPCS)

Project activities are carried out through a selected Multi-purpose Cooperative Society. A MPCS generally covers about 15-20 villages, has a membership of about 5000, and generally has one central office and godowns and 20 or more branch retail outlets. One MPCS would generally cover an area with a population of about 20,000 persons. In Sri Lanka today there are 282 MPCSs, some of which may have over 80 retail branches.

The members of the MPCS are grouped in geographical units covering one or two villages. Each of these geographical units has a branch committee and also a branch retail outlet. Where however the population is dense one geographical unit may have more than one retail outlet, but however, there would be only one branch committee. A branch committee consisting of nine persons is elected by the members of the MPCS residing in that geographical area. The branch committee acts as an advisory body and is the link between the member and society, the Representative Body and the Board of Directors.

The Representative Body consists of delegates from the branch committees and is limited to 100 persons. Each committee can send one delegate at least. The number of additional persons depends on the number of members in the geographical area covered by the Branch Committee.

The business activities of the MPCS are conducted by the General Manager who is assisted by various staff both at the central office and at the branches. He functions under the general guidance of the President and the Board of Directors. Generally an MPCS has over 200 employees. One of the significant employees is the Consumer Education Officer who functions as the liaison between the society and the Project and who coordinates Project activity at the society and branch levels.

The ICA/SCC/NCC Study Group was constituted as follows :

- (i) Mrs. Margaret D'Cruz,
Education Officer
(Women and Youth)
ICA ROEC, New Delhi.**
- (ii) Mrs. Birgi Madsen, SCC,
Stockholm.**
- (iii) Mrs. Muthulatha Perera,
District Secretary, NCC,
Kandy.**

I. Expatriate Advisors:

- (i) Ms. Katerina Larson, SCC, 1978-79
- (ii) Ms. Helena Gadelina, 79-80

II. ICA/SCC/NCC Evaluation Team:

- (i) Mrs. Anula Udalagama (Chairman)
President—Kegalle District Committee, NCC
- (ii) Mrs. Svea Ornstedt, SCC
Deputy Head Planning and Evaluation Division,
SIDA.
- (iii) Mrs. Padma Jayaweera
Deputy Director, Social Services, Govt. of Sri Lanka.
- (iv) Mr. Palita E. Weeraman,
Former CCD & RCS, Sri Lanka and
former Regional Director, ICA ROEC.

III. Project Directors—Women's Project, Sri Lanka.

- (i) Ms. Jayantha C. Tennakoon
Sri Lanka Administrative Service
Assistant Commissioner, Cooperative Development.
(from inception of Project till 15-8-83)
- (ii) Mrs. S.P.L. Goonesekera
NCC.
(from 16-8-83 till 30-6-84)

SEWING EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE PROJECT

	1980	1981	1982
(i) No. sitting	76	240	251
(ii) No. successful	57	185	233
Grades			
(i) Grade I	06	32	71
(ii) Grade II	27	109	131
(iii) Grade III	24	44	31
	57	185	233

BUY A BUCKET OF WATER PROGRAMME

Funds Received

(i) Consumer Guilds in Sweden	SLR.	158880.00
(ii) ICA	SLR.	23574.00
(iii) Project Flag Day	SLR.	5908.06
I USD = 22.00 SLR.	Total :	SLR. 188362.75

Expenditure

Society Name	No.	Place	Amount spent.	Families Benefiting	No. school children
1. Harispattuwa North MPCS	1.	Vilana Udagama	6418.00	30	1000
	2.	Alawatugoda	6000.00	25	—
	3.	Ratukohodeegala	3250.00	32	—
	4.	Watagoda	8600.00	30	—
	5.	Batagalla	4315.00	20	—
	6.	Parakrama School	11862.50		1319
2. Wategama MPCS	7.	Udurawana	8840.00	40	—
	8.	Yatirawana	8015.00	50	—
	9.	Polgolla	9605.00	20	—
	10.	Panwila	10645.00	16	—
	11.	Doragamuwa	12970.00	30	—
3. Kundasale MPCS	12.	Rajawella Colony	7455.00	40	—
	13.	Delgaslanda School	6500.00	20	500
	14.	Lewella Barberwatte	12100.00	30	—
	15.	Heepitiya	10020.00	30	—
	16.	Ataragalla— Udagama	8500.00	32	—

