

Less Words, More Action

How to Increase Women's Participation
in Leadership and Decision-Making in Co-operatives

A Trainer's Manual



Asian Women In Co-operative Development Forum (AWCF)
and
International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ICAROAP)

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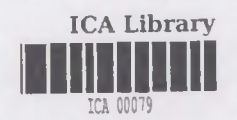
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Foreword

In the Foreword of the final report on the regional conference “Women in Decision-Making in Co-operatives” held in Tagaytay City, Philippines, on May 7-9, 1997, I wrote: “Having done what we should in the Regional Conference and also having the final print of the well-defined Declaration and Platform for Action and the proceedings of the Regional Conference, is certainly not enough and, hence, just the beginning. The Regional Conference has shown that there is readiness for change, the reinforcement of this change must follow suit. Thus, we certainly cannot rest satisfied with the conduct of the formal proceedings and processes alone. Real action must follow, and collaborative strategies must be implemented, tested, and subsequently monitored in the field.”

Making available in popular form the ideas contained in the Declaration and Platform for Action as in this publication “Less Words, More Action”, is precisely one of several steps that both the AWCF and ICAROAP are taking to ensure that real action follow our ideas, our plans and good intentions. Publishing this material with the objective of having primary level co-operatives as target users is a step in the right direction. For while it is true that actions are needed at the regional and international levels to increase women’s representation and participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives, only a critical mass from the grassroots, primary co-op level can bring about and sustain these actions.

We are grateful to the regional conference participants, resource speakers, guests, and organizers—cooperators and gender advocates, women and men alike—whose ideas provide the meat and substance of this material. We are pleased to share herewith all of our ideas and views that will be useful and valuable not only for gender- or women-related activities but for the daily activities in your co-operatives. We do hope that this popularized version of the Declaration and Platform for Action will contribute to the improvement of your co-operative movement.

We acknowledge the significant contribution of Misereor of Germany, the European Commission and the Japanese Consumers Credit Union for their financial contribution in the publication of this material. We truly appreciate their belief in and support to our work that contributes to the betterment of life of many peoples in the world through co-operatives.

Robby Tulus
Regional Director
International Co-operative Alliance
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Preface

Many ideas on how to increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operative structures came up during the AWCF-ICAROAP regional conference "Women in Decision-Making in Co-operatives" held in Tagaytay City, Philippines, on May 7-9, 1997. Coming from the resource speakers, panelists and participants of that conference, these ideas are contained in two publications, namely, "Women in Decision-Making in Co-operatives," which is the final report and proceedings of the conference, and "A Declaration and Platform of Action for the Enhancement of Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making in Co-operatives," which contains the important outputs of the conference.

The document (the Declaration and Platform of Action) is more than just a conference declaration or a call to action issued by participants of that conference. The document is really an organized compilation of ideas of people from various sectors in the co-op movement as well as from NGOs, government, and women's organizations on how women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-ops can be increased. These ideas are addressed to cooperators and governments in countries in Asia and Pacific, and also to all regions in the world because the problem of women's under-representation (or marginalization) in co-op leadership is global, and the actions that need to be taken must be done both globally and locally. This document is probably the first and only one dealing with this issue that has been published in the world.

The call to increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-ops is addressed to many sectors: governments, NGOs, co-operatives at all levels—primary, secondary, tertiary, regional and international. Both the ICAROAP and AWCF have exerted efforts to distribute all printed copies to these sectors in the hope that the ideas and information therein contained would be disseminated and would bring about results—more women in leadership and decision-making positions, more co-ops having women in decision-making positions.

Indeed, it is crucial to make the ideas in the Declaration and Platform of Action reach institutions, groups and individuals from which actions for change are expected. Governments and co-operative organizations at international, regional and national levels in some countries in Asia may have access to this document and understand it. However, co-operatives, self-help groups, people's organizations and NGOs working at the grassroots level that do not have any representation at the national level may not be aware of and may not have access to this document. This dilemma makes it extremely important that AWCF and ICAROAP find a way to ensure that this document reaches the primary co-ops and grassroots level. Another important matter to ensure is that they understand the important ideas and information on how to increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-ops. And, consequently, having understood, they will act.

With these intentions, AWCF and the ICAROAP once again collaborated to publish the Platform of Action in popularized form as a trainer's manual. "Less Words, More Action" presents the Platform of Action in a more direct and simpler way so as to ease understanding of the ideas for action that it contains. In turn, it is hoped that implementation of these ideas would come sooner.

A year after its initial publication, a review of the ideas that the Platform of Action contains makes us in AWCF realize that there are still more that can be done to increase women's participation as leaders and decision-makers in co-ops. We view the Platform, therefore, as a documentation of only some ideas, that is, only those that came up at that time of the regional conference. As such, the Platform will increase in volume as more ideas are created.

Another important matter that we realize is the need to have a tool and system for monitoring the implementation of the Platform of Action. The presentation of the ideas in this popularized version would help in developing that monitoring tool. Again, the AWCF and ICAROAP can collaborate in developing and implementing a monitoring system to ensure that the Platform of Action is implemented.

The collaboration between the ICAROAP and the AWCF proved catalytic and synergistic in fact, as can be gleaned from the results and further actions that the regional conference in 1997 have spawned. We thank the ICAROAP for working together with AWCF in the cause of gender equality in power and decision-making in co-ops.

Lota Y. Bertulfo
Regional Coordinator
Asian Women in Co-operative
Development Forum

Acknowledgment

AWCF and ICAROAP would like to acknowledge the ideas and suggestions of the resource speakers, panelists and participants of the “Women in Decision-Making in Co-operatives” regional conference held on May 7-9, 1997 in Tagaytay City, Philippines. “Less Words, More Action” is only as rich as the ideas that they presented and the experiences that they shared.

We would like to give special mention to our two main resource speakers, Lorraine Corner from United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Victoria Licuanan from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). Their analysis of the situation of women’s under-representation and marginalization in decision-making in various areas and fields helped cooperators analyze their own situation in co-operatives.

The global women leaders of the co-op movement led by Raija Itkonen, Katarina Apelqvist and Sen. Rahaiah bt. Baهران provided a lot of inspiration and encouragement. They serve as good role models for other women cooperators to emulate and follow. The panelists, namely, Hatsoku Omori, Dr. Somporn Rod-anant, Ibu Bambang Wibowo, Teresita De Leon, Rameshwari Ramachandra, Robby Tulus, Paul Sinnappan, Shanta Raj Sharma, Remedios Rikken, Laura Vance, and Lalita Krishnaswami provided interesting insights into their experiences and posed challenging ideas for action to improve women’s participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives.

The AWCF wishes to thank Misereor of Germany and the European Commission for their support in the publication of “Less Words, More Action” as the popularized version of the Platform of Action. We also thank SEAGEP-CIDA for its support in having the regional conference “Women in Decision-Making in Co-ops” organized.

There are many more individuals whose contributions we would like to acknowledge but they are very many to name, including the full-time staff of AWCF and ICAROAP alike who worked long hours and behind the scenes to produce this trainer’s manual.

We thank you all.

How to Use this Trainer's Manual

The Target Trainers

“Less Words, More Action,” the popularized version of the Platform of Action, is intended for trainers, field workers and community organizers who have direct access to members of primary co-ops and to people at the grassroots level. In the form of a trainer's manual, the popularized version will serve as a teaching and information tool for primary co-op members and people at the grassroots to be aware of the problem (of women's marginalization in co-op leadership) and to get ideas on how they can address this problem at their primary co-op.

The Contents and Format

The trainer's manual contains a lot of illustrations as a way of simplifying the messages or ideas in the Platform of Action. The **text** of what the trainer may say are provided below each illustration. The text, which are quoted, are mere suggestions and should not be taken as what the trainer should actually say about the illustration or the message. The text provide further explanation on the illustration and message being presented.

Some illustrations are not provided with text but rather with a **Note to the Trainer**. The Note to the Trainer contains instructions on what the trainer may do to explain the illustration. Furthermore, in a number of illustrations, particularly the statistics on participation profile of co-op members in various aspects, very little instruction is written in the Note in order to allow the trainer to explain the message using the illustration itself.

The trainer's manual also contains the full text of the Declaration and Platform of Action as found in the original document published in 1997.

The sequence in which the ideas are presented in this trainer's manual is based on how the messages would be taught in training. The ideas are not presented in the same order as they are in the Declaration and Platform of Action. In the manual, similar ideas are clustered to show that the messages are related. Broad categories of ideas were set up, the related ideas were placed under these broad categories as sub-messages. All broad categories of ideas and sub-messages were illustrated.

The logical **order** of the key messages or ideas from the document is as follows:

A. The Co-operative Identity (as found in illustration nos. 1-4)

The sub-messages in this category are:

- definition of a co-op
- co-op's nature as a member-based organization
- principles, values and ethical values
- co-operatives as serving the community

B. The problem: the under-representation and marginalization of women in leadership and decision-making in co-ops (as found in illustration nos. 5-27)

The sub-messages in this category are:

- situation of women's marginalization in leadership in co-operatives
- situation of women's marginalization in leadership in society
- causes of women's marginalization in leadership in society
- causes of women's marginalization in leadership in co-operatives

C. The rationale for having women in leadership in co-ops, or why should women have an equal share in decision-making in co-ops? (as found in illustration nos. 28-33)

D. The vision and goal, or what kind of leadership in co-ops do we want? (as found in illustration nos. 34-35)

E. How can women's representation and participation in co-op leadership be increased? (as found in illustration nos. 36-69)

The key messages are:

- general: women and men working together
- specific: Platform of Action

F. Action Planning

An approach to action planning is proposed, but the trainer may use another approach that is appropriate for the participants and will lead to the desired results.

G. Evaluation

An evaluation guide is provided, but the trainer may use another approach that is appropriate to the participants and will lead to the desired results.

Acronyms

ACCU	Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWCF	Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum
CCA	Canadian Co-operative Association
GST	Gender Sensitivity Training
ICA	International Co-operative Alliance
ICAROAP	International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
NGO	Non-government Organization
UN	United Nations
UN ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UN ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WOCCU	World Council of Credit Unions



Trainer : " What is a co-operative?"

Definition of a Co-operative

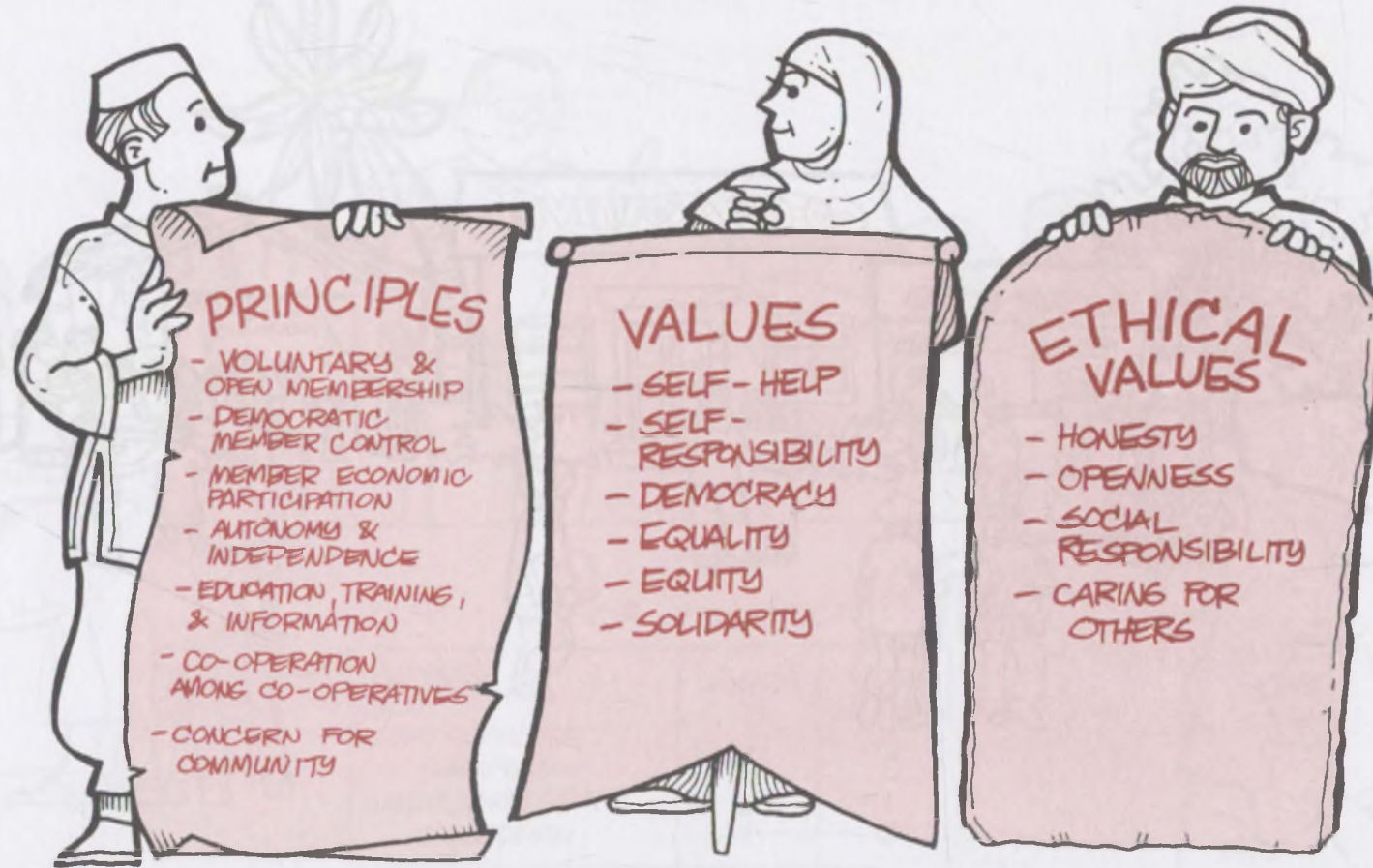
A co-operative is:

- * an autonomous association of persons**
- * who unite voluntarily**
- * in order to meet their common needs and aspirations**
- * through a business enterprise**
- * which they jointly own**
- * and democratically control.**

Note to the Trainer : Read out the definition of a co-operative and explain the meaning of each characteristic contained in the definition.

Co-op Principles and Values

In Leadership Positions

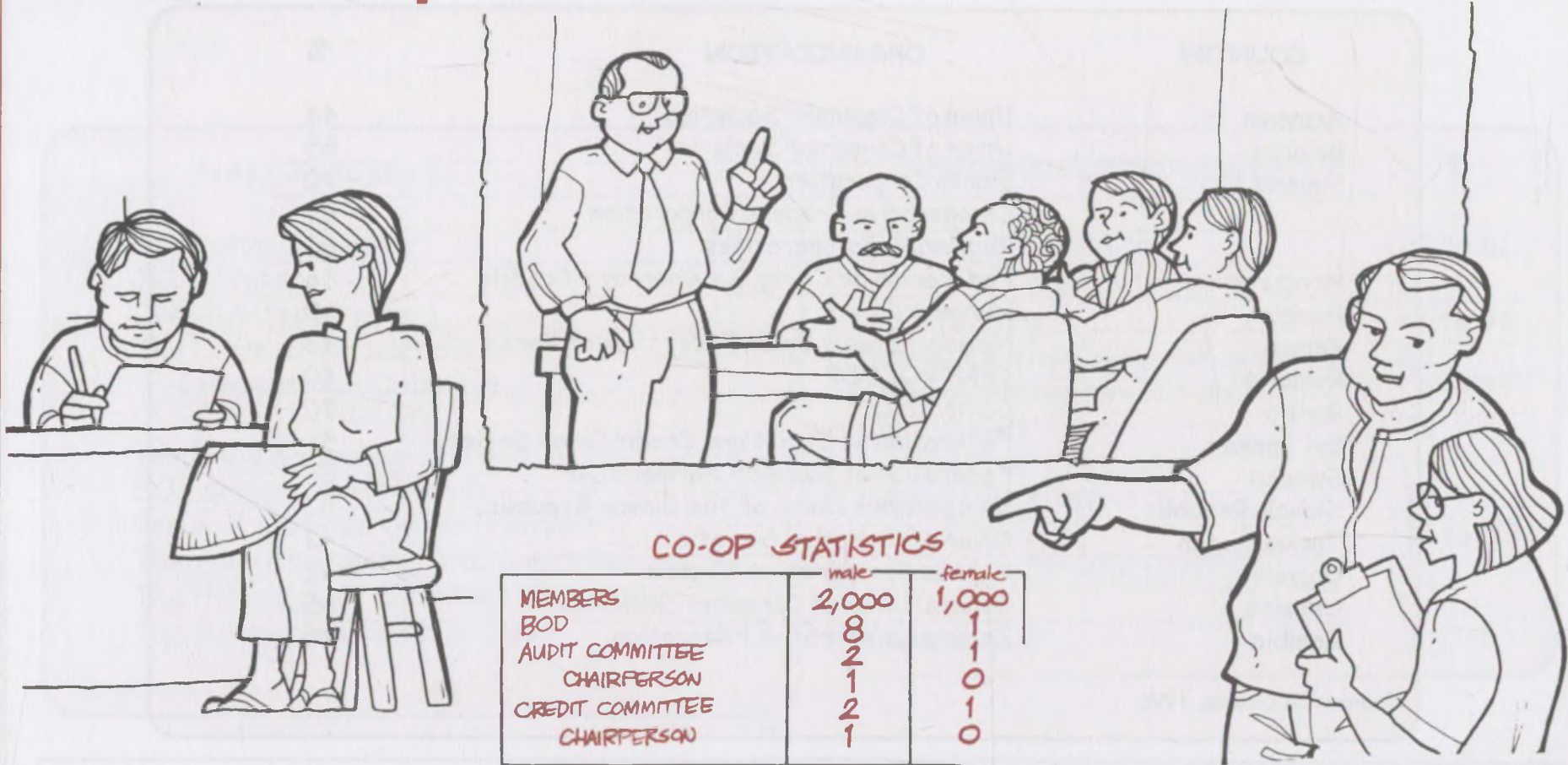


Note to the Trainer : Read out the principles and values, and explain each of them. Refer to Annex 1 for the complete statement of each principle. You may also choose to write down the statements and present them to the participants.



Trainer : "Co-ops provide services to their members. As a way of applying the seventh principle, *Concern for Community*, co-ops must address not only the economic needs of their members but also address those needs that co-ops do not traditionally address, such as greater participation by women in community and co-op affairs, physical safety, childcare, environment, violence against women, gender equality, etc."

The Problem: Few Women in Leadership Positions



Trainer : "Although co-operatives uphold the seven internationally held co-op principles, are established on the basis of six values, and believe in four ethical values, still there is a major problem in most co-operatives, at all levels: primary, secondary, tertiary and internationally. The problem is that there are few women in the decision-making positions in co-ops although many members are women."

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN MEMBERS IN
SPECIFIC CO-OPS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION	%
Armenia	Union of Consumer Societies	44
Belarus	Union of Consumer Societies	55
Finland	Elanto Corporation	70
	Co-operative Tradeka Corporation	54
	Regional S Co-operatives	60
Honduras	Federacion de Co-op. De Ahorroy y Credito	56
Hungary	Hungary Co-op	60
Korea	National Credit Union Federation of Korea	43
Romania	CENTROCOOP	40
Russia	Centrosoyuz	70
Sri Lanka	Federation of Thrift and Credit Co-op Society	51
Sweden	Federation of Swedish Farmers LRF	26
Slovak Republic	Co-operative Union of the Slovak Republic	52
Turkmenistan	Union of Consumer Societies	42
Uganda	Uganda Co-operative Alliance	42
Ukraine	General Union of Consumer Societies	65
Zambia	Zambia Co-operative Federation	25

Source: ICA Geneva, 1996

Note to the Trainer : Present and explain the statistics.

Trainer : "Let us look at the participation of women in membership and decision-making bodies of different types of levels of co-ops in various countries. There are many statistics that show there are few women in decision-making positions in co-ops and in society, in general."

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION
IN CO-OP BOARDS AND MANAGEMENT

NATIONAL LEVEL	%
Centrosoyuz (Russia)	50
JCCU (Japan)	6
CWS (United Kingdom)	13
The Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (Norway)	14
Co-op Elanto (Finland)	43
Tradeka Corporation (Finland)	14
SOK Corporation (Finland)	17
Regional S Co-operatives (Finland)	9
The Folksam General Insurance (Sweden)	33
The Folksam Life Insurance (Sweden)	31
The Belorussian Republic Union	26

Source: ICA-Geneva, 1996

REGIONAL/LOCAL LEVELS	%
Belorussian Republican Union of Consumer Society	28 to 61
JCCU (Japan)	66 to 94
Latvian Central Co-operation Union	28
Union of Agricultural Co-operatives Centrosoyuz (women chair of regional unions/societies)	8 to 21 59 36
General Union of Consumer Societies (Ukraine)	44 to 55

Source: ICA-Geneva, 1996

Note to the Trainer : Present and explain the statistics.

