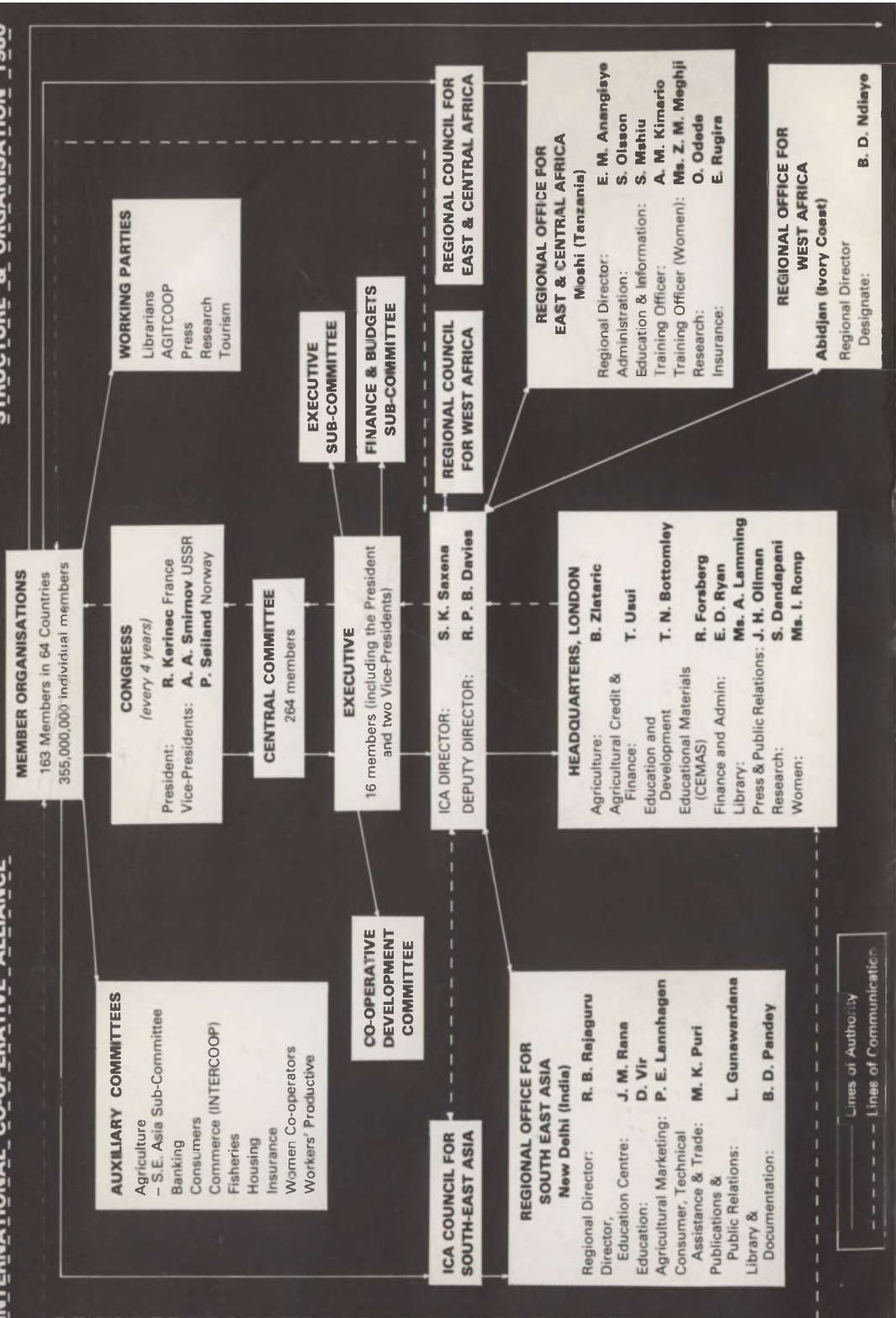


**THE
INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATIVE
ALLIANCE**



STRUCTURE & ORGANISATION 1980

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE



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THE INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE

Objects and Methods

The International Co-operative Alliance is a non-governmental international organisation which was established in London in 1895. Its membership consists of around 163 organisations from 64 countries and represents an approximate individual constituency of 355 million. Membership is open to all organisations which observe the Rochdale principles, as elaborated by the ICA Commission on Co-operative Principles, and is spread throughout the five continents, in 12 countries in Africa, 10 in the Americas, 16 in Asia, 24 in Europe and 2 in Oceania.