4. Teldeniya MPCS	17. Karalliyadde	6880.80	35	—
	18. Werapitiya	5000.00	30	—
	19. Udawela	6140.00	20	—
	20. Wenduruwa	7500.00	15	—
5. Mahanuwera MPCS	21. Uda Peradeniya School	3020.00		700
	22. Deyiannewela School	7000.00		1000
	23. Asgiriya	4050.00	15	—
6. Harispattuwa South MPCS	24. Balawathgoda	5107.00	15	—
	25. Ambaruppe	4885.00	16	—
	26. Hingulwela	3685.00	30	—
Total		188362.75	631	4519

**LIST OF PUBLICATIONS/VISUAL AIDS BROUGHT OUT
BY THE PROJECT**

I. Handbooks

(i) Cooperative Principles	Sinhala
(ii) The MPCS and You	Sinhala and Tamil
(iii) Balanced Diet	” ” ”
(iv) Nutrition for Pregnant and Lactating Mothers	” ” ”
(v) Breast Feeding	” ” ”
(vi) Supplementary Diet for Infants	” ” ”
(vii) Importance of Family Planning	” ” ”
(viii) Food Preparation and Preservation	” ” ”
(ix) Improvement of Kitchens	” ” ”
(x) Consumer Protection	” ” ”
(xi) Environmental Hygiene	Sinhala
(xii) Display of Goods	”
(xiii) The Legal Background to Consumer Protection	”
(xiv) Adulteration	”
(xv) Consumer Associations	”

II. Subject Matter Booklets

- (i) Infant Nutrition
- (ii) Basic Nutrition
- (iii) Preservation of Food
- (iv) Preparations with Soya
- (v) Basic Nutrient Requirements, their effectiveness and how they can be obtained
- (vi) Kitchens.

III. Pamphlets

- (i) Basic Nutrition Sinhala and Tamil

(ii) Infant Nutrition	Sinhala and Tamil
(iii) Vitamins	„ „ „
(iv) Recipes	„ „ „
(v) Food Preservation	„ „ „
(vi) Preparations from Soya	„ „ „
(vii) Nutrition and the pre-school child	„ „ „
(viii) Preparation of Papadams	„ „ „
(ix) The Triposha Programme	Sinhala
(x) Prevention of Malnutrition	„
(xi) Rural Kitchens	„
(xii) Home Gardening	„
(xiii) Preparation of floor polish	„
(xiv) The Cooperative Song	„
(The Sinhala Pamphlets are in the course of translation to Tamil)	

IV. Slides

- (i) A set of slides on Consumer Protection.

V. Other Visual Aids—flip charts, illustrations etc. on

- (i) Balanced Diet
- (ii) Basic Nutrition
- (iii) Infant Nutrition
- (iv) How to achieve Infant Nutrition
- (v) How to detect Malnutrition.

VI. Introduction to the Consumer Education Project—Sinhala, Tamil and English.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE PROJECT—JAN. 1979 TO JUNE 1984

Type of Activity	1979		1980		1981		1982		1983		1984		Total	
	N.A.	N.P.	N.A.	N.P.	N.A.	N.P.	N.A.	N.P.	N.A.	N.P.	N.A.	N.P.	N.A.	N.P.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8							
(i) Residential Workshops														
Polgolla	10	303	15	654	03	131	11	530	06	300	04	200	49	2118
(ii) District Level Residential	—	—	—	—	03	250	02	150	36	1140	16	560	57	2100
(iii) District Level one day	—	—	—	—	15	550	14	575	09	300	05	175	43	1600
(iv) Village Level Workshops	253	5000	761	15000	—	—	—	—	22	491	14	276	1050	20767