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN
SPECIFIC CO-OPS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION	%
Belarus	Union of Consumer Societies	70
Costa Rica	Federacion Nacional de Cooperativas Ahorro Credito y Servicios Multiples	30
Finland	Elanto Corporation	76
	Co-operative Tradeka Corporation	90
Honduras	Federacion de Coop. De Ahorro y Credito	35
Hungary	Hungary Co-op	80
Korea	National Credit Union Federation of Korea	65
Latvia	Central Co-operation Union Turiba	74
Japan	Japanese Consumers' Credit Union	66
Russia	Centrosoyuz	70
Sweden	Folksam	50
	HSB Riksforbund	47
Switzerland	Co-op Switzerland	59
Uganda	Uganda Co-operative Alliance	10
Ukraine	General Union of Consumer Societies	71
United Kingdom	Co-operative Wholesale Society	60

Source: ICA-Geneva, 1996

Note to the Trainer : Present and explain the statistics.

Japanese Consumers' Credit Union (JCCU) (as of 1997)

AREAS	% FEMALE	% MALE
Membership	96	4
Board of Directors	65	35
Employees	70	30
<i>Full-time</i>	18	82
<i>Part-time</i>	94	6
Managers	2	98

National Confederation of Co-operatives (NATCCO)-Philippines (as of 1998)

AREAS	% FEMALE	% MALE
Membership	60	40
Board of Directors	35	65
Chairpersons	27	73
Employees	60	40
Managers	57	43

PERCENTAGE OF CO-OP MEMBERS, OFFICERS AND STAFF IN SELECTED SECONDARY CO-OP ORGANIZATIONS

Credit Union League of Thailand (CULT)

AREAS	% FEMALE	% MALE
<i>(as of 1997)</i>		
Members of Credit Unions (CUs)	59	41
BOD at primary CUs	35	65
BOD at national level	13	87
<i>Participation in CUs (as of 1998)</i>		
Chairperson	13	87
Vice Chairperson	19	81
Secretary	44	56
Treasurer	40	60
Executive Committee	16	84
Education Committee	26	74
Loan/Credit Committee	25	75
Supervisory Committee	25	75

Note to the Trainer : Present and explain the statistics.

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN MEMBERS
IN CREDIT UNIONS

COUNTRY	%
Bangladesh	27
Costa Rica	48
El Salvador	55
Ethiopia	32
Ghana	30
England	54
Grenada	51
Guyana	37
Korea	45
Malawi	28
New Zealand	44
Peru	22
Philippines	58
Russia	60
Seychelles	55
Sierra Leone	39
Singapore	9
Sri Lanka	51
Zambia	53

Source: WOCCU, 1995

Note to the Trainer : Present and explain the statistics.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Heads of State or Government	as of Dec. 1994, only 24 women had been voted to become heads of state or government in this century, half after 1990
Government and Cabinet	<p>1994: women were 5.7 percent of cabinet ministers (3.3 per cent in 1987)</p> <p>1994: women held no ministerial position in 59 countries (93 countries in 1987)</p> <p>1994: women held more than 15 percent of ministerial positions in only 16 countries (8 countries in 1987)</p> <p>1994: in Sweden, 52 percent of ministers were women</p>
Sub-ministerial level	1994: women held more than 15 percent of positions in 23 countries (only 14 countries in 1987)
Parliamentary representation	<p>Wide variation</p> <p>1987-1994 proportion of women declined in eastern and western Asia; strongest in northern Europe (Nordic countries)</p>
Overall	<p>Women's representation at highest levels of government: weakest in Asia</p> <p>In southern Asia, women held 5-6 percent of senior positions; but in other regions of Asia, women held not more than 2 percent; women most represented in social, law and justice ministries</p> <p>1991 formation of International Association of Women Judges</p>

Source: UN/World's Women, 1995

Trainer : "In most societies in the world, there are few women in leadership and decision-making positions."

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING 1990 AND 1995

	HDI Rank	Women in Government 1995		Total	Administrators & Managers 1990 % Female	Professional & Technical 1990 % Female
		Ministerial	Sub-Ministerial			
Japan	3	7	9	8	9	42
Australia	11	14	27	23	43	25
New Zealand	14	7	20	17	32	48
Thailand	52	4	5	4	22	52
Korea	29	3	1	2	4	5
Singapore	34	0	7	5	34	16
Fiji	47	9	11	10	10	45
Malaysia	53	8	5	6	12	45
Iran Islam	66	0	1	0.4	4	33
Philippines	95	8	26	24	34	63
Lao PDR	138	0	4	3	-	-
Vietnam	121	7	2	4	-	-
Myanmar	133	0	0	0	-	-
Pakistan	134	4	1	2	3	20
India	135	4	6	6	2	21
Bangladesh	143	5	3	3	5	23
Nepal	151	0	0	0	-	-
Papua New Guinea	126	0	3	2	12	30
Indonesia	102	4	1	2	7	41
China	108	11	21	16	13	48
Samoa (West)	88	7	7	7	12	47
Mongolia	113	0	9	5	-	-
Korea DP Republic of	83	13	1	1	-	-
Sri Lanka	89	0	8	9	17	25
Cambodia	156	0	7	5	-	-
Developing Countries		8	9	8	10	36
Industrial Countries		13	11	11	27	48

Source: UN/World's Women, 1995

Note to the Trainer : Present and explain the statistics.

DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES BY SEX IN THE ESCAP REGION, 1987 AND 1993

Country	Election Year (to 1987)	Upper chamber of bicameral assembly			Unicameral assembly or lower chamber of bicameral assembly			As at 30 June 1993	Upper chamber of bicameral assembly			Unicameral assembly or lower chamber of bicameral assembly		
		Total Number of Seats	Number of seats occupied by		Total Number of Seats	Number of seats occupied by			Total Number of Seats	Number of seats occupied by		Total Number of Seats	Number of seats occupied by	
			Men	Women		Men	Women			Men	Women		Men	Women
Australia	1987	76	60	16	148	139	9		76	60	16	147	135	12
Bangladesh	1986				330	300	30					330	296	34
Brunei Darussalam														
Cambodia												120	115	5
China	1983				2978	2346	632					2978	2352	626
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	1986				655	517	138					687	549	138
Fiji									34	31	3	70	69	1
India	1987/84	245	213	28	544	472	43		232	215	17	531	492	39
Indonesia	1987				500	438	62					500	439	61
Iran	1984				270	265	4					261	252	9
Japan	1986	252	229	22	512	505	7		252	215	37	512	500	12
Lao People's Democratic Republic												85	77	8
Malaysia	1987/86	69	48	10	177	168	9		69	59	10	180	171	9
Myanmar	1985				489									
Nepal	1986				140	129	8		60	60	0	205	198	7
New Zealand	1987				97	83	14					97	81	16
Pakistan	1985	87	87	0	237	216	21		87	86	1	207	205	2
Papua New Guinea	1987				109	109	0					109	109	0
Philippines	1987	24	22	2	200	182	18		24	20	4	199	178	21
Republic of Korea	1985				276	268	8					299	296	3
Singapore	1984				79	76	3					81	78	3
Solomon Island	1984				38	38	0					47	47	0
Sri Lanka	1977				168	160	4					225	214	11
Tajikistan												230	223	7
Thailand	1987/86	260	255	5	347	335	12		270	272	8	360	345	15
Tonga	1987				29	29	0					30	29	1
Turkmenistan												175	167	8
Tuvalu												13	12	1
Uzbekistan												500	452	48
Vanuatu	1987				46	44	2					46	46	0
Vietnam	1987				496	408	88					395	322	73

Sources: UN Women's Indicators and Statistics Microcomputer Database (MNSD), Version 1 (May 1991), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Women in Parliament, (1993)

Note to the Trainer : Present and explain the statistics. However, the information might not be of interest or relevance to village-level co-ops. Thus, it might not be necessary to elaborate on these figures.

Cause (in society) #1: Cultural beliefs and difference in ways of bringing up boys and girls that make girls inferior to boys and less involved in public life

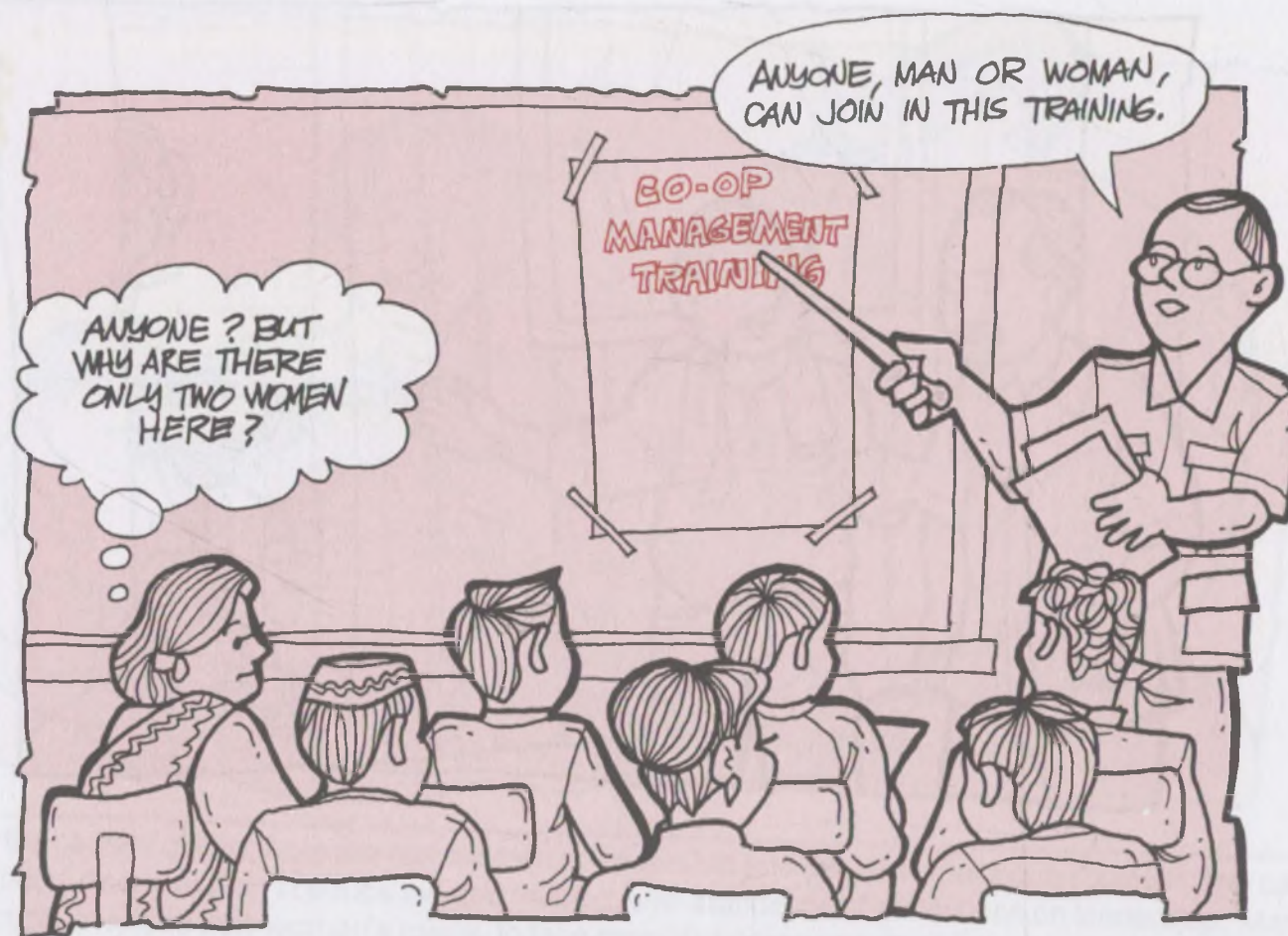


Trainer : “What are the causes of why there are few women in leadership and decision-making in society? The causes are cultural beliefs, discrimination in education and training, and standards of institutions on leadership. Many cultural beliefs support the idea that women’s role is to take care of children and the home while men’s role is to find income to support the family and participate in community activities. In short, women should have private roles while men should have public roles. Most societies put lesser value on the private roles done by women and more value on the public roles done by men. Thus, females are brought up in a way that make them inferior to males.



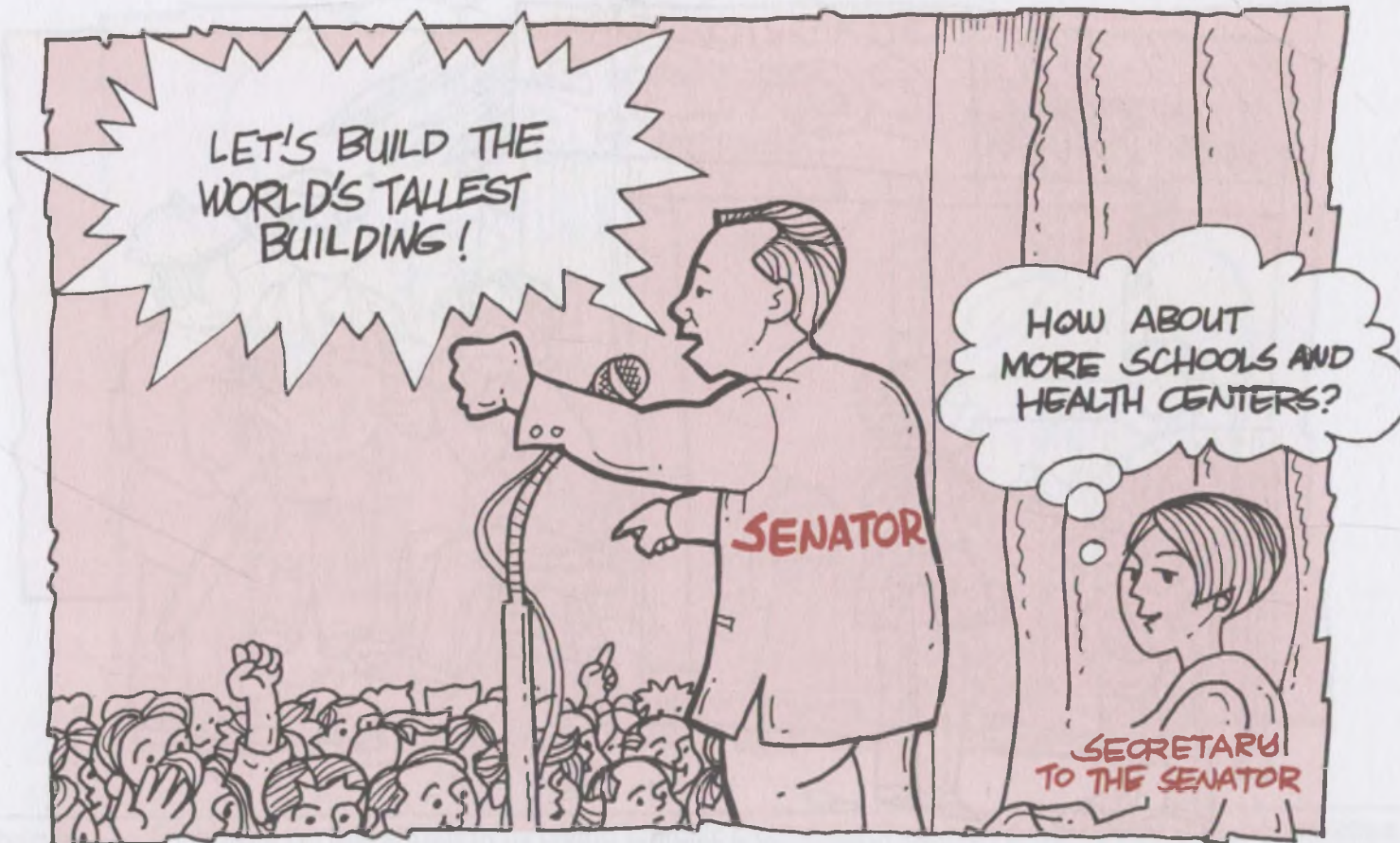
Trainer : "In some cultures, women are not allowed to entertain people outside of their household. This practice inhibits women from participating in community affairs such as being a member of a co-op. We are not saying that this practice is good or bad, we are just pointing out that this would restrict women from participating in co-op affairs."

Cause (in society) #2: Limited opportunities for education and training for women



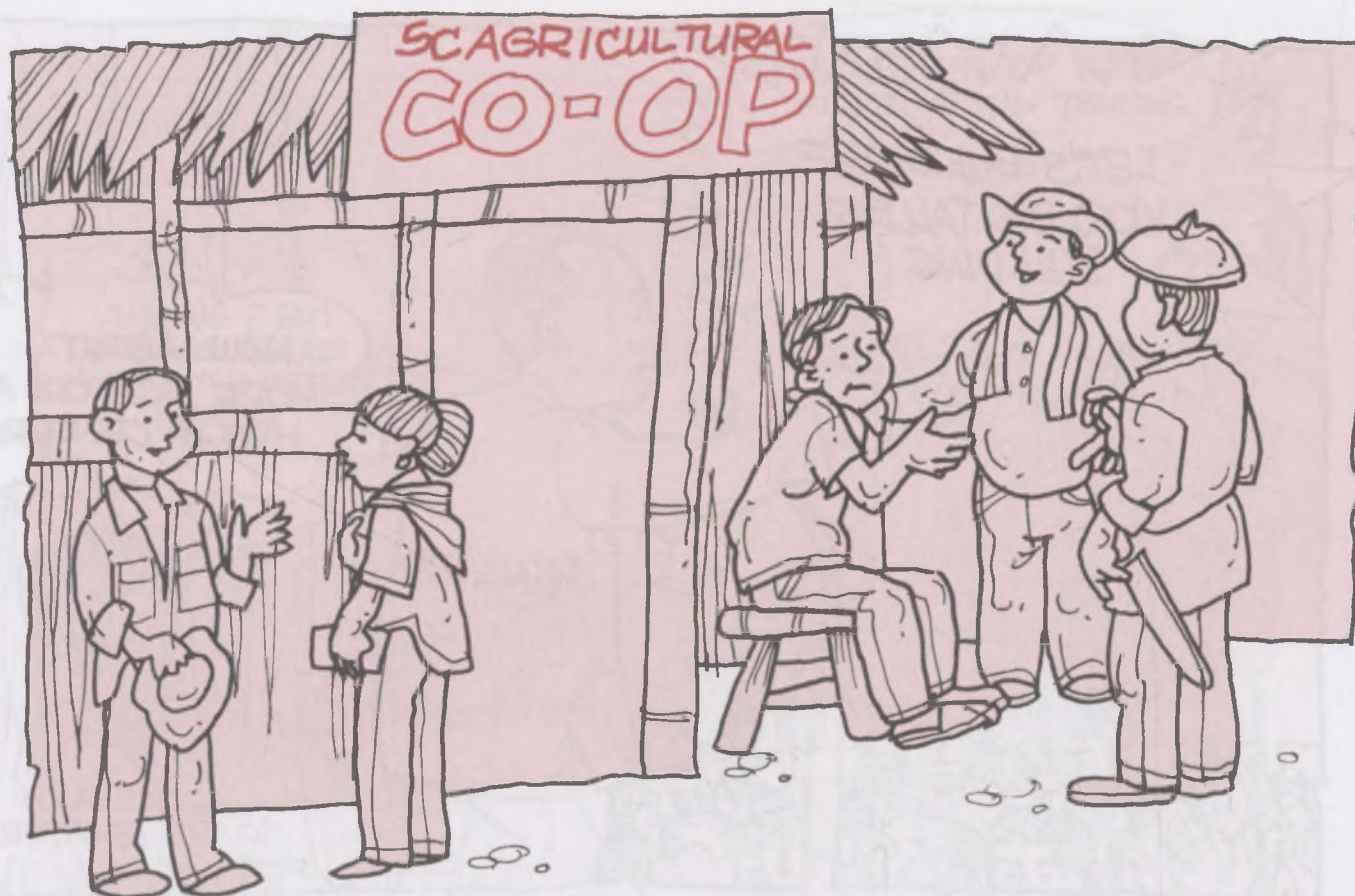
Trainer : "In many cases, men are given priority in providing opportunities for education and training, especially in management and technical subjects."