The objects of the International Co-operative Alliance as laid down in its Constitution are as follows:

- (a) To be the universal representative of co-operative organisations of all types which in practice observe the co-operative principles.
- (b) To propagate co-operative principles and methods throughout the world.
- (c) To promote co-operation in all countries.
- (d) To safeguard the interests of the co-operative movement in all its forms.
- (e) To maintain good relations between its affiliated organisations.
- (f) To promote friendly and economic relations between co-operative organisations of all types, nationally and internationally.
- (g) To work for the establishment of lasting peace and security.
- (h) To assist the promotion of the economic and social progress of the workers of all countries.

The methods through which these objects are to be attained are as follows:

- (a) By convening periodical International Congresses.
- (b) By sending delegations to visit the movements in all countries, with the special object of studying the movements, of exchanging experiences, and of giving to the movements such advice and guidance as they may desire, or which the ICA may consider desirable.
- (c) By issuing publications.
- (d) By promoting the teaching and study of co-operation in all countries.
- (e) By carrying out research studies and inquiries on problems of vital importance to the movement and by collecting co-operative statistics.

- (f) By creating international co-operative auxiliary organisations for trading; production – agricultural, industrial and artisanal; banking and credit; insurance; housing; as well as for other sectors of economic activity; and by maintaining a close liaison with all such auxiliary committees.
- (g) By collaborating to the fullest extent with all United Nations organisations, and with other voluntary and non-governmental international organisations, which pursue aims of importance to co-operation.
- (h) By any other suitable and legal method.

The organisational structure of the Alliance is shown in the chart on page 2.

ICA Authorities

The Congress, which is the highest authority of the Alliance and can be regarded as a Co-operative Parliament, is convened at intervals of four years; there is provision in the statutes for calling an extraordinary session at the request of a majority of $\frac{2}{3}$ of representative votes. The Congress reviews the work of the ICA during the preceding period and this is contained in the Report of the Central Committee submitted to the Congress. In addition, there is a principal paper for discussion as well as motions submitted by member organisations. The 1976 Congress was held in Paris, and the 1980 is in Moscow with discussions focussed on “Co-operatives in the Year 2000”.

The Central Committee, which meets once a year, is a fully representative body and during the inter-Congress years has the responsibility of formulating and implementing ICA’s policies as defined by the Congress. This Committee elects the President and the two Vice-Presidents of the ICA as well as the Executive Committee and this is normally done on the occasion of the Congress. The membership of the Central Committee varies but is presently 264 and its meetings resemble a miniature Congress, the agenda being along the lines of the Congress.

The Executive Committee consists of 13 members plus the President and the two Vice-Presidents. The Executive meets twice a year and receives regular reports on the work of the ICA and its Regional Offices; it considers and approves applications for membership to the ICA and generally ensures that the decisions of the Central Committee and the Congress are being carried out.

The Executive Committee has created three sub-committees, namely the Finance and Budgets Sub-Committee, the Executive Sub-Committee and a Co-operative Development Committee which is concerned entirely with questions of the promotion of co-operatives in the Third World.

Auxiliary Committees

The technical expertise of the ICA resides in various **Auxiliary Committees** which have been created to allow opportunities for Co-operators working in a particular sector to discuss their common areas of interest. These committees submit regular reports to the Central Committee so that the Central Committee has full access to information on the wide ranging work of the Alliance. There are in all nine such Committees.

The Agricultural Committee brings together agricultural co-operative organisations from 50 countries; it also has a sub-committee for S.E. Asia which is served by the Regional Office in New Delhi. An Economic Sub-Committee has been set up with a joint secretariat in Paris and in London. Two of its recent initiatives are as follows. In November 1978, the Economic Sub-Committee organised an International Co-operative Trade Conference at the World Trade Centre in New York which brought together 121 participants from 22 countries, including 40 representatives from 21 US co-operatives and allied organisations. The Conference, which was regarded as a success, both in terms of the flow of trade it generated and in highlighting the trade potential of Co-operatives, will be followed by another Conference to be held a few days before the ICA Congress in 1980. The Agricultural Committee also organised a delegation to represent the ICA at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development held at FAO in Rome in July 1979

The Banking Committee's Secretariat is based at the offices of the Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft in Frankfurt (Fed. Rep. of Germany); it brings together in its membership a large number of co-operative and trade union supported banks. It organises technical meetings for the exchange of experience. It represents the ICA in the International Liaison Committee on Co-operative Thrift and Credit, and has helped to organise several international conferences dealing with the subject of thrift and credit, the last of which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1977 and the next one to be organised in New Delhi, India, in 1981.