(v) Society Level Workshops	—	—	59	2300	893	18000	31	1149	07	208	08	341	998	21998
(vi) National Level Workshops	—	—	01	40	—	—	03	374	01	125	—	—	05	539
(vii) Sewing Classes	—	—	180	200	324	360	504	320	—	—	—	—	1008	880
(viii) Staff Training	17	45	07	56	02	65	11	35	01	01	04	04	42	206
(ix) Other														
Conferences	04	15	04	68	05	35	01	22	01	22	01	150	16	312
(x) Special Conferences	05	26	06	69	—	—	02	24	02	24	02	24	17	221

(Note: N.A. = Number of Activities. Total number of activities — 3285
N.P. = Number Participating. Total number of participants — 50741)

**MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER DETAILS FROM 24/26
COOPERATIVE DISTRICTS IN SRI LANKA, AS AT 01.07.84**

District	Members		W. in B.C.	W. in R.B.	W in B.D.
	W	M			
1. Colombo	59324	73582	253	45	03
2. Kalutara	45322	76492	103	20	02
3. Galle	29443	54236	151	34	02
4. Matara	35742	57798	166	15	02
5. Kurunegala	32472	77529	73	16	01
6. Kuliypitiya	7573	11516	07	—	—
7. Gampaha	47461	69924	154	38	—
8. Matale	2601	10356	13	06	—
9. Chilaw	17204	41523	74	21	01
10. Kegalle	43346	71429	132	44	02
11. Anuradhapura	15524	39980	48	23	01
12. Ampara	4520	14371	16	08	01
13. Pollonnaruwa	16761	39384	161	12	01
14. Hambantota	23376	45294	89	38	02
15. Badulla	24534	67498	265	29	01
16. Ratnapura	32040	56024	912	72	02
17. Kandy	30043	55317	870	80	01
18. Nuwera Eliya	3216	11370	18	14	—
19. Paranthan	4321	13917	14	09	01
20. Mannar	3592	11274	12	07	—
21. Vavuniya	2604	8924	11	05	—
22. Trincomalee	5408	11683	16	09	01
23. Batticola	1592	10798	22	06	—
24. Jaffna	38076	94496	86	29	02
Total	526,095	1,024,715	3,666	580	25

Branch Women's Committees

2593 Branch Women's Committees have been formed out of a total of 5500 Branches in 21 Districts reporting as at 01.07.84.

Note: W=Women
 M=Men
 B.C.=Branch Committee
 R.B.=Representative General Body
 B.D.=Board of Directors.

COOPERATIVE WOMEN'S COMMITTEES IN SRI LANKA

In recent times in an attempt to get the members more especially the women folk more involved in cooperative activities, the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka (NCC) in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Development has taken steps to set up Women's Consumer Advisory Committees at the Multi-purpose Cooperative Society (MPCS) level and at the District and National Levels.

I. MPCS Society Level Women's Committee

i. Branch Level :

The branch level women's committee is composed of five members elected at an Annual General Meeting of the Women members of the branches of the MPCS. The President and the Secretary of the women's committees are also elected by the General body from among the five members. The area of operation of this committee is limited to the area of operation of the branch of the MPCS. An average MPCS would have about 20 branches and hence there would be twenty branch women's committees in a society.

ii. Society Level :

The society level women's committee also consists of five members elected at a general meeting of the branch women's committee members. The president and the secretary are also elected by the General Body from among the five elected to the committee. This committee is known as the Central Women's Committee of the MPCS.

II. District Level Women's Committee

An administrative district may have about 10 MPCS. The Central Women's Committees of the MPCSs in the district meet

annually and elect the District Women's Committee which also consists of five members. The president and secretary are also elected by the general body from among the five members. The District Secretary of the National Cooperative Council coordinates at the District level.