Cause (in society) #3: Institutional standards are governed by male norms & preferences



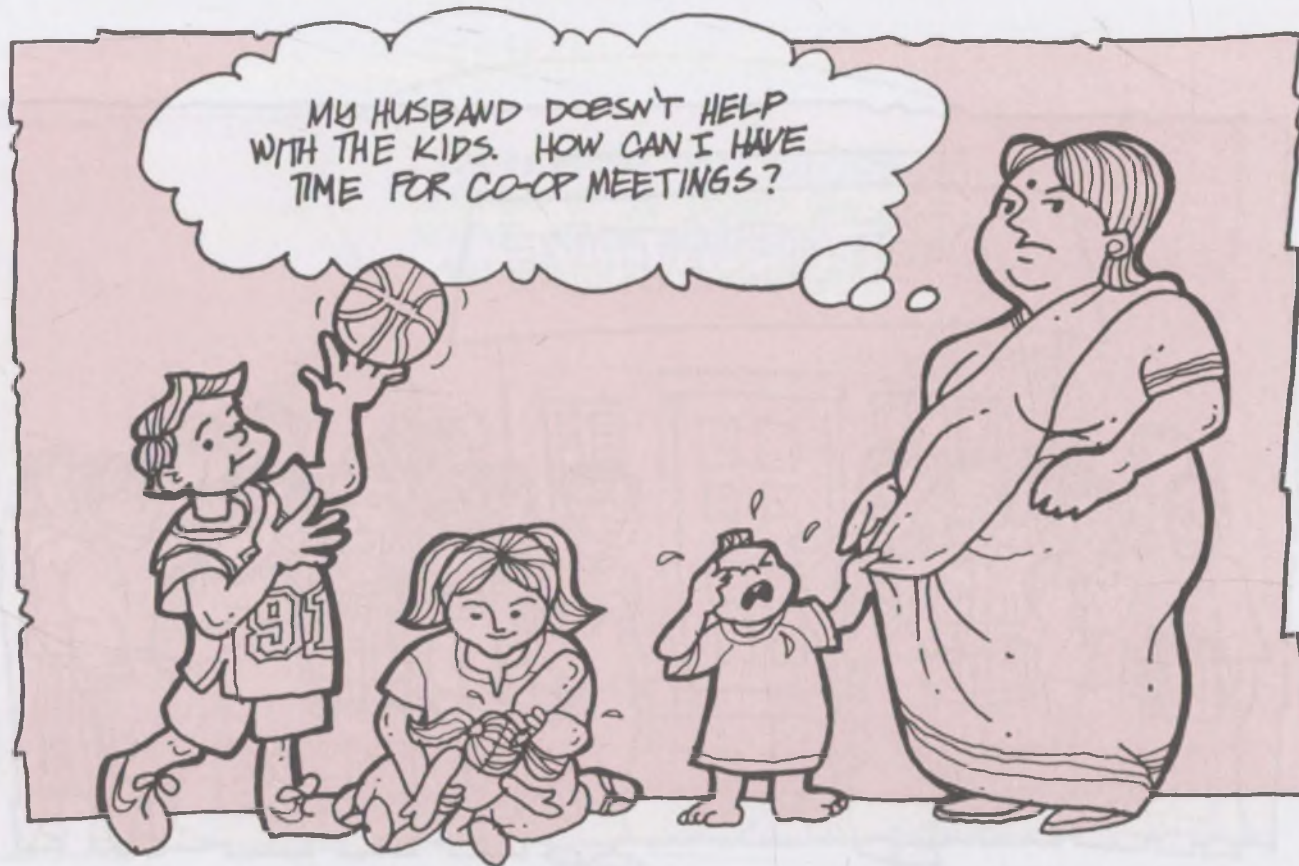
Trainer : "Because in most cases, men hold positions of power and decision-making, they determine the priorities of organizations, communities, and society, in general. This may even be true in the family. Because of their upbringing where they are taught more to think about matters outside of the family, men tend to think less about matters that benefit families directly such as education, health care, and child care."

Cause (in co-ops) #1: Few women members in some types of co-ops



Trainer : "What are the causes of why there are few women in leadership and decision-making in co-ops? One cause is that in some types of co-ops, for example, agricultural co-ops, there are very few women members because by tradition, only men are considered farmers and not women, too."

Cause (in co-ops) #2: Co-ops do not take into full account reproductive roles traditionally borne by women



Note to the Trainer : Elaborate on this situation by giving specific examples of women's reproductive responsibilities.

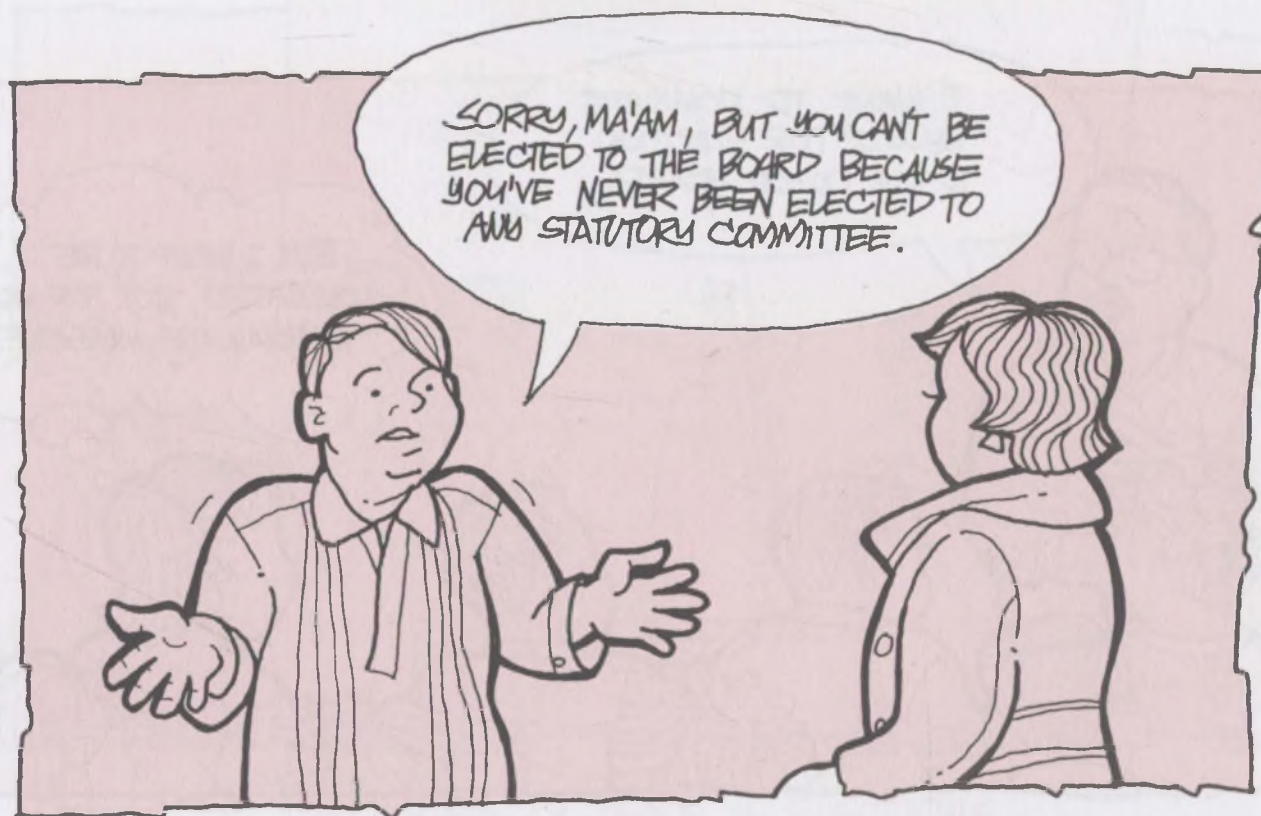
Trainer : "Co-ops—in their planning, in implementing activities and in choosing what services to provide to members—do not take into account the fact that women are traditionally responsible for taking care of children, preparing food, keeping the house clean, and other chores. These tasks traditionally borne by women reduce their time for co-op work such as being an elected officer. For example, when a co-op does not schedule its Board meeting during times when women are freer from their housework, then women would not want to be in the Board."

Cause (in co-ops) # 3: More men get elected as officers than women

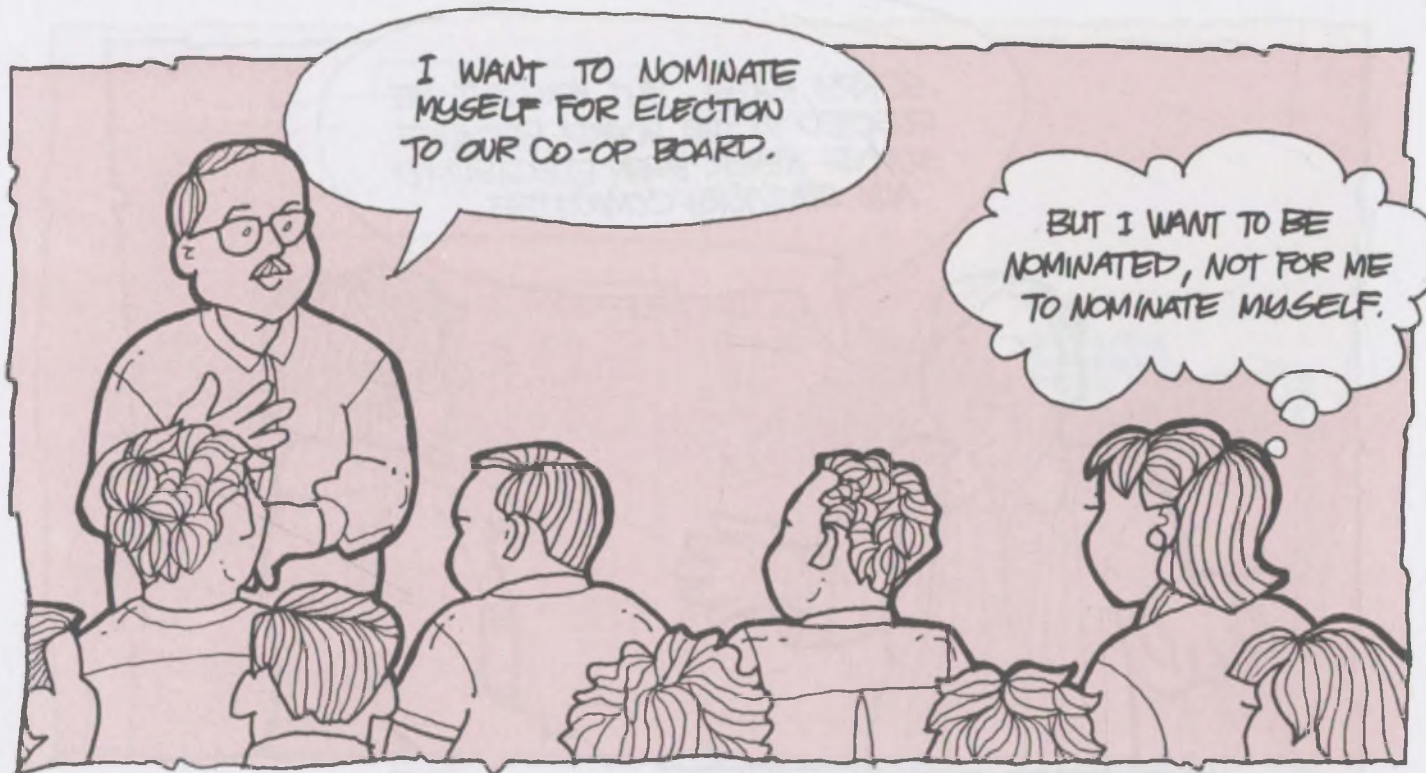


Trainer : "Most people have the traditional view that men are more fit to be leaders and, thus, they tend to elect men and not women as officers. Therefore, although there are many or, in some cases, more female than male members in many co-ops, still, more men than women get elected. This means that more female members elect men and not women to be co-op officers."

Cause (in co-ops) #4: Co-op standards and procedures restrict women's opportunities to be in leadership in co-ops



Trainer : "Some co-ops require that a member must have served a certain number of years in an elected position before she/he can get into the Board. This practice discriminates against members who have no or have limited prior experience in an elected position. Between women and men, in general, more women will not be able to meet this requirement."



Trainer : "Men and women have different styles in communicating their desire to lead. Men tend to be more direct whereas women are not."

Cause (in co-ops) # 5: Leadership practices in co-ops make it difficult for women to carry out their leadership duties.



ALL BOYS' NETWORK AT WORK IN ELECTIONS

Trainer : "In general, men have more experience in strategizing on how to win elections. The "all-boys' network" automatically works whereby men campaign among themselves to get votes. Women, on the other hand, have less experience on how to win elections. They are more reluctant at campaigning for themselves."



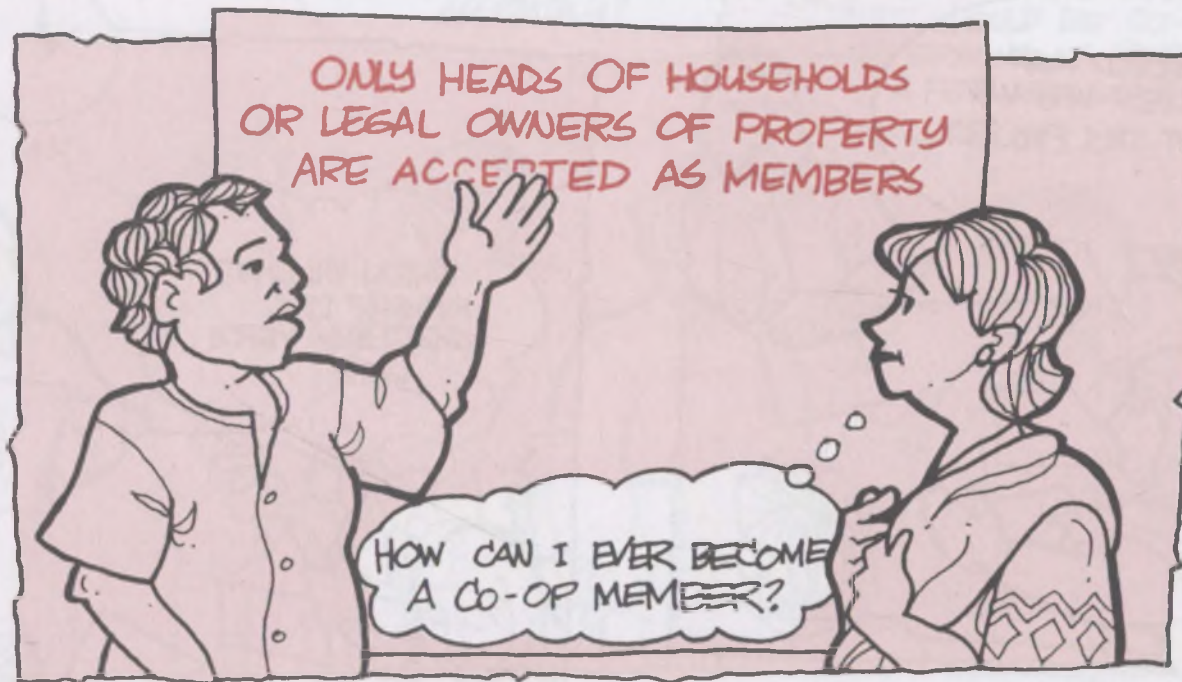
Trainer : "Many co-ops have the practice of having the chairperson as the automatic representative to the General Assembly of the federation. Because of this practice, women have less chances of getting into the federation because only few women are chairpersons of their co-ops."

Cause (in co-ops) # 5: Leadership practices in co-ops make it difficult for women to carry out their leadership duties



Trainer : "Board meetings are usually held at night and run for hours. Women are more vulnerable to physical violence, and, thus, are more concerned about physical safety than men are. Women continue to fulfill their household responsibilities while fulfilling their leadership duties in the co-op."

Cause (in co-ops) # 6: Some co-op laws and policies restrict women's membership in co-ops



Note to Trainer : Provide other examples of co-op laws or co-op policies that restrict women's membership in co-ops.

Cause (in co-ops) # 7: Training on areas such as finance, technology and management are given mostly to men rather than to women



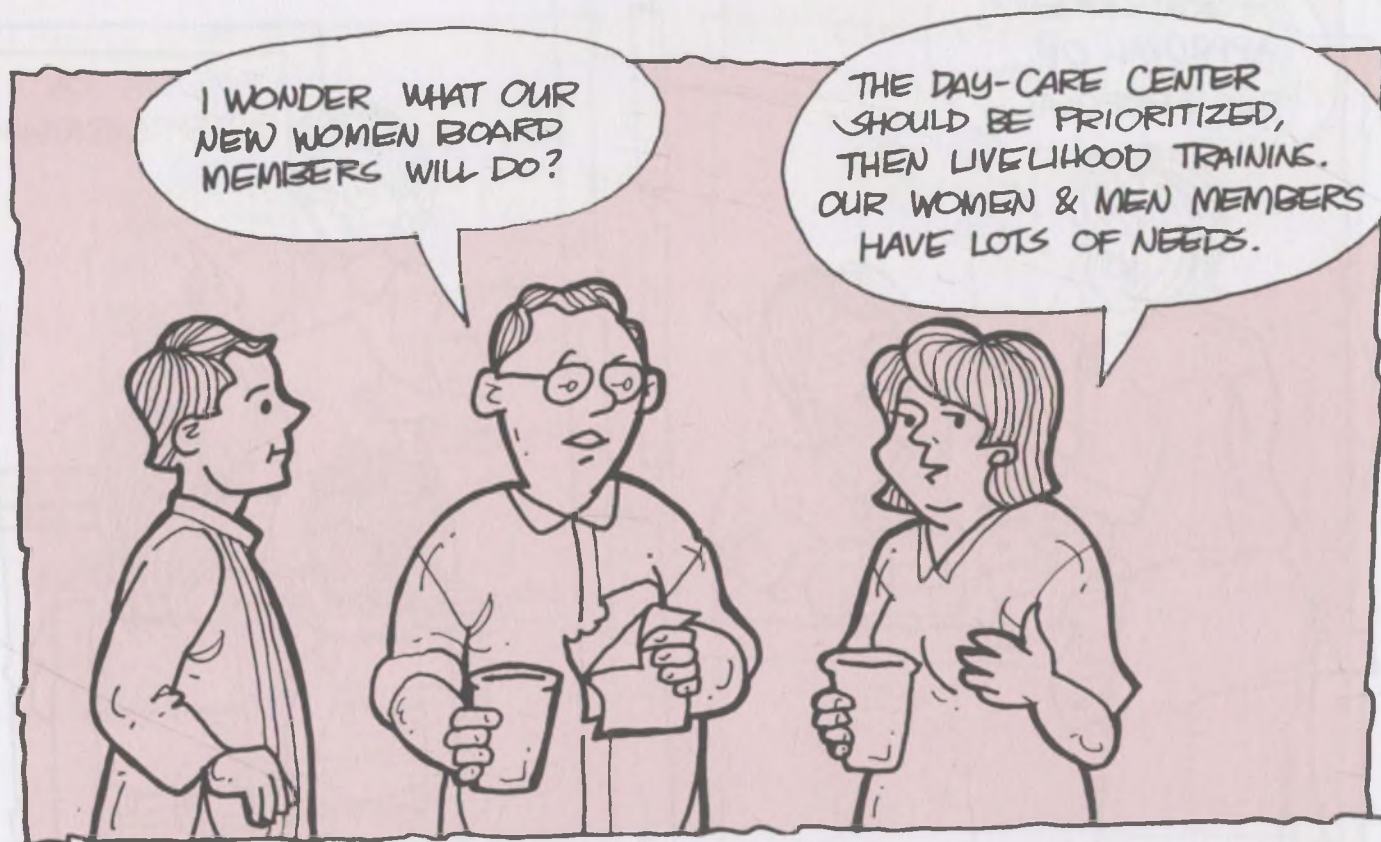
Note to Trainer : Elaborate on the situation illustrated by giving examples from actual cases.

Why Should Women Be in Leadership and Decision-Making in Co-ops?



**REASON #1: EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN
DECISION-MAKING BY WOMEN AND MEN.**

Trainer : "If an organization is to be democratic and if women are to be considered equal to men, then both women and men must have equal share of power and participation in decision-making."



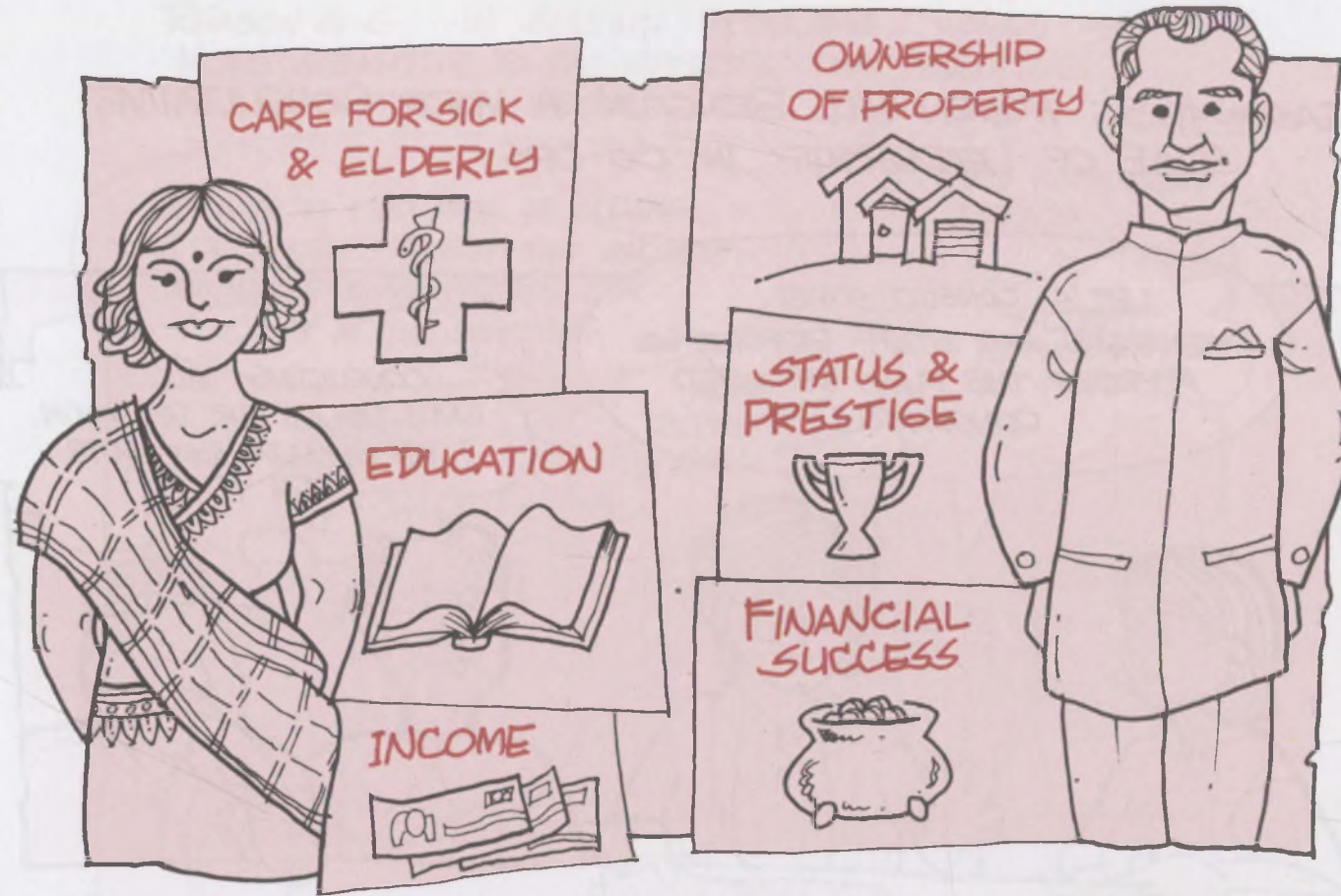
REASON # 2 : WOMEN CAN REPRESENT WOMEN'S NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS BETTER THAN MEN.