The Organisation for Co-operative Consumer Policy has its Secretariat in Copenhagen. In addition to publishing a magazine entitled Co-op Consumer (which replaced the Consumer Affairs Bulletin previously produced in London), the Consumer Committee is broadly responsible for advising the Alliance and for intensifying its work in the field of consumer protection by arranging for an exchange of experience in matters such as descriptive labelling etc.

The International Organisation for Consumer Co-operative Distributive Trades (INTERCOOP) is concerned with arranging joint purchasing on behalf of its consumer wholesale member organisations in the world market, thus obtaining economies for its members. The Secretariat of the INTERCOOP is also located in Copenhagen. There is a broad division of work between INTERCOOP and EUROCOOP, based in Brussels, whereby the INTERCOOP specialises in economic activities and EUROCOOP attends to the "political" aspects relating to the EEC. The INTERCOOP either retains its own buyers in different parts of the world or has joint arrangements with co-operative member organisations, for instance, in California, São Paulo (Brazil), Australia. It has recently opened an office in Hong Kong to make purchases for its members from the Republic of China, Korea and Japan.

The Fisheries Committee has in its membership about 20 fisheries organisations. It maintains close and cordial relations with the FAO and is currently discussing projects for assistance in Sudan, Ghana, etc. In 1975 the Committee organised a successful "First Open World Conference on Co-operative Fisheries" in Tokyo. It publishes the *Co-operative Fishermen's Bulletin*.

The Housing Committee is an old established Auxiliary Committee of the ICA having its joint Secretariat shared between the ICA in London and Berlin. The Housing Committee issues a bulletin of its own and discusses matters relating to the sector of co-operative housing especially in the industrialised countries. Co-operative housing in the developing countries is a matter for the **International Co-operative Housing Development Association**, whose Secretariat is based in the ICA in London. ICHDA's recent activities include an extremely successful low-income co-operative housing project in Lesotho, the undertaking of a housing sector survey and housing workshop in the Gambia, and advising the Government of Tanzania on housing policy and strategy for the new capital of Dodomo.

The International Co-operative Insurance Federation (ICIF) deals with co-operative insurance and has completed over 50 years of existence. The ICIF has two sub-committees, one of which is the Re-insurance Bureau which arranges re-insurance agreements between co-operative insurers and the Insurance Development Bureau whose Secretariat is based in Stockholm (Sweden). The function of the IDB is to encourage and develop co-operative insurance throughout the world and as a result of its vigorous efforts the UNCTAD Committee on Invisibles, Finance and Trade (CIFT) adopted some time ago a resolution calling for the organisation of insurance on a co-operative basis in the Third World.

The Women's Committee is charged with the task of ensuring the fullest participation of women in all aspects of co-operative activities. It was created in 1975 and, exceptionally, has a seat on the Central Committee. At a Central Committee meeting in Bucharest it brought out an important document surveying the extent of participation of women in co-operative activities and has collaborated closely with the United Nations in emphasising the role which women can play in different kinds of co-operative activities. It has a special working party dealing with agricultural matters. The Women's Committee, in collaboration with the Housing Committee, organised a Seminar on "The Role of the Family in Housing Co-operatives" in Stockholm in October, 1979.

The Workers Productive Committee deals with a form of co-operative organisation which has recently acquired an increased significance, namely industrial and artisanal co-operatives. In October 1978, the Committee organised a World Conference on Industrial Co-operatives in Rome which resulted in useful discussions with UNIDO; the ICA Director attended UNIDO III in New Delhi in March 1980. One of the Committee's active member organisations, the Polish Central Union of Work Co-operatives, has created a Centre in Gdansk for training of co-operators from developing countries.

Working Parties

While ICA Auxiliary Committees represent distinct sectors of the international co-operative movement, the **Working Parties** bring together individuals performing similar tasks in the various sectors of the movement, such as librarians, journalists etc. The Working Parties are as follows:

The International Working Party of Co-operative Librarians and Documentation Officers (which publishes a quarterly information bulletin, *LIBRADO*);

The Research Officers' Group;
The Working Party on Co-operative Press;
The Advisory Group for International training of Co-operators (AGIT-COOP);
The Working Party on Co-operative Tourism.

The above Working Parties are serviced from the ICA Headquarters which provides Secretaries for them.

As mentioned earlier, the ICA is a member, through its Banking Committee, of the *International Liaison Committee on Co-operative Thrift and Credit*. ICA is also a member, together with the UN, the FAO, the ILO, IFAP and IFPAAW, of the *Committee for the Promotion of Aid to Co-operatives* (COPAC), whose function is to co-ordinate technical assistance work in developing countries