III. National Level Women's Committee

The objects of the National Women's Committee are ·

1. To enhance the participation of women in the cooperative movement.
2. To promote the economic, social and cultural status of the women members.
3. To expand, promote and strengthen the cooperative movement in Sri Lanka.
4. To function in collaboration with the International Women's Organisations.

The National Level Women's Committee consists of ten members of whom 9 are elected at a meeting of the members of the various district level women's committees, who meet under the auspices of the National Cooperative Council. In Sri Lanka, there are 9 provinces. Elections to the committee are, therefore, on the basis of one from each province. The tenth member is nominated by the Commissioner for Cooperative Development from among the lady executive in his staff. The President and the Vice-President of the National Women's Committee are also elected at this meeting. A lady secretary who is appointed by the NCC coordinates the activities of the National Women's Committee.

IV. At all levels, the Committees function as advisory bodies.

The activities of these committees are as follows :

- (a) furnish assistance and advice for the promotion of cooperative activities in their area of operation;
- (b) work towards the expansion of membership of the cooperative societies;

- (c) enhance women's participation in cooperative activities from the village level to the national level;
- (d) provide advice to regularise the supply and distribution of consumer goods and make joint efforts towards consumer protection;
- (e) find ways and means to promote the economic and social well being of the families of the members by developing income generating projects such as cottage industries, handicrafts, agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry etc;
- (f) take steps in collaboration with the MPCCS to provide raw material, marketing facilities and appropriate technology for the income generating activities;
- (g) organise the women of the area into common interest and commodity groups and motivate them for development;
- (h) organise member education programmes, savings campaigns; exhibitions and fairs, cookery demonstrations, health clinics etc;
- (i) promote cooperative consciousness by imparting knowledge on cooperative principles and the movement etc;
- (j) provide opportunities to the members to increase their knowledge on food, nutrition and health, family planning, household economy and general economy;
- (k) take appropriate steps to engage youth in the cooperative movement;
- (l) provide assistance for the promotion of cultural and community activities of the area.

The funds necessary for the activities of the Women's committees at the MPCCS, and the district level are provided by the educational and extension fund of the MPCCS, while the cost of the national level training programmes are provided by the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka.

The training programmes of the Women's Committees are

prepared and implemented with the guidance of the National Cooperative Council and the Department of Cooperative Development.

The Cooperative Consumer Education Project, now in operation in Sri Lanka, works in collaboration with the various women's committees of the 15 societies in the project and the committees of the concerned districts and the National Level Committee. There is close collaboration between the Project, the Boards of Directors and the staff of the 15 societies, the Department of Cooperative Development, the NCC and its District Organisations.

THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

is one of the oldest of non-governmental international organisations. It is a world-wide confederation of cooperative organisations of all types. Founded by the International Cooperative Congress held in London in 1895 it now has affiliates in 66 countries, serving over 365 million members at the primary level. It is the only international organisation entirely and exclusively dedicated to the promotion of cooperation in all parts of the world.

Besides the Head Office of the ICA, which is in Geneva, there are three regional offices, viz., the Regional Office & Education Centre for South-East Asia, New Delhi, India, started in 1960, the Regional Office for East and Central Africa, Moshi, Tanzania, started in 1968, and the Regional Office for West Africa, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, started in 1979.

The main tasks of the Regional Office & Education Centre are to develop the general activities of the Alliance in the Region, to act as a link between the ICA and its affiliated national movements, to represent the Alliance in its consultative relations with the regional establishments of the United Nations and other international organisations, to promote economic relations amongst member-movements, including trading across national boundaries, to organise and conduct technical assistance, to conduct courses, seminars and conferences, surveys and research, to bring out publications on cooperative and allied subjects and to support and supplement the educational activities of national cooperative movements. The Regional Office and Education Centre now operates on behalf of 15 countries, i.e. Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