Trainer : "There is no true democracy if elected officials are not able to represent the needs and aspirations of those who are supposed to represent their constituencies or members. Women are better able than men to represent and articulate women's needs and aspirations to the co-ops."



REASON #3: WOMEN ARE HALF CO-OPS' POOL OF TALENT AND ABILITY.

Trainer : "Women possess lots of talents and skills that when utilized will benefit co-ops. As women bring different perspectives and experience, co-ops will be enriched and will benefit from their contribution as leaders. 'Being enriched and being benefited' means that co-ops will become more successful as businesses, and that they will be more aware and responsive to needs that co-ops don't traditionally address, such as health care, literacy, child care, etc."



REASON #4: WOMEN AND MEN HAVE DIFFERENT PRIORITIES.

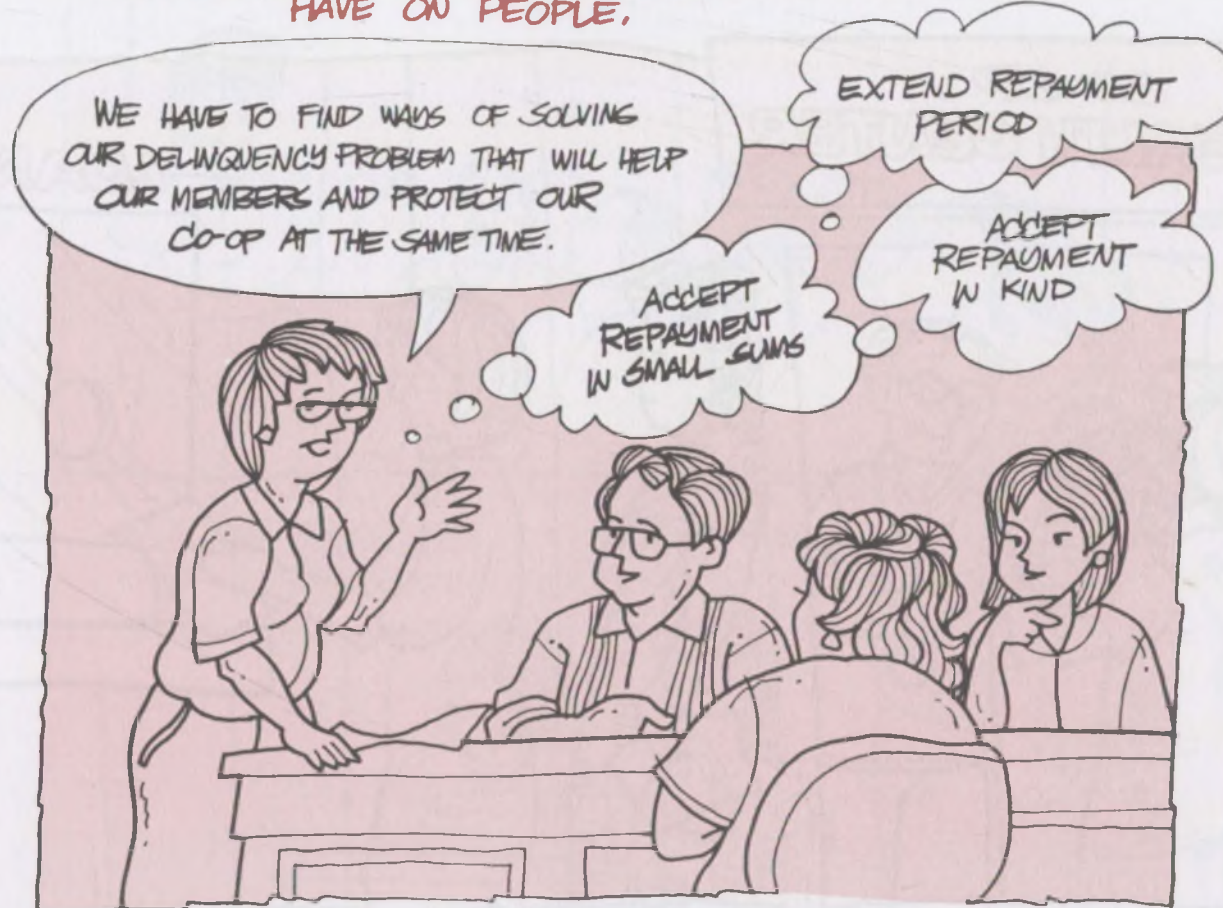
Trainer : "Women being brought up differently and having different roles, have different needs. Women, therefore, are more aware of their own needs and are better able to press for them. Some of these needs are: proper provision for care of children and care for those who are dependent like the old, the sick and other physically dependent people; education; and having and freely using their own income."

REASON #5 : WOMEN WILL BRING IN A MORE CONSULTATIVE STYLE OF LEADERSHIP IN CO-OPS.



Trainer : "Women tend to be more consultative and process-oriented whereas men tend to be more dictatorial and efficiency-oriented."

REASON # 6: IN SOLVING PROBLEMS, WOMEN ARE MORE SENSITIVE TO THE EFFECTS THAT SOLUTIONS HAVE ON PEOPLE.



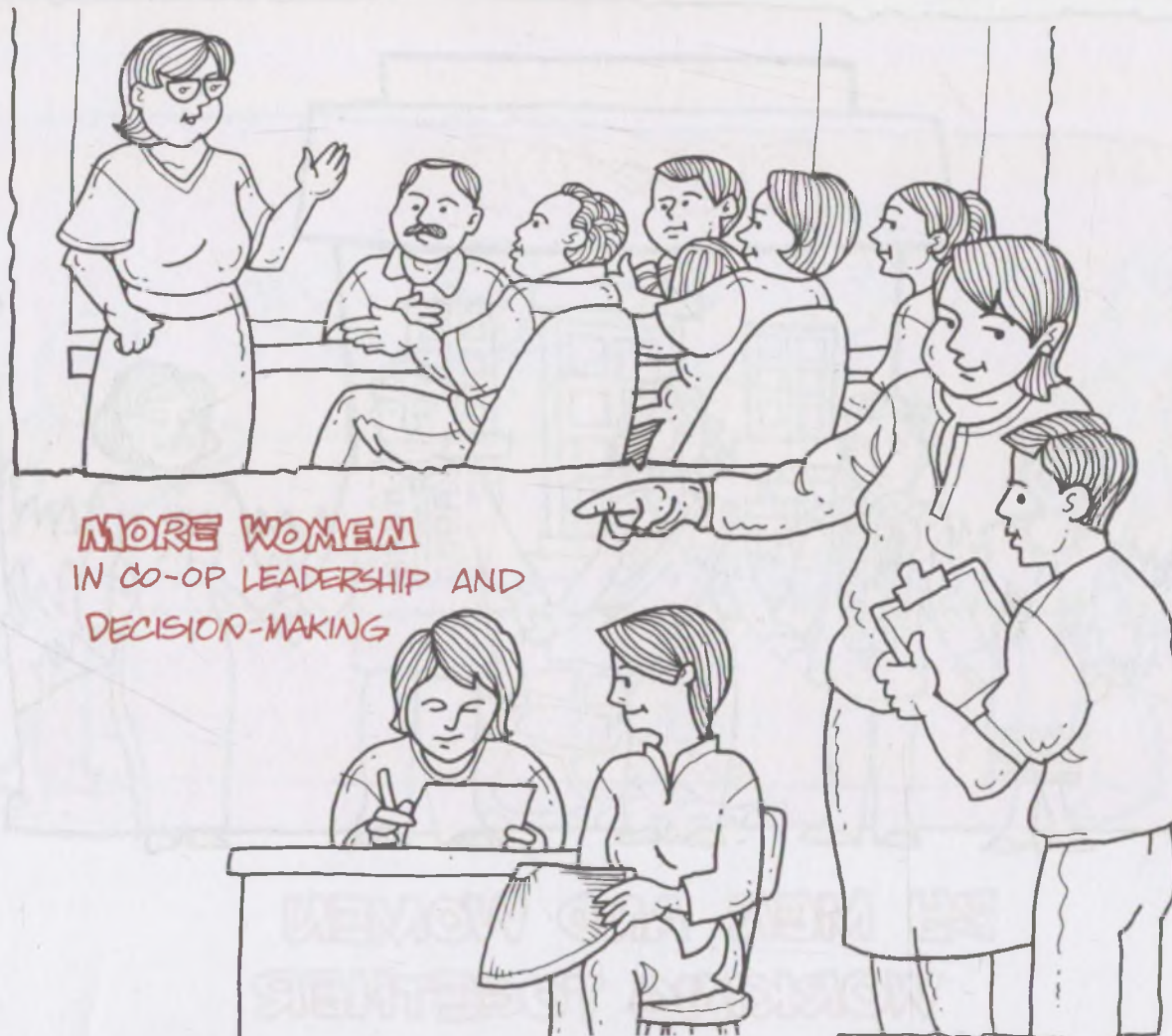
Trainer : "Women tend to find ways of solving problems that make people happy and not simply because policies or rules say so. For example, the female chairperson of a community-based co-op convinced her Board not to raise loan interest rates despite the currency devaluation. She also led in developing innovative repayment schemes, such as extending repayment periods, accepting in-kind repayment for loans received in cash, and accepting repayment in small sums. These schemes greatly helped the co-op members, both men and women. The members were happy and the co-op gained."

Vision: A more caring co-operative responsive to women's and men's different needs and aspirations



Trainer : "Our vision is that of co-operative that goes beyond the community's and the members' economic needs that co-operatives traditionally address, such as need for credit, consumer goods, marketing of products, etc., to the social needs and concerns of the community and co-op members, such as greater political participation by women in community and co-op affairs, equality between women and men, childcare, physical safety, etc."

Goal: To increase women's representation and participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives



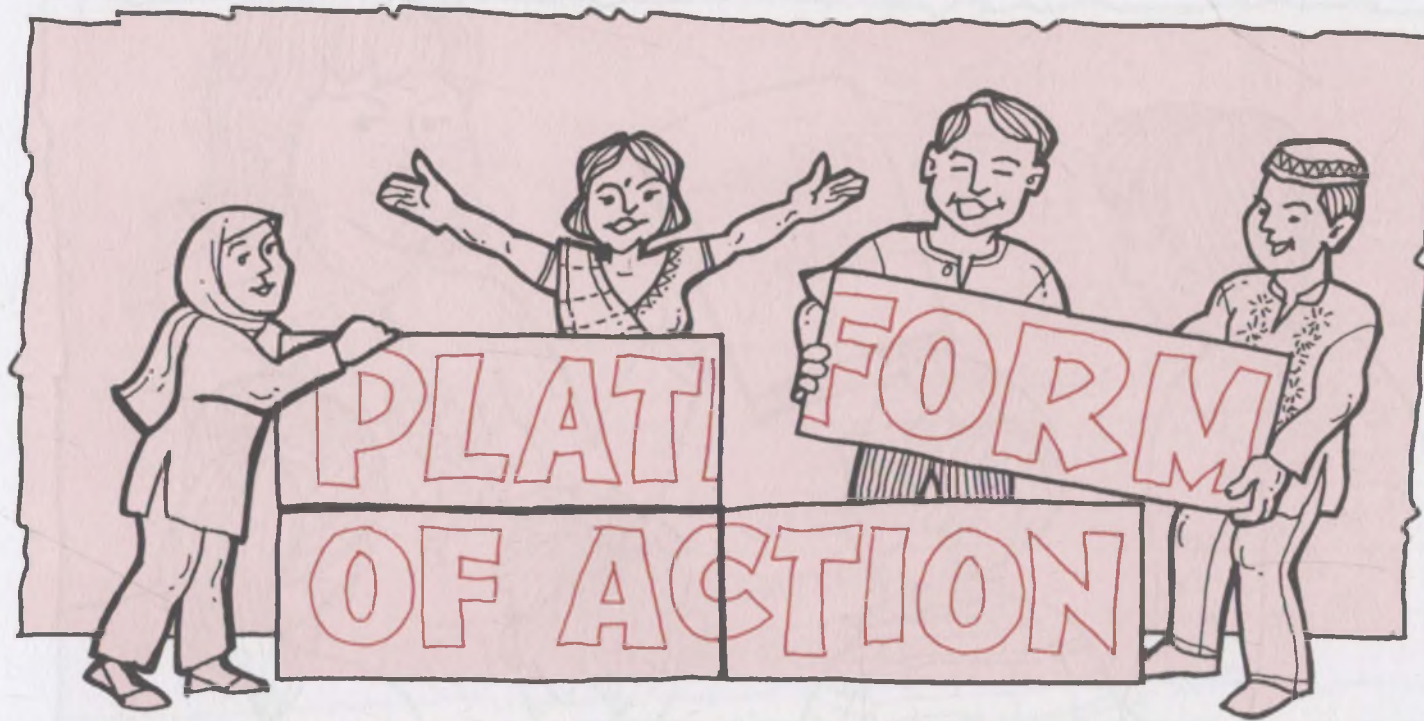
Trainer : "What is our goal? Our goal is to increase women's representation and participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives at all levels."

How Can We Achieve Our Vision?



**BY MEN AND WOMEN
WORKING TOGETHER**

Trainer : "How can women's representation & participation in co-op leadership be increased? First, by men and women working together."

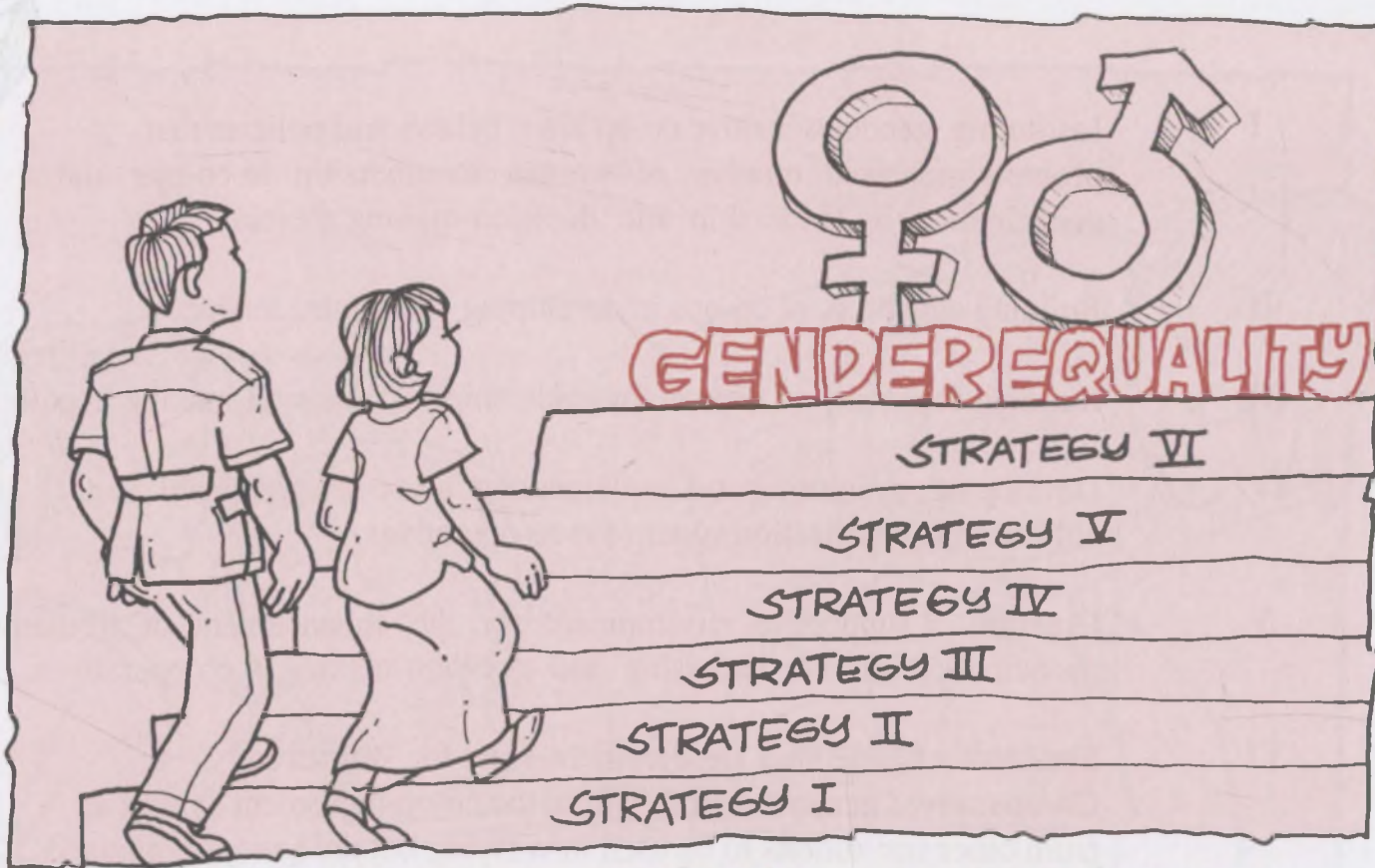


Trainer : "Second, by implementing the Platform of Action."

How Can We Achieve Our Vision?



Trainer : “The Platform of Action is an agenda to increase women’s representation and participation in leadership and decision-making in co-ops.”



THE PLATFORM OF ACTION IS A SERIES OF STEPS FOR ACTION

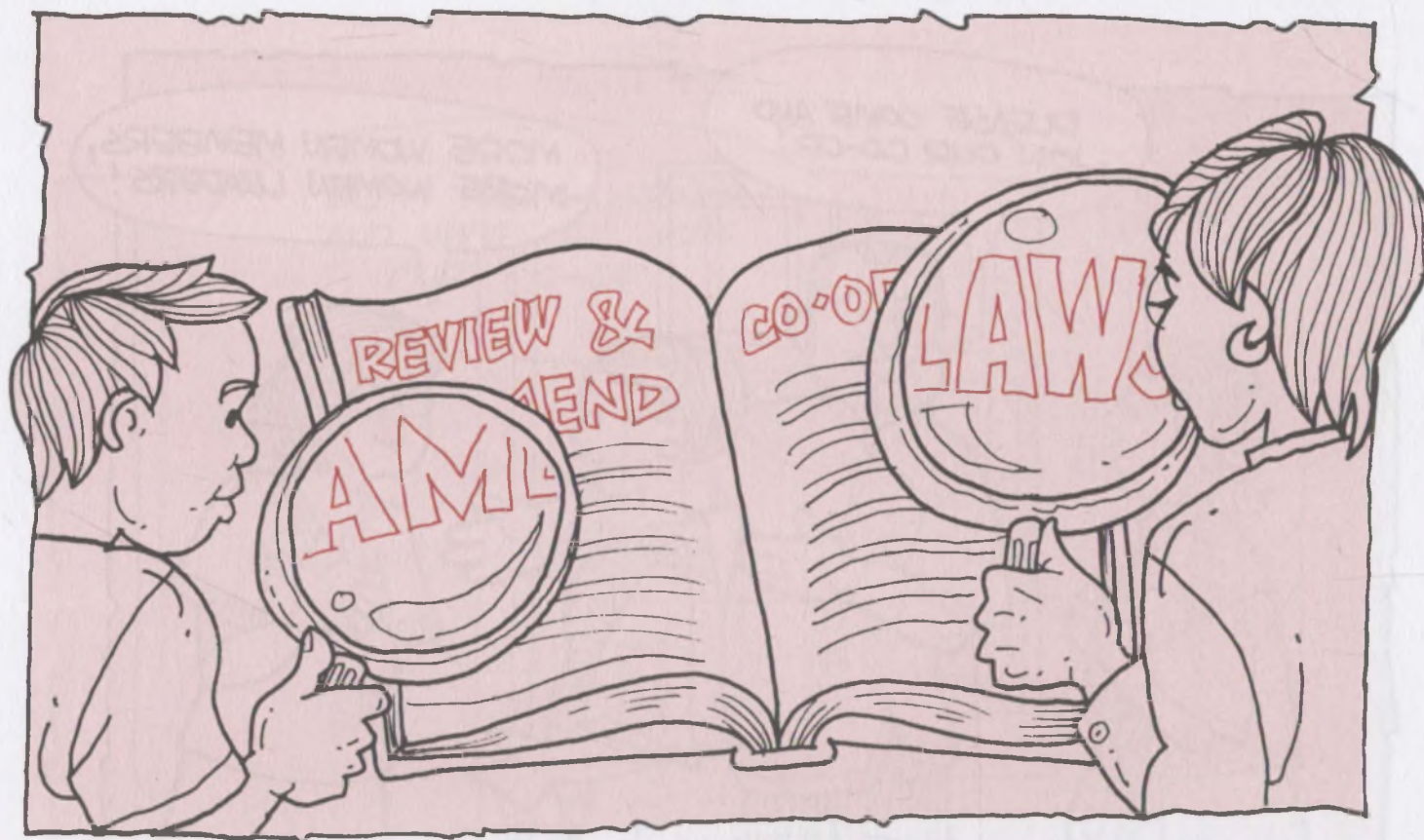
Trainer : "The Platform of Action is a guide or a series of steps to increase women's representation and participation in leadership and decision-making in co-ops."



- STRATEGY I** : Instituting gender-sensitive co-op laws, bylaws and policies that promote increased number of women membership in co-ops and participation in leadership and decision-making therein.
- STRATEGY II** : Building capability of co-ops in developing women leadership.
- STRATEGY III** : Building capability of women for leadership and decision-making in co-ops.
- STRATEGY IV** : Developing, promoting and implementing a sex-disaggregated data collection and utilization system for co-operatives.
- STRATEGY V** : Creating a supportive environment for the enhancement of women's participation in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives.
- STRATEGY VI** : Establish a Leadership Development Fund for Women in Co-operatives generated from within the co-op movement as well as from other institutions to be used in carrying out the actions contained in this Platform of Action.

Trainer : "What steps for action does the Platform of Action propose? The Platform of Action proposes six strategies and under each strategy are specific action steps."

Strategy I - Actions for governments and co-ops at all levels



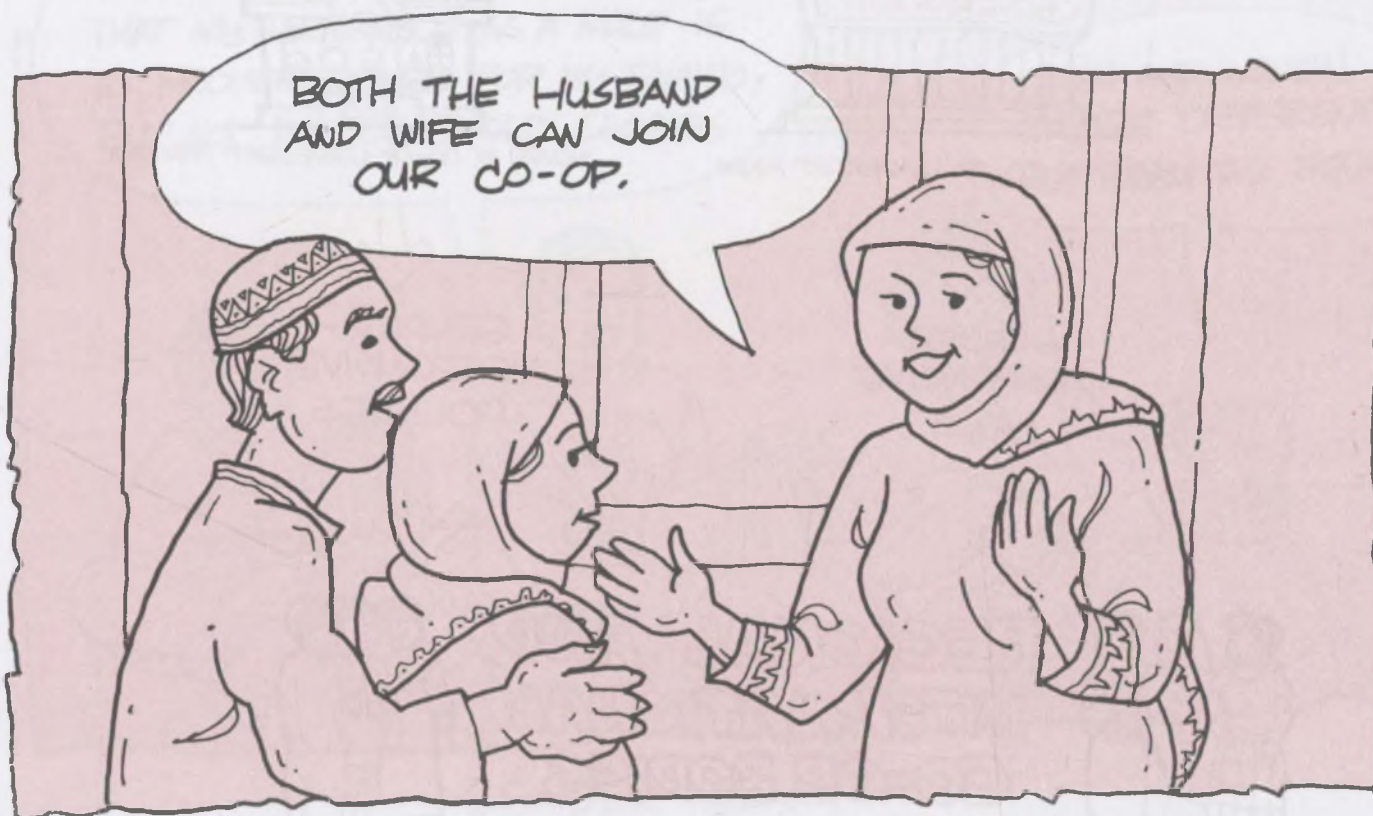
Trainer : “Now, let us find out what specific action steps the Platform of Action proposes so that there will be more women leaders in our co-ops. Strategy I says that Governments, and all types of co-ops at all levels—primary, secondary, tertiary, regionally and internationally—must review co-op laws and other co-op policies from a gender perspective and amend these laws if they restrict women from becoming members or leaders of co-ops.”

Strategy I - Actions for governments and co-ops at all levels



Trainer : "Strategy I also says that Governments and all types of co-ops at all levels—primary, secondary, tertiary, regionally and internationally—must actively recruit more women to become members and leaders of co-ops."

Strategy I - Actions for governments and co-ops at all levels



Trainer : "The other action proposed in Strategy I is that Governments and all types of co-ops at all levels—primary, secondary, tertiary, regionally and internationally—must encourage joint membership of couples in a household."

Strategy I - Actions for governments and NGOs



Trainer : "Strategy I also proposes that Governments and NGOs support regional and international co-op bodies that promote the increase of women in leadership in co-ops."

Strategy II - Actions for primary co-ops



GENDER-SENSITIVITY TRAINING FOR CO-OPERATORS

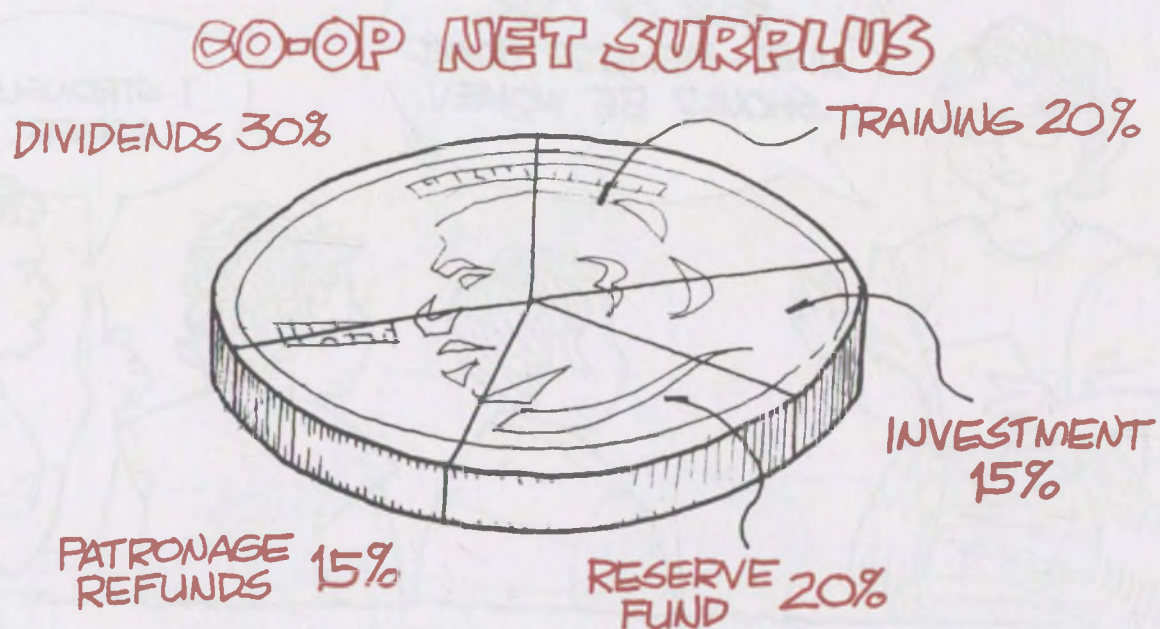
Trainer : "Now, let's look at Strategy II and find out what action steps it proposes. It says that co-operatives at primary and national levels must conduct gender-sensitivity training."

Strategy II - Actions for primary co-ops



Trainer : "In some cases, it is necessary to have a separate gender-sensitivity training for men only."

Strategy II - Actions for co-ops at all levels



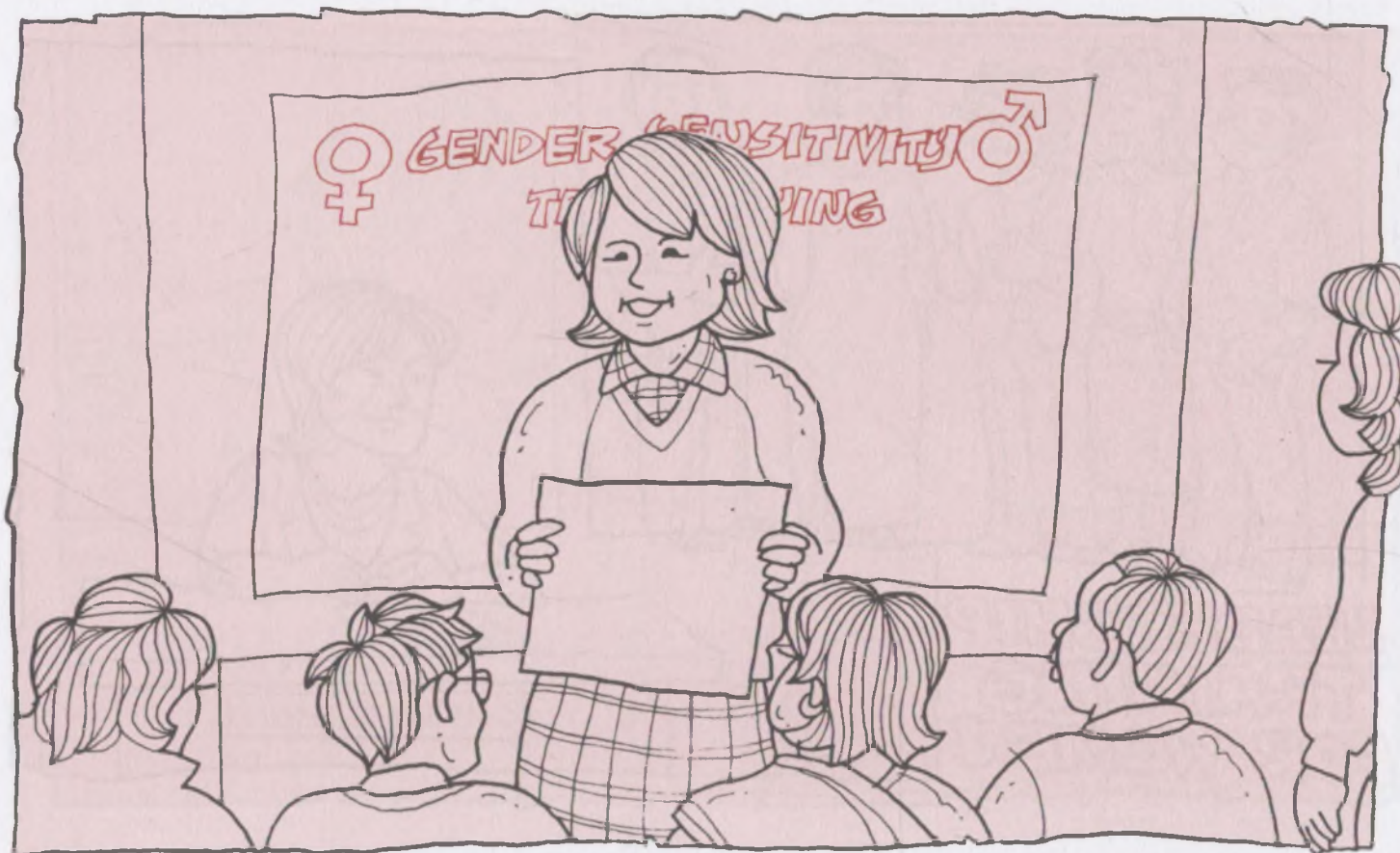
Trainer : "Strategy II also proposes that all types of co-ops at all levels—primary, secondary, tertiary, regionally and internationally—must provide technical, material, human and financial resources for training of trainers on women leadership."

Strategy II - Actions for primary co-ops



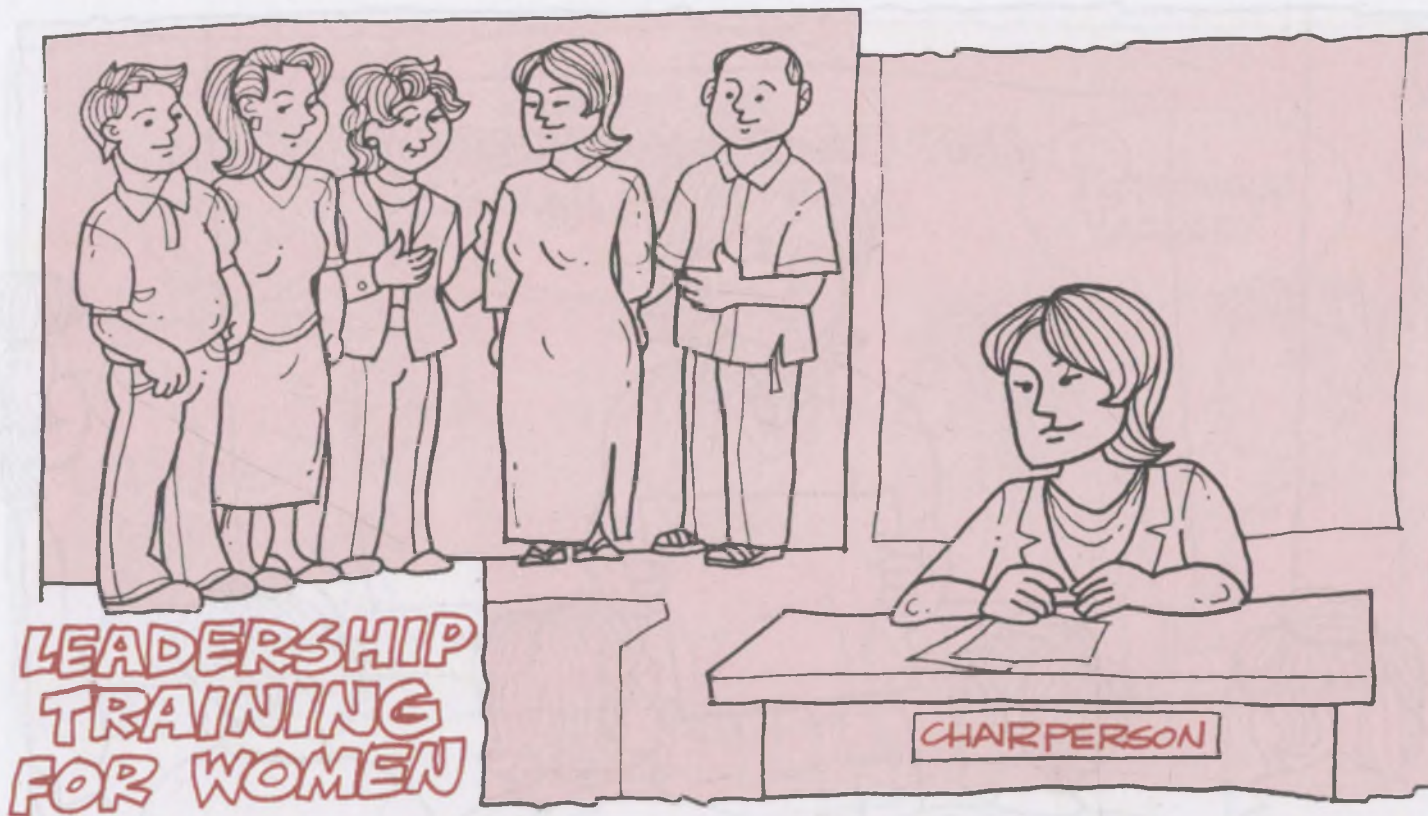
Trainer : "Supporting the quota system is also proposed in Strategy II. Quota system means that a specific number of seats are allocated for women in a body or position, say in the Board of Directors."

Strategy III - Actions for primary co-ops



Trainer : "What actions does Strategy III propose? One is gender-sensitivity training for women members and leaders."

Strategy III - Actions for primary co-ops



Trainer : "Another action is training for women members on leadership. One training is to enable women to have the skills to become leaders. The other is training for women to become effective in performing their roles as leaders. We believe that women will bring in a new model of leadership in co-operatives."

Strategy III - Actions for primary co-ops



MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Trainer : "Training women co-op staff as well as prospective or incumbent women leaders on co-op and business management."

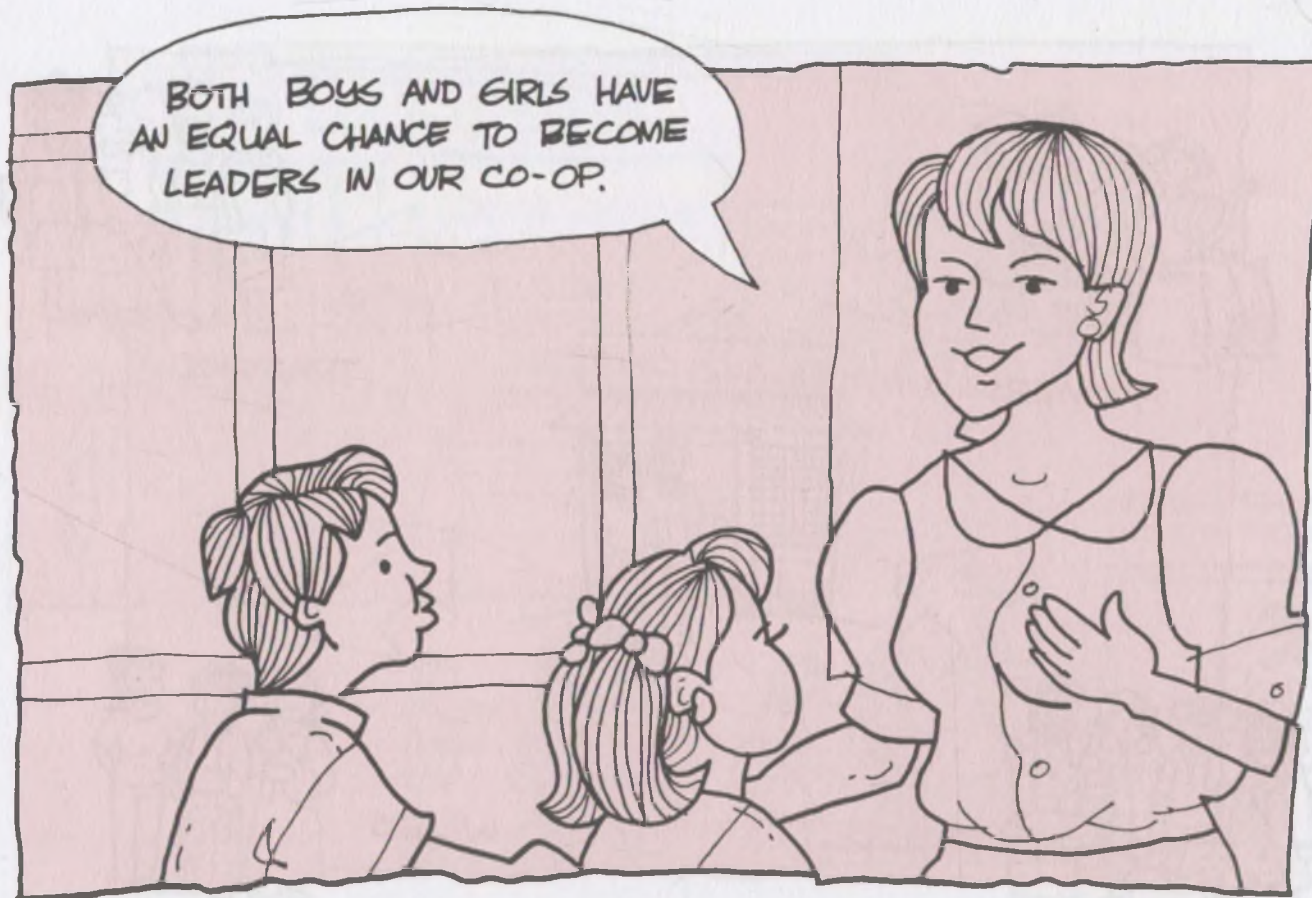
Strategy III - Actions for primary co-ops



**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR
CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

Trainer : "Another action is providing equal opportunities for career advancement to female and male staff of co-ops."

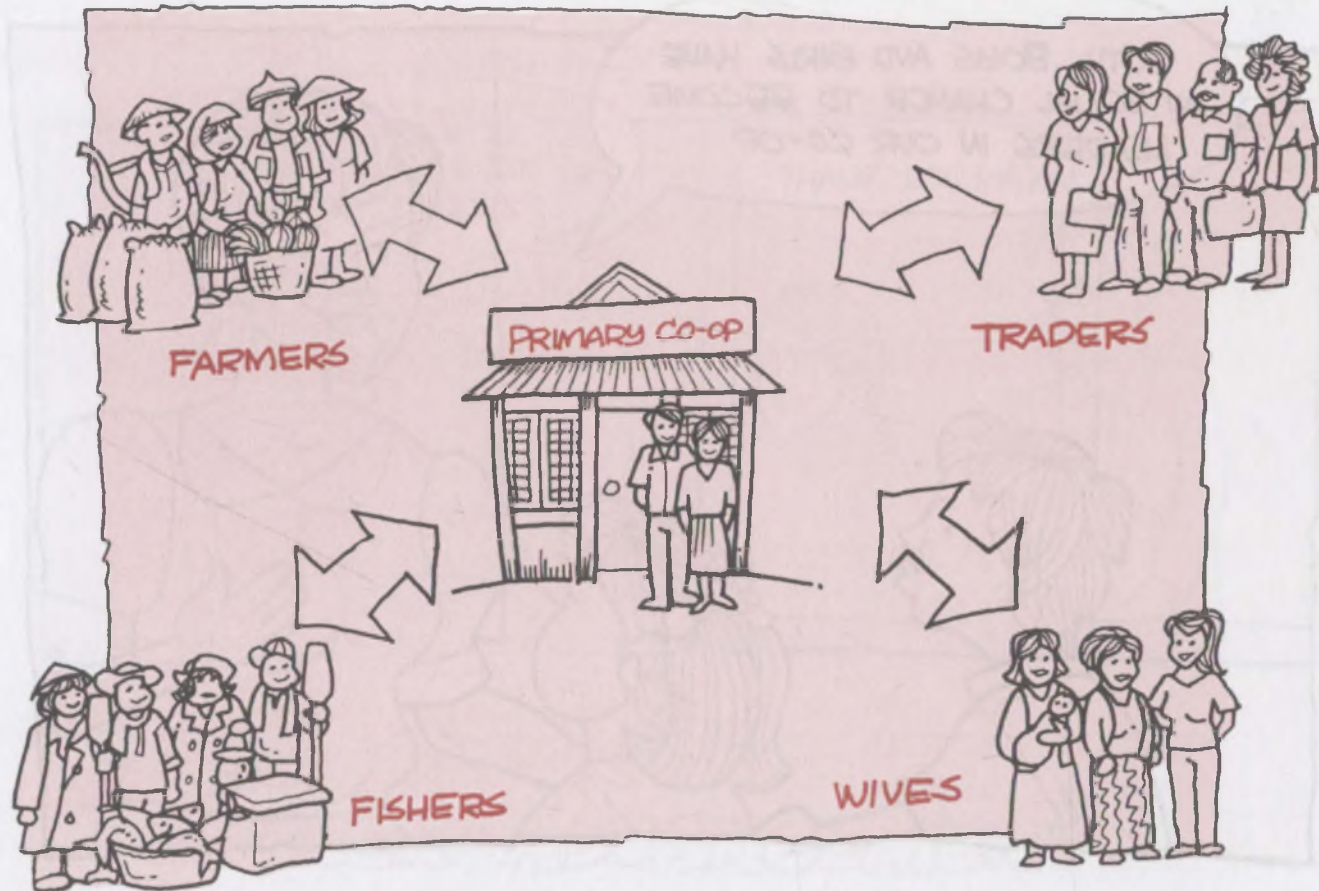
Strategy III - Actions for primary co-ops



EDUCATING THE YOUNG

Trainer : "Educate the young co-operators about gender issues and the need for women to be in leadership in co-ops."

Strategy III - Actions for primary co-ops



Trainer : "Establishing a network of women in the primary co-op. There are many advantages to women from having such a network. One, the network could serve as the forum for women in co-ops to identify common needs and aspirations, and express these to their co-ops. Two, the network could serve as a support and advocacy group for women's concerns."

Strategy III - Actions for national level co-op organizations



Trainer : "Other than the actions already stated, Strategy III also proposes more and other actions that are specifically directed to national level co-operative organizations. These actions are: 1) developing and promoting a gender-sensitive human resource development program for co-operatives, 2) developing and promoting a gender-sensitive youth development program for co-operatives,"

Strategy III - Actions for national level co-op organizations



Trainer : "3) documenting and publishing best practices on women leadership in co-ops,"

Strategy III - Actions for national level co-op organizations



Trainer : "4) establishing a national network among women leaders of primary co-ops. So Strategy III is suggesting that other than the network of women at the primary co-op level, the national organizations must set up a national network."

Strategy III - Actions for regional co-op organizations



Trainer : "Strategy III also proposes actions for regional organizations, such as the ICAROAP, AWCF, and ACCU, on how to build the capability of women for leadership in co-operatives at all levels. Strategy III proposes that regional organizations develop, publish and share information about curriculum and training materials on Leadership Program for Women in Co-operatives."

Strategy III - Actions for regional co-op organizations



Trainer : "Another proposed action for regional organizations is the organizing of regional fora related to the sharing of power between women and men, and their equal participation in decision-making. These fora could be in the form of regional conferences, workshops, meetings, etc., in which women's participation in decision-making in co-ops need not be the main and only topic."

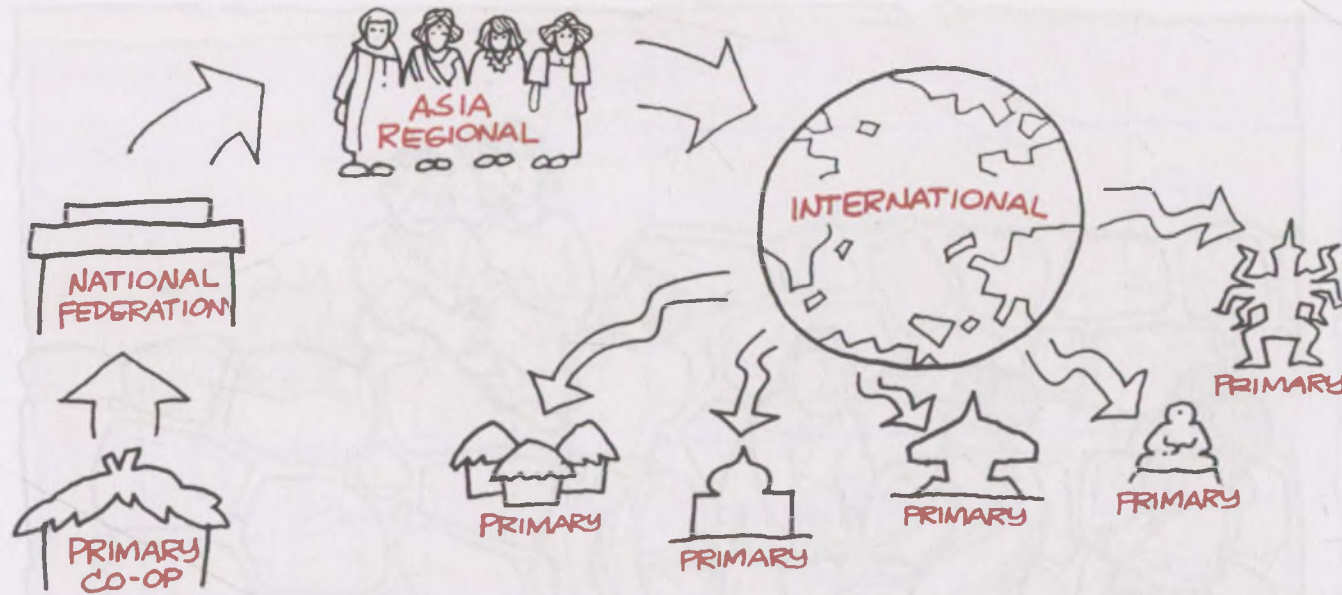
Strategy III - Actions for regional co-op organizations



EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR
WOMEN CO-OP LEADERS

Trainer : "Another action is organizing regional exchange or exposure programs for women co-op leaders."

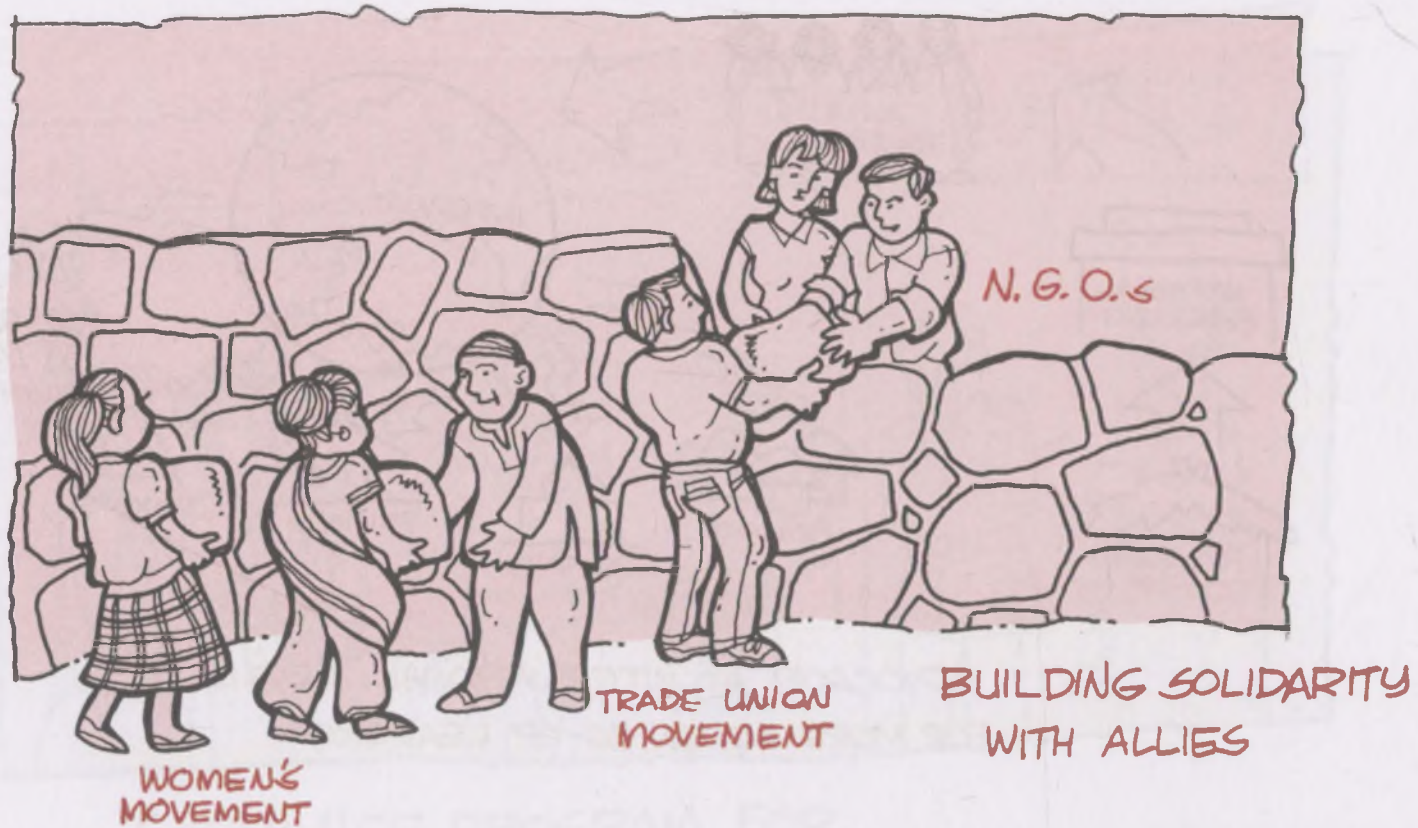
Strategy III - Actions for regional co-op organizations



ADVOCATE AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL
FOR MORE WOMEN CO-OP LEADERS

Trainer : "Advocate at the international level the need for promoting women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-ops so that as more co-op members become aware and recognize women's capacities, more women would eventually get elected."

Strategy III - Actions for regional co-op organizations



Trainer : "Build solidarity with the women's movement, people's movement, NGOs and other actors in the civil society that are supportive to the cause of increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-ops."

Strategy IV - Actions for co-ops at all levels



COLLECT SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA ON CO-OPS

Trainer : "Strategy IV emphasizes the need to collect sex-disaggregated data on co-operatives. For such a system to be established, a system of collecting this data must be developed. In this strategy, regional co-op organizations are called upon to develop the system for collecting sex-disaggregated data whereas primary and national level co-ops are called upon to collect this data. Now, why is sex-disaggregated data important?"

Strategy IV - Actions for co-ops at all levels



SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA MAKES WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO CO-OPS VISIBLE

Trainer : "Sex-disaggregated data is important because it makes women's contribution to co-ops visible."

Strategy IV - Actions for co-ops at all levels

PARTICIPATION PROFILE OF WOMEN AND MEN IN CO-OPERATIVES IN INDONESIA

Membership Activities	%		Leadership/Management Activities	%	
	Women	Men		Women	Men
Attend Annual General Meeting	1.45	3.00	Are elected to the Board of Directors	0.81	2.75
Attend other regular membership meetings	1.10	2.63	Are elected to the Supervisory Committee	0.83	2.75
Elect co-operative leaders	0.83	2.80	Are elected/appointed to other committees	0.94	2.83
Express their views at meetings	0.80	2.45	Take part in management planning	0.72	2.25
Examine the financial situation of the co-op	0.75	2.45	Take part in decisions about the co-op's financial situation	0.81	2.35
Attend training courses open to the membership	1.40	2.25	Are elected/appointed as co-op treasurers	1.39	2.35
Participate in savings	2.30	2.60	Are appointed/hired as co-op managers	1.06	2.61
Obtain loans	1.40	2.45	Report on co-op operations to members	0.81	1.65
Obtain other co-op services	1.20	2.15	Represent the co-op outside institutions	0.83	2.95
Prepare logistics (food, physical arrangement, etc.) for co-op meetings	2.20	1.88	Take part in decisions concerning personnel	0.69	2.70
Participate in cultural activities of the co-op	1.60	1.22			
Participate in co-op activities for the youth	1.00	1.31			
Receive guests of the co-op	1.25	2.44			

Source: Gender Integration Planning in Indonesian Co-operative Development Assistance Program - Phase 1, CCA 1992

Trainer : "Sex-disaggregated data shows the difference between women's and men's participation in co-ops."

Strategy IV - Actions for co-ops at all levels

CO-OP SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND MEN



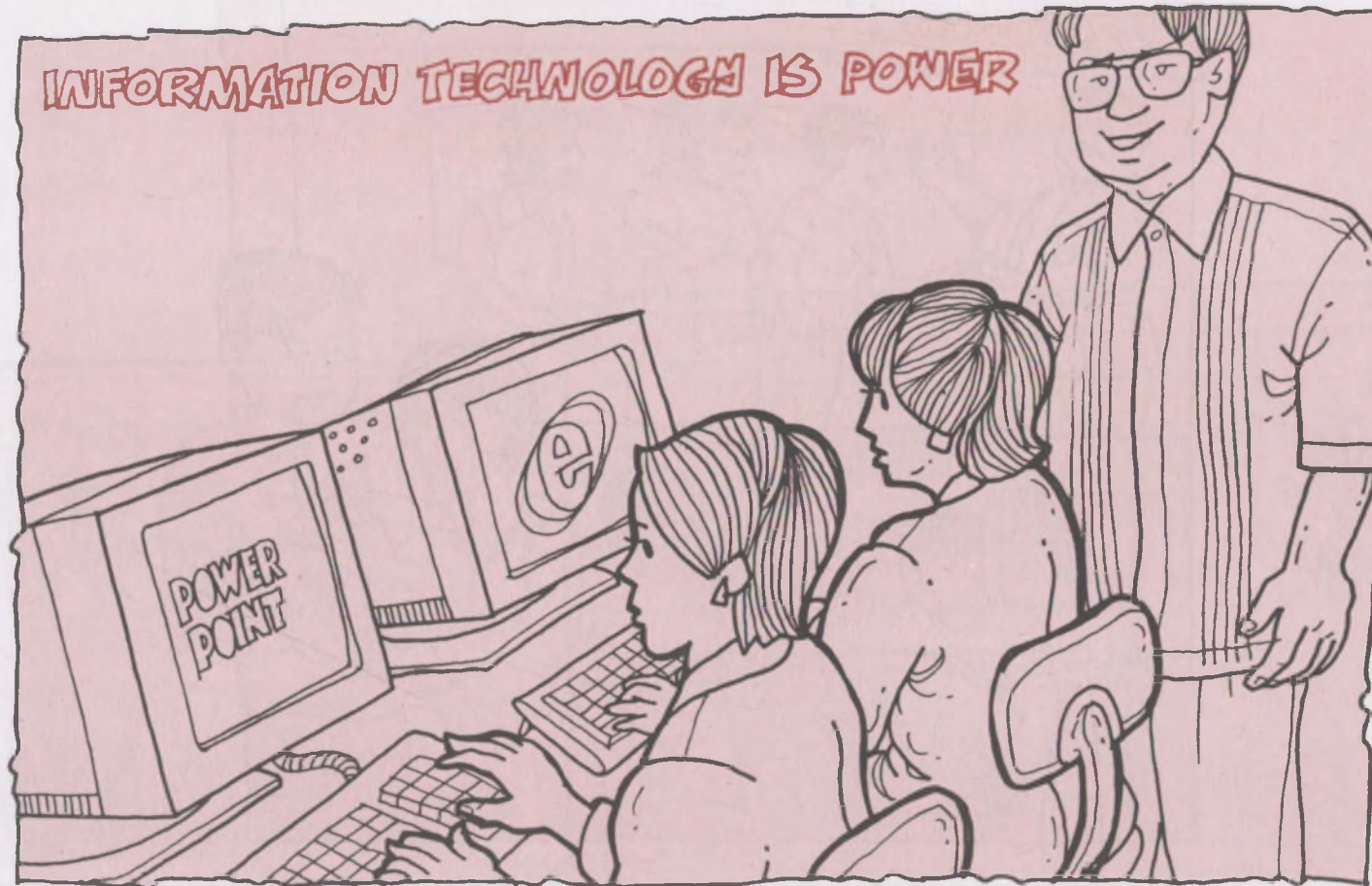
Trainer : "Sex-disaggregated data is important because it helps co-ops to know the conditions and needs of their men members and their women members. Most likely, the needs of women are different from those of men or that women have needs that men don't have. Through sex-disaggregated data, co-ops would be better able to come up with services to answer the needs of all their members, women and men."

Strategy V - Actions for co-ops at all levels



Trainer : "Strategy V proposes that co-operative organizations at all levels must provide a supportive environment that will encourage the participation of women in leadership and decision-making in co-ops. A supportive environment is one where co-ops would challenge or prevent stereotypes of women and men in meetings, in the conduct of training and in training materials, in informal discussions, or in the decision for promotion of staff. For example, the co-op would encourage the husbands of its members to share in the housework so that their wives could attend co-op meetings."

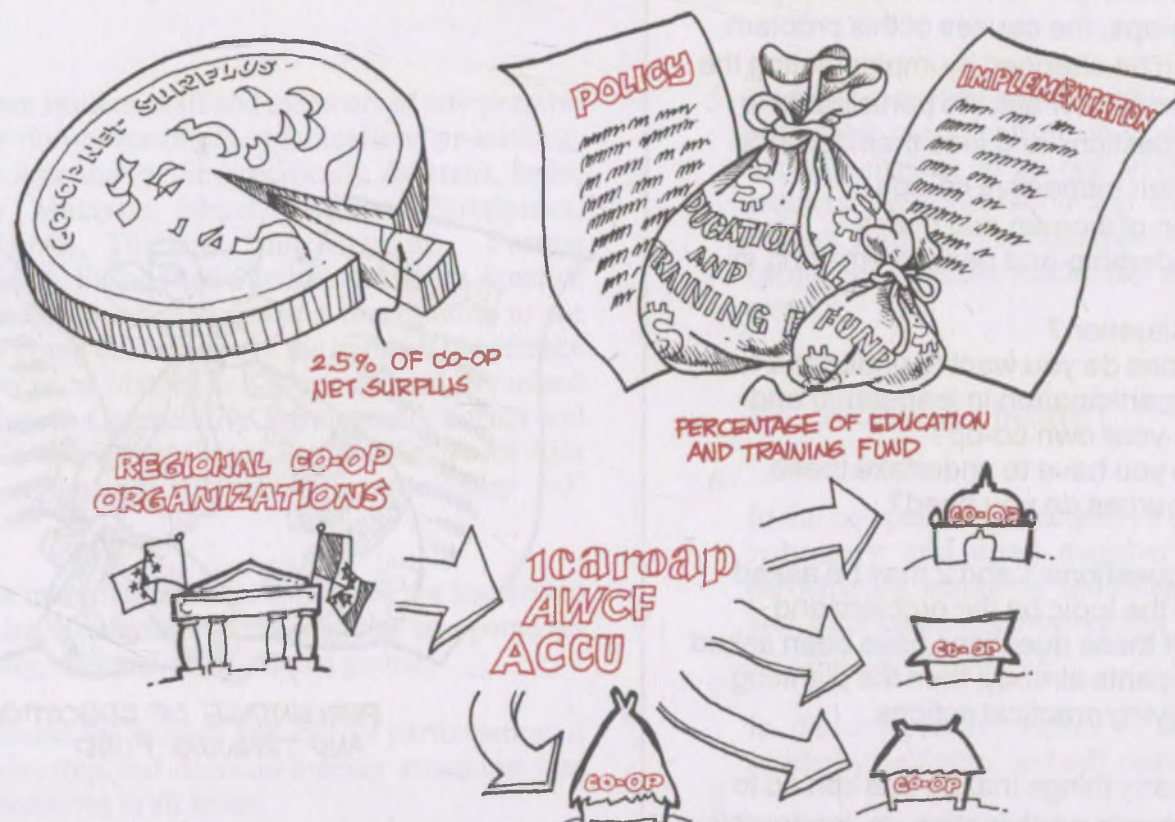
Strategy V - Actions for co-ops at all levels



Trainer : "Strategy V also proposes that co-ops ensure that women have equal access to advanced technology. One example is information technology."

Strategy VI - Actions for co-ops at all levels

ALLOCATION FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN IN CO-OPS



Trainer : "Strategy VI is a very important one because without this, all the actions that we have discussed earlier will not be carried out. Strategy VI proposes that a Leadership Development Fund for Women in Co-operatives be established by co-operative organizations at all levels. Three sources of funds are proposed. These are:

1. Allocate at least 2.5% of annual net surplus of the co-op at any level;
2. Allocate a percentage of the Education and Training Fund proportionate to the percentage of women members in the co-op; and
3. Undertake fund-raising activities to contribute to the fund."

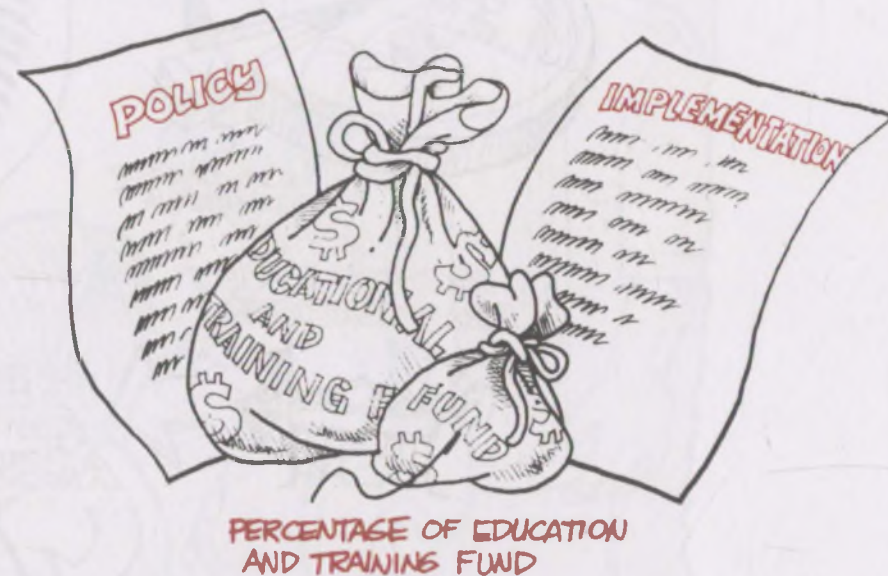
Note to the Trainer : At this point, you have completed explaining to the participants and engaging them in discussion about the problem of women’s low participation in decision-making in co-ops, the causes of this problem, and how the situation can be changed by implementing the Platform of Action. You may now ask the participants to reflect on the following questions and lead them towards planning for change in their respective co-ops.

1. What is the situation of women and men’s participation in leadership and decision-making in your own co-op?
2. What caused this situation?
3. What practical actions do you want to undertake to increase women’s participation in leadership and decision-making in your own co-op?
4. What resources do you have to undertake these actions? What resources do you need?

Please remember that questions 1 and 2 may be asked during the discussion of the topic on the problem and causes of the problem. If these questions have been asked and discussed by participants already, then the planning may go directly to identifying practical actions.

Trainer : “There are many things that co-ops can do to increase women’s participation in leadership and decision-making.

Now that we have some ideas on what we in the co-ops can do, we have to think now of how to start doing them. At this point, we can proceed to our action planning.”



Part One: DECLARATION

PREAMBLE

- 1 We, women and men leaders, staff and members of co-operative organizations and non-government organizations promoting co-operatives from Asia and Pacific (specifically, Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam), Europe (specifically, Denmark, Finland and Sweden) and North America (specifically, Canada) participating in and contributing to the successful reflection and deliberation in the regional conference on “Women in Decision-Making in Co-operatives” organized by the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum and the International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and Pacific held in Tagaytay City, Philippines, on May 7-9, 1997,
- 2 Aware of the gross marginalization of women in the leadership and decision-making structures and processes in co-operatives at all levels: primary, national, regional and global,
- 3 Determined to increase the number and level of participation of women in the leadership and decision-making structures and processes in co-operatives at all levels,
- 4 Acknowledging the voices and concerns of our other sisters and brothers in the co-operative movement in the Asia and Pacific and other regions in the world, who share our concern and commitment for increased participation by women in the leadership and decision-making structures and processes in co-operatives,

- 5 Dedicate ourselves unreservedly to promote and advocate the increased participation of women in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives, agreeing that such goal requires the cooperation and solidarity of all cooperators: leaders, staff—women and men—as we strive to create a more caring and effective leadership in co-operatives into the 21st century.

We reaffirm our beliefs:

- 6 In the co-operative principles of democratic member control, voluntary and open membership, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and information, co-operation among co-operatives, and concern for community,
- 7 In the co-operative values of democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, self-help, and self-responsibility,
- 8 In the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others, on which co-operatives all over the world were and are organized on these bases.

We are convinced that:

- 9 Women and men have different needs, interests, priorities and styles of leadership and decision-making arising from their specific roles and situations, and that both women's and men's needs can only be adequately and appropriately addressed if women and men are equally represented in the decision-making processes in all structures, including in co-operatives; and that, addressing these needs will result in the progress of these structures;
- 10 The exclusion of women and the failure to incorporate women's concerns in decision-making and leadership levels and processes in all structures, represents a major loss to society as a whole; and to co-operatives in particular, translates into a loss of half the potential, talent and experience pool that can contribute to the growth and progress of co-operatives;
- 11 All co-operative members and leaders, women and men, are bound and at the same time, have a role to play in increasing the number and participation of women in decision-making and leadership in co-operatives in all levels: primary, national, regional, and global.

We are aware and recognize that:

- 12 The gross marginalization of women in decision-making and leadership levels and processes in structures in society, including in co-operatives are due to:
 - cultural beliefs and socialization processes that result in women's subordinate position compared to men and restrict women from being more involved in public life,
 - discrimination (explicit and covert) against women in access to education and training,
 - institutional settings that are governed by male norms, and thus, reflect men's needs and situation more than women's different needs and experience, and,
 - the limited number of women in co-op membership;

- 13 Women's number and participation in decision-making and leadership structures and processes in co-operatives must be increased for the following reasons:

- women are more critical of the traditional definition of politics and of the use of power: too centralized, too hierarchical and too autocratic; women leaders will bring in a different kind of leadership in co-ops;
- if there are more women decision-makers in co-operatives, co-operatives' focus can be enlarged in such a way that women-specific needs will be included; women can influence co-ops to use resources that will help correct gender inequality and inequity not only in co-ops but also in society at large;

14 Efforts have been made to increase the number and participation of women in decision-making and leadership in co-operatives, but these efforts are inadequate, and in some cases, ineffective in achieving this goal as evidenced in the:

- still marginal number of women in decision-making and leadership positions in co-ops especially in the national, regional, and global levels,
- in the barriers that continue to keep women from these positions such as co-op practices, standards, and processes in selecting leaders,
- in the exercise of leadership duties and in the recognition of contributions as leaders;

We are determined to:

- 15 Amend laws, revise, and where necessary, create structures to increase the membership of women in all types of co-operatives;
- 16 Create an environment that is conducive partnership between women and men and supportive of increased participation by women in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives at all—levels,—primary, national, regional and global—and other structures in society: family, community and law;
- 17 Continue our advocacy on gender equality, gender equity, and the empowerment of women in co-operatives by transforming our co-operatives to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of both women and men members;

18 Set up systems and take the immediate steps to provide women with the necessary education, training and experience in order to be effective as leaders;

We commit ourselves to:

- 19 Bring co-operative practice in line with co-operative theory and values by pursuing and creating a kind of leadership in co-operatives that is:
- consistent with co-operative principles;
 - democratic, participatory, collaborative, consultative and accountable to members;
 - gender responsive where women and men work together for the betterment of family, workplace and society; and
 - responsive to the needs and situation of the disadvantaged.
- 20 **We hereby adopt and commit ourselves** as leaders, members, staff, volunteer promoters and organizers of co-operatives to implement the following Platform of Action. We call on the International Co-operative Alliance and its members, other co-operative movements, the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum and other networks of gender and co-operatives, non-government organizations and women's organizations promoting co-operatives, to fully commit themselves and contribute to the implementation of this Platform of Action.

Part Two: PLATFORM OF ACTION

Chapter 1

MISSION STATEMENT

- 1 The Platform of Action is an agenda to increase the participation of women in the leadership and decision-making positions and processes in all types of co-operatives in all regions of the world by increasing their opportunities and capabilities for leadership and decision-making. It aims to facilitate and accelerate the achievement of congruity between co-operative practice and theory, specifically in the area of democratic member control.
- 2 The Platform of Action is a broad guideline for achieving equality between women and men in the access to power and decision-making in co-operatives with the end in view that such equality of access will result to equitable benefits between men and women as well as to the benefit and progress of co-operatives.
- 3 Although the implementation of the actions enumerated and described in the Platform of Action are specific to co-operatives, the intention is that the serious and full implementation of the Platform of Action will result to improved gender relations not only in the context of co-operatives, but in the home, workplace and in the wider community.
- 4 The cooperation of ALL men and women in co-operatives, working together as equal partners, is essential to the successful

implementation of this Platform and the achievement of the goals for which this Platform was drawn up. Likewise, the serious, sustained and long-term commitment from leaders, members and staff—women and men—from ALL co-operatives.

Chapter 2

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN'S ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN THE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING IN CO-OPERATIVES AND IN SOCIETY

Global Situation of Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making

- 5 Women are marginalized in the leadership and decision-making positions and processes in all structures in society in all countries of the world. Such condition has been existing for centuries, so much so that this has been taken to be the norm—the inevitable, incorrigible, unchangeable state of women vis-a-vis men. This state is certainly a shame to humankind, which is comprised of at least 50% women.

- 6 In 1995, there were only 24 women heads of states. In 1994, women comprised only 5.7% of cabinet ministers. In the same year, there was not a single woman minister in 59 countries. It was only in 16 countries where women comprised 15% of ministers. And only one country, Sweden, had more women ministers than men (52% women to 48% men).¹
- 7 The *UNDP Human Development Report 1995* stated, "Upholding the equality of rights is not an act of benevolence by those in power. It is needed for the progress of every society." Further, it stated, "The goals of gender equality differ from one country to another, depending on the social, cultural and economic contexts.... Fundamental to all these priorities are the equality of access to means of developing basic human capabilities, the equality of opportunity to participate in all aspects of economic, social, and political decision-making, and the equality of reward.... Equality is not a technocratic goal—it is a wholesale political commitment. Gender equality is an essential aspect of human development."
- 8 The *Beijing Declaration*² stated, "Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace."
- 9 The *Beijing Platform for Action* pointed out, "Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and ensure its democracy and ensure proper functioning. Equality in decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government decision-making is feasible. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved."
- 10 Further, the Beijing Platform for Action stated unequivocally that women's participation in decision-making is a demand for simple justice and democracy.
- 11 In a study commissioned by the UN, five basic arguments for women's participation in decision-making and politics were presented:³
- a) *Democracy and egalitarianism* - women constitute at least half of any population and should be represented proportionally. The recognition of women's rights to full citizenship must be reflected in their effective participation at the various levels of political life. There cannot be true democracy where women are virtually excluded from positions of power.

¹ *The World's Women 1995. Trends and Statistics*, United Nations (New York, 1995).

² With the Beijing Platform for Action, one of two main outputs of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China last September 1995. These two documents serve as guideline for achieving equality between women and men, equitable access to resources between women and men, and to improved situation of millions of women in the world. Although Governments are mainly responsible for implementing the Platform for Action, all actors of civil society, such as co-operatives, have a key role in achieving the goals of the Platform.

³ *Women in Politics and Decision-Making in the Late Twentieth Century*, United Nations (New York, 1995).

- b. *Legitimacy* - women's underrepresentation can be dangerous for the legitimacy of the democratic system since it distances elected representatives from their electorate and more particularly from the women among their electors.
- c. *Differences in interests* - political participation involves articulating, providing and defending interests. Women are conditioned to have different social roles, functions and values. It is reasonable to believe that women are more aware of their own needs and are therefore better able to press for them. Women are more aware, for example, of the need to have proper provision for the care of children and of others who are physically dependent; and to have more protection against sexual violence and harassment. The current composition of the political decision-makers means that women are unable to articulate and defend their own interests.
- d. *Changing politics* - if there are enough women politicians, they can change the focus of politics. An initial effect of women entering the political scene was the enlargement of the scope of politics. Issues, such as child care, sexuality and family planning, that once were confined to the private sphere are now seen as political. Some women have come to regard the decision-making process itself as being too centralized, too hierarchical and too technocratic.
- e. *Efficient use of human resources* - no country can afford not to utilize all its human resources. Women comprise half the world's pool of potential talent and ability. The importance of their fundamental biological and social roles is clear, and though their inputs is often unrecognized, they are major contributors to national economies through their paid and unpaid labor.

Excluding women from positions of power and from elected bodies impoverishes public life and inhibits the development of a just society. In short, without the full participation of women in decision-making, the political process will be less effective than it can and should be, to the detriment of society as a whole.

- 12 The *UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)* established the proportion of at least 30% women in decision-making positions to establish a "critical mass" of women who can effectively influence decision-making processes. This is borne out by the experience of Nordic countries.

Regional (Asia and the Pacific) Situation of Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making

- 13 Asia is currently the most rapidly growing and dynamic part of the world. While the region is forging ahead at an incredible pace of economic growth, the same unfortunately cannot be claimed for the vast majority of its women. Large numbers continue to suffer poverty, illiteracy, poor health, malnutrition, and low social, economic, and political status. While economic growth in the region has admittedly led to some gains for a significant majority of women, the overall plight of Asian women remains unsatisfactory and unaddressed.⁴
- 14 A *UN ESCAP* survey (for the period, 1985-1993) of women's participation in politics and leadership in Asia and the Pacific showed that women comprise only 11% of total parliamentarians in the region in 1993, which was lower than it was in 1987 at 12%. The survey further showed that there were more women parliamentarians in East Asia at 19% and lowest in the Pacific states at 2%.⁵

⁴ *Women in Development: Issues, Challenges and Strategies in Asia and Pacific*, Asian Development Bank (1994).

⁵ *Women in Asia and the Pacific 1985-1993*, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (United Nations New York, 1994).

15 The *UNDP Human Development Report 1996* showed that women's participation in decision-making for the period, 1990 to 1995, in Asian and Pacific countries ranged from 0 to 23.9% or an average of 6.3% among twenty-five countries surveyed.

16 Yet, it has been observed that "greater participation in political decision-making has been perceived to be one of the factors that strengthen the process of empowerment.... Equal participation by women in the public sphere can be looked upon as an effective strategy to initiate a process of changing power

The Nature of Co-operatives:

17 Historically, co-operatives have fulfilled the socio-economic needs of communities, and have enjoyed success in many countries. Co-operatives are formed by many low-income communities to promote their well-being and to become self-reliant. In Asia and the Pacific, the total number of individual co-operative membership has reached no less than 480 million people by yearend 1995. Assuming that 50% belong to the middle class category and 40% still among the relatively poor, it means that well over 200 million members are still in need of basic services and social infrastructure.

18 Where women are concerned, their subordinate roles continue to prevail. Unless co-operatives take an active part in mainstreaming gender, women continue to have less access and control over resources as compared to men, and they will continue to be marginalized in the co-operative leadership and decision making processes .

19 Co-operatives are distinct in their "identity" and mode of operations from private enterprises. Co-operation is a practical

philosophy based on a society that promotes development by consent and consensus of the people. Co-operatives combine business and moral values. Co-operatives are unique as they possess universal suitability and acceptance to operate under all kinds of economic systems : be they capitalism, socialism, or a system based on mixed economies. Cooperatives combine the merits of all the systems. Co-operatives promote the values of self-help, self-initiative, and self-responsibility which are basic characteristics of capitalism. They adhere to values of equality, equity, solidarity and non-exploitation which are vital ingredients of socialism; co-operatives believe in democratic governance which balances the two systems under one where public and private sectors co-exist.

20 But the central focus of any co-operative movement is always to be in the best interest of **MEMBERS** (read : *Women and Men*) both in the short and long term. Co-operatives exist primarily to serve them, and any measure of effectiveness must be based on how well those needs are served. Co-operatives also become more effective when they give people more control over their lives. Co-operatives give members the opportunity to consume more wisely, and give producers the opportunity to control the production and distribution of their goods; co-operatives give all kinds of people the chance to save, invest, and borrow money in honest, secure, and competitive financial institutions. There is an important kind of dignity in enlarging such kind of empowerment.

21 A co-operative movement must also build a **strong vertically integrated structure**, combining the power of local co-operatives into an integrated system that can wield influence on national, regional and even international levels. Doing so will require vision and a capacity to make difficult decisions. In rare instances, it may even require foregoing local possibilities in favour of a common good. "Acting locally, working globally" became a cliché in the later decades of the twentieth century. Within

co-operatives, it must become a reality if full effectiveness is to be achieved—where women and men work together at all levels within the co-operative structures.

- 22 There is a challenge for more strategic thinking. Thinking strategically means the ability to consider how the membership advantage, the co-operative distinctiveness, the empowerment of people, the combination of resources and the pools of accumulated capital can be most effectively deployed. It is envisioning what can be prudently attempted and collectively accomplished.
- 23 Co-operatives also confronted other challenges in the nineties as a result of open markets and globalization that demanded a review of ways of doing, a change in understanding and perspective of the old and emerging issues such as the increasing gap between the haves and have-nots, environmental degradation, and the deepening inequality between women and men in all spheres of life, including in co-operatives.
- 24 Within the context of all the above challenges the INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE conducted and celebrated its Centennial Congress in Manchester in September 1995. It was at the ICA Centennial Congress that the definition of a Co-operative has been accepted by all delegates coming from all over the world. It was at the Centennial Congress that the Co-operative values have been adopted, and Co-operative Principles revised and sharpened. The Co-operative definition, values and principles are put together under what is now called the **“STATEMENT ON THE CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY.”**
- 25 The document on **“STATEMENT on the CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY”** approved by the ICA’s members in Manchester

consists of three parts : the Definition, the Values, and the Co-operative Principles.

Firstly, as there has been no commonly-accepted international definition of a Co-operative (with the exception of a 1966 document issued by the International Labour Office), co-operatives have been described in different ways by different people over the years. The ICA’s definition clearly identifies the main characteristic of any co-operatives in any sector or any country. In short, a co-operative is:

- * an autonomous association of persons
- * who unite voluntarily
- * in order to meet their common needs and aspirations
- * through a business enterprise
- * which they jointly own
- * and democratically control

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

The *Third* part of the Identity Statement deals with the Co-operative Principles. In the past, the principles were used to define the key characteristics of a co-operative and to describe its basic values. This inevitably led to some confusion, which is why the three elements have now been separated. In reality, the co-operative principles are *“guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.”*

The seven principles are :

- * Voluntary and Open Membership
- * Democratic Member Control
- * Member Economic Participation
- * Autonomy and Independence
- * Education, Training, and Information
- * Co-operation among Co-operatives
- * Concern for Community

- 26 The new principle added is that of "Autonomy and Independence," giving emphasis that co-operatives must be controlled and directed by their members. The second new principle is that of "Concern for Community." As locally-rooted, member responsive organizations, co-operatives have a close link with their communities. During recent years, it has become apparent that co-operatives are often playing a leading role in the economic, social, and cultural development of their communities. They have become especially active in the field of community health, community housing, group-lending for micro-enterprises, and in environmental protection.
- 27 The principle of "Concern for Community" also, in some ways, mandates co-operatives to go beyond the community's and the members' economic needs which co-operatives traditionally addressed, such as need for credit, consumer goods, marketing of products, etc. to the social needs and concerns of the community and of co-ops' members such as greater political participation by women in community and co-ops' affairs, gender equality, childcare, physical safety, etc.
- 28 The history and nature of co-operatives as can be gleaned from their values and principles, show that co-operatives are democratic and gender-fair institutions, which respect and encourage the participation of all members in all co-op affairs, including in decision-making, regardless of their gender.

Efforts to Promote Gender Equality in Co-operatives

- 29 In the Declaration passed during the celebration of the ICA Centennial held in Manchester in 1995, it was stated, "There are untapped resources in many memberships, especially among women and young people. Much of the future success of the co-operative movement will depend upon a willingness to recognize true equality between women and men in the deliberations of co-operative organizations; much of the vitality will come from the involvement of young people."
- 30 In the same document, it was pointed out that one of the many challenges that face co-operatives in the next century is resolving "complex issues of social justice, many of which co-operatives have historically tried to address; it is as important as before that they continue to do so. One of them concerns the unequal position of women around the world. Women are disproportionately evident among the poor; they provide more than their share of labor, paid and unpaid, in most economies; their capacity to control their own lives is often restricted."
- 31 The importance the ICA and its members placed on the need for gender equality in co-operatives is no less demonstrated in the passing of the Resolution on Gender Equality in Co-operatives during the ICA Centennial Congress held in Manchester last September 1995. The resolution stated, "Gender equality is a global priority of the ICA.... To improve such gender balance co-operatives are requested to set an action plan which should include targets, with a clear idea of what should be achieved and by when."
- 32 In Asia and Pacific, the ICAROAP had conducted several regional activities for the purpose of bringing to the awareness of its members the issue of gender inequality in co-operatives as well as to identify strategies on how to pursue and achieve in and through co-operatives. These activities were: three regional consultation meetings on gender integration in co-operatives, the first in Colombo in 1992, the second in Tokyo in

1993, and the third in Bangkok in 1996, two sub-regional gender sensitivity training and planning meetings, and the setting up of a protempore Regional Women's committee during the ICAROAP General Assembly in 1996, which the ICAROAP Executive Committee approved in ChiangMai in March 1997.

- 33 In the Co-operative Ministers' Conference on "Co-operatives in a Changing Socio-Economic Environment" held in ChiangMai last March 1997, the body passed four resolutions on Gender and Development.
- 34 The Canadian Co-operative Association was catalytic in its approach to gender and co-operative development when it organized a consultation meeting on Women in Development (in the co-operative context) in Kuala Lumpur in 1989 that led to the organizing and conduct of a Leadership Training for Women Leaders in ASEAN countries, which in turn, led to the setting up of the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum, then a collaborative informal forum among co-operative organizations to pursue gender equality and the empowerment of women in and through co-operatives.
- 35 The AWCF has been promoting gender awareness and gender integration in co-operatives since its inception in 1990. Leadership development for women has been one of its four priority thrusts since it was set up. All of its programs and activities are geared towards increasing women's share of power and decision-making in co-operatives.

Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making in Co-operatives: Global and Regional (Asia and Pacific) Situation

- 36 The picture of women's participation in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives is the same at the global level

and in the context of Asia and the Pacific. And the picture is that of low, even marginal representation of women in co-op Boards—lowest at the national level and slightly greater at the primary and chapter/federation levels. The picture is better only in Nordic countries.

- 37 When women are in the Boards at all, they usually hold the position of Secretary or Treasurer, both doing or implementing positions, rather than a position of decision-making.
- 38 Several factors have been identified to cause women's limited representation in co-op Boards and in co-op management in all regions of the world:

One, reproductive roles traditionally borne by women reduces women's time for community and voluntary work such as being an elected official in a co-operative;

Two, old stereotypes of women and men where men are traditionally seen as more fit to have a public role (i.e., as leaders) and women to have a private role (i.e., as homemakers);

Three, requirements and processes for entry in leadership and decision-making in co-ops restrict women's access and opportunities for leadership and decision-making therein, e.g., the member must have served a certain number of years in an elected position before she/he can get into the Board or be elected as co-op President or Chairperson, the nomination procedure where the member willing to be elected must nominate her/himself in front of the general assembly—this practice is not attractive to women, the "old boys network" that is actively at work during election time in co-ops;

Four, practice of leadership and decision-making in co-operatives discriminates against women, e.g., the practice of holding long

meetings at night in less than safe places, hierarchical and bureaucratic styles, etc.;

Five, co-op laws and bylaws that restrict women's membership in co-ops, e.g., laws that stipulate that only land owners or heads of households can be members of co-ops; furthermore, traditional laws and cultural practices that regard women as subordinate to men;

Six, in some co-ops, women are not given the same opportunities as men for basic training and higher education in such areas as finance, technology and management.

- 39** The co-op movement is filled with many examples of co-ops being ably and effectively led and/or managed by women. From women's leadership and management, many co-ops have progressed and have improved the lives of peoples all over the world.
- 40** The benefits that co-operatives get from women's leadership and management can be multiplied with more women in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives. The need to enhance women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives is not only for ethical reasons, but for economic reasons as well.

Chapter 3

PLATFORM OF ACTION TO ENHANCE THE NUMBER AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING IN CO-OPERATIVES IN THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

- 41** In order to enhance the number and participation of women in the leadership and decision-making structures and processes in co-operatives, we propose the following strategies and actions to be implemented within a period of eight years, from Year 1997 up to Year 2005.

Strategy I: Instituting gender-sensitive co-op laws, bylaws and policies that promote increased women membership in co-ops and participation in leadership and decision-making therein

Actions to be taken:

42 *By Governments:*

- a) Review co-op laws, implementing rules and guidelines from a gender perspective, and amend, if they cause disadvantage to women in becoming members of co-ops;
- b) Review Co-op Laws, implementing rules and guidelines from a gender perspective, and amend or correct, if they cause disadvantage to women in becoming leaders and/or becoming effective in the performance of their duties as co-op leaders;

43 *By all types of co-operatives at all levels: primary, national, regional, and global:*

- a) Review their (co-op) bylaws and other policies from a gender perspective, and amend, if they cause disadvantage to women in becoming members of co-ops; promote joint membership in primary level co-operatives of couples in a household;
- b) Undertake pro-active efforts to increase the number of women members in their co-ops;
- c) Review their (co-op) bylaws, other policies and practices from a gender perspective, and amend or correct, if they cause disadvantage to women in becoming leaders and/or in becoming effective in the performance of their duties as co-op leaders;
- d) Undertake pro-active efforts to increase the number and participation of women in the leadership and decision-making structures and processes in co-operatives;

44 *By all co-operatives, governments, non-government organizations:*

- a) Support ICAROAP in its efforts to pursue legislation and government policies that are more gender-responsive, with particular emphasis on the resolutions adopted by the Fourth Asia Pacific Conference of Co-operative Ministers held in Chiangmai, Thailand, from March 19 to 22, 1997;
- b) Support the role of the ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia and the Pacific in its efforts to promote gender-responsive policies in co-operatives;

- c) Support the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum (AWCF) in its efforts to advocate gender-responsive policies in co-operatives and provide services in helping co-operatives become gender-responsive.

Strategy II: Building capability of co-ops on women leadership development

Actions to be taken:

45 *By primary level co-operatives:*

- a) Conduct Gender Sensitivity Training (GST)⁶ for women and men co-op members, leaders, and staff;
- b) Allocate technical, material, human, and financial resources for the training of the Education Committee on women leadership development in co-ops;
- c) Ensure and monitor the equal access by women and men members and staff to all types of training opportunities and resources for their personal and professional advancement;

46 *By national level co-operative organizations:*

- a) Initiate, promote and conduct GST for women and men co-op members, leaders and staff;
- b) Develop and allocate technical, material, human, and financial resources for the training of national trainers on

⁶ Also referred to as Gender Awareness Seminar/Training, it serves as an introduction and provides a basic orientation to the participants on gender, gender issues, and how they affect social and economic development and political life, in general. When conducted in the co-op context, GST shows how gender issues affect co-operative development, in particular.

- c) Ensure and monitor the equal access by women and men members and staff of affiliates/ members to all types of training opportunities and resources for their personal and professional advancement;

47 *By all co-operative organizations at all levels: primary, national, regional (ICAROAP), global, and gender & co-operative networks such as the AWCF:*

- a) Promote awareness among members as voters on the need and importance for women to be in the leadership and decision-making structures at all levels in co-operatives;
- b) Support the quota system as a means to ensure and facilitate the increase in the number and level of women's participation in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives;

Strategy III: Building capability of women for leadership and decision-making in co-ops

Actions to be taken:

48 *By primary level co-operatives:*

- a) Conduct Gender Sensitivity Training for women members and leaders;
- b) Allocate resources for and provide training opportunities to women members to enable them to get into leadership positions in co-ops; likewise, to be effective and efficient in the performance of their duties as co-op leaders;
- c) Provide equal opportunities for women and men staff of co-ops in promotion and other opportunities for career advancement in a co-op organization/employer;

- d) Educate young cooperators about gender issues and promote awareness of the need and importance for women to be in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives;

- e) Establish a network of women leaders in the primary level that bring the women's agenda (empowerment of women, support in carrying out multiple roles, equitable sharing of power in co-operatives) to the co-operative movement, build solidarity at all levels, build consensus on common issues and exercise influence on decision-making processes in co-operatives at all levels;

49 *By national level co-operative organizations:*

- a) Develop and allocate technical, material, human, and financial resources for leadership skills training of women members at all levels;
- b) Develop and allocate technical, material, human and financial resources for management skills training of women co-op managers, other women co-op staff, and women elected leaders;
- c) Develop a management and leadership development program for women and men members and leaders that emphasize the new model of leadership and management that is consistent with co-op values and principles and is characterized by caring and compassion, consultation, democratic style, high regard for ethics, cooperation and collectivism;
- d) Develop and promote a gender-sensitive human resource development for co-operatives among affiliates/members;

- e) Develop and promote a gender-sensitive youth development program for co-operatives among affiliates/members;
- f) Document and publish stories about the efforts of co-operatives in enhancing women's participation in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives and disseminate to the media, governments and general public;
- g) Establish a network of women leaders at the national level that brings the women's agenda (empowerment of women, support in carrying out multiple roles, equitable sharing of power in co-operatives) to the co-operative movement, builds solidarity at all levels, builds consensus on common issues and exercises influence on decision-making in co-operatives at all levels;

50. By the ICAROAP and AWCF:

- a) Develop, publish and disseminate curriculum and materials for a Leadership Development Program for Women in Co-operatives;
- b) Organize and conduct regional fora at least once a year on issues related to equitable sharing of power and decision-making between women and men in co-operatives;
- c) Organize and conduct regional exchange programs and exposure visits for women leaders of co-operatives on co-operative operations and other programs relevant to the enhancement of women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives;

- d) Assist members in their respective leadership development programs for women in co-operatives;
- e) Advocate at the international level issues concerning women in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives;
- f) Document and publish stories of women leaders in co-ops who could be good role models for other women as well as men leaders in co-operatives highlighting women leaders' unique contributions to the progress of co-operatives;
- g) Document and publish cases of co-operatives that are successful in enhancing the participation of women in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives;
- h) Document and publish stories about the efforts of co-operative organizations in enhancing women's participation in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives at the regional and international levels to the media, governments and the general public;
- i) Establish a network of women leaders in the primary, national, regional and global levels that bring the women's agenda (empowerment of women, support in carrying out multiple roles, equitable sharing of power in co-operatives) to the co-operative movement, build solidarity at all levels, build consensus on common issues and exercise influence on decision-making processes in co-operatives at all levels;

- j) Build solidarity with allies in the women's movement, people's organizations, non-government organizations, trade union movement and other movements and organizations in all parts of the world who are supportive to the cause of enhancing women's participation in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives;

Strategy IV: Developing, promoting and implementing a gender-disaggregated data collection and utilization system for co-operatives

To measure the actual participation and contribution of women and men in the co-operatives for the purpose of:

- making women's contribution to co-operative development visible;
- showing the degree of inequity and inequality in women's and men's involvement in co-operatives;
- facilitating the recognition of gender issues in co-operatives; and,
- providing concrete basis for the co-operative's formulation of policies, design of programs, and provision of services that are gender-responsive.

Actions to be taken:

51 *By the ICAROAP and AWCF:*

- a) Develop a model or system for generating, analyzing and utilizing gender-disaggregated data in all aspects of operations of primary level co-operatives, including on leadership representation and participation;

- b) Promote and assist primary level co-operatives in using this model or system so as to collect gender-disaggregated data on a regular basis to establish benchmarks and monitor the progress towards a more gender-responsive co-operative movement;

- c) Collect and publish gender-disaggregated data on co-op members, to relevant government bodies, and to the general public;

52 *By co-operative organizations at the primary and national levels:*

- a) Collect gender-disaggregated data on membership and leadership vis-a-vis co-op operations on a regular basis, and utilize these data to make co-op services truly responsive to the needs and conditions of women and men members;

Strategy V: Creating a supportive environment for the enhancement of women's participation in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives

Actions to be taken:

53 *By co-operative organizations at all levels:*

- a) Undertake pro-active efforts to address and correct gender stereotypes that portray women as less capable than men to be leaders in all structures, including in co-operatives as shown in media, in books and other educational materials, and as practiced in the family; but rather, to portray women as equal to men and that the difference in roles, capacities, and physical make-up between women and men is an advantage and not a limitation;

- b) Provide material and financial resources to support women and men members of co-operatives in their reproductive roles in the form of child care subsidy, parental leave, transport services, good and safe daycare facilities;
- c) Ensure women's equal access to advanced technology as it enhances women's participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives;

Strategy VI: Establish a Leadership Development Fund for Women in Co-operatives generated from within the co-operative movement as well as from other institutions to be used in carrying out the actions contained in this Platform of Action.

Actions to be taken

54 *By co-operatives at all levels:*

- a) Allocate at least 2.5% of the annual net surplus for contribution to the Leadership Development Fund for Women in Co-operatives of the (co-op) organization;
- b) Allocate a percentage of the Education and Training Fund proportionate to the percentage of women members in the (co-op) organization for contribution to the Leadership Development Fund for Women in Co-operatives;
- c) Undertake fund-raising activities to contribute to the Leadership Development Fund for Women in Co-operatives.

Chapter 4

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 55 The Platform of Action is a set of actions that should lead to the increased participation of women in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives. Immediate action and accountability are essential if the targets are to be met by the year 2005. Implementation is primarily the responsibility of co-operatives at all levels: primary, national, regional and international.
- 56 The participation of other institutions promoting and supporting co-operatives, but do not have the structure of a mainstream co-operative organization, such as co-operative networks (e.g., Asian Co-operative Organization), gender and co-operative networks (Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum), non-government organizations, people's organizations, and women's organizations at the community, national, regional, and international levels, is important, and may even be essential to the successful implementation of this Platform as they provide the social development and human rights perspective of this endeavor in a sustained basis.
- 57 Women leaders, members and staff of co-operatives play a big role for the successful implementation of the Platform. They should form the core of advocates who will remind co-operatives at all levels to implement the Platform and achieve the goals for which it was drawn up.

A. Primary Co-operative Level

- 58** All elected officials of the primary co-operative, especially the Board of Directors, are mainly responsible for giving the co-operative the mandate to implement the Platform of Action. All elected co-op officials and management must ensure that the Platform is implemented and must account to their members the extent that they have led their co-op to create the enabling and supportive environment for women to participate fully and as equitably as the men in the leadership and decision-making in their co-op.
- 59** The role of the co-op's Internal Audit/Supervisory Committee is to monitor the implementation of the Platform and report to the members.
- 60** The Education Committee (EdCom) must be mobilized in implementing the Platform. The EdCom must ensure that gender perspective is integrated in the Education and Training program of the co-op. The EdCom itself must have gone through some basic Gender Sensitivity Training and must be trained for running leadership training seminars for women members.
- 61** The co-op management must ensure that any kind of training that the co-op accesses from other institutions has a gender perspective and is supportive of the increased participation of women in leadership and decision-making in co-ops.

B. National Level

- 62** The Board of Directors of the national/apex organization must provide the mandate for the organization to implement the Platform. All elected officials and the management at the national/apex level must account to their member-coops, the extent that they have led their co-op to create the enabling and supportive environment for women to participate fully and as equitably as the men in the leadership and decision-making in co-ops at the primary, chapter/federation, and national levels.
- 63** The national/apex organization must take a lead role in mobilizing resources from among their member-coops, in particular, and within the co-op movement, in general, for the establishment of a Leadership Development Fund for Women which shall be made available for use by co-ops.
- 64** The national/apex organization must train the education committees of its member-coops in running leadership training seminars for women. The national/apex organization must ensure that gender perspective is integrated in its Education and Training Program for members, staff and leaders. The staff of the whole Education and Training Department of the national/apex organization itself must have gone through some basic Gender Sensitivity Training.
- 65** The national/apex organization must ensure that any kind of training that the organization access from other institutions have a gender perspective and is supportive of the increased participation of women in leadership and decision-making in co-ops.

C. Regional and International Levels

- International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ICAROAP)
- 66 To ensure effective implementation of the Platform by ALL co-operatives at all levels, the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), the international body of co-operatives representing the family in which all members of co-operatives — women and men—belong, should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming the gender perspective in all co-operative policies, programs, services, and business operations. The ICA must play a key role in promoting awareness about the Platform of Action and its funding requirements as well as in monitoring co-operatives' participation and contribution in implementing the Platform. In Asia and Pacific, the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ICAROAP), must perform these roles.
- 67 Within the ICA structure, specialized committees and specialized bodies were set up for the purpose of providing advice to the ICA about specific sectors of the co-op movements as well as about specific areas of concern related and/or affecting co-operatives. Although the Women's Committee would be normally expected to play a lead role in ensuring that this Platform is implemented and in fact, in actually implementing the Platform itself, all specialized committees and specialized bodies must be concerned and contribute to the successful implementation of the Platform.
- 68 The **Regional Women's Committee for Asia and the Pacific** has a key role in ensuring that the Platform is implemented. Comprised of leaders from the movement who are aware of gender inequality and inequity and committed to correct this imbalance in and through co-operative structures, the Committee can effectively monitor the implementation of the Platform by all members of the ICAROAP.
- Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum (AWCF)
- 69 Gender and co-operatives network such as the AWCF play an important role in the successful implementation of the Platform. The AWCF, because of its nature and the purpose for which it was set up, is in good position to perform its advocacy role in ensuring that mainstream co-op organizations do not forget or fall short of their commitment to implement the Platform. As a resource body, it has a long experience and has developed an expertise in the area of gender and co-operatives. AWCF is available to co-operative organizations and development agencies promoting co-operatives (who are not its members) at national, regional and international levels to provide technical assistance and services, upon request, for the successful implementation of the Platform.
- 70 The AWCF should assist ICAROAP in promoting awareness about the Platform and its funding requirements as well as in monitoring co-operatives' participation and contribution in implementing the Platform.

Chapter 5

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 71 Commitment to change is best demonstrated in the willingness to pay for the financial costs of the change. All co-operatives at all levels: primary, national, regional and international levels must allocate funds needed for the successful implementation of the Platform. The Boards of all co-operatives at all levels must adopt a policy mandating their organizations to allocate funds for the implementation of the Platform.
- 72 All co-operative organizations must contribute at least 2.5% of its annual net surplus and a percentage of its Education and Training Fund which is proportionate to the percentage of women members to the Leadership Development Fund for Women in Co-operatives.

- 73 Regional and international bodies such as the ICAROAP and the AWCF must play a lead role in accessing resources from outside the co-op movement to contribute to the Leadership Fund for Women. The Fund must be made available to all women in co-ops as well as those who will eventually become co-op members. The Fund can also be made available to fund Gender Sensitivity Training seminars for co-operative members, leaders and staff—men and women—as they contribute to gender awareness among cooperators and support the enhanced participation of women in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives.

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) Statement on the Co-operative Identity

DEFINITION

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

VALUES

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

PRINCIPLES

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

1st Principle: *Voluntary and Open Membership*

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

2nd Principle: *Democratic Member Control*

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

3rd Principle: *Member Economic Participation*

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

4th Principle: *Autonomy and Independence*

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

5th Principle: *Education, Training and Information*

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

6th Principle: *Co-operation Among Co-operatives*

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

7th Principle: *Concern for Community*

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their community through policies approved by their members.



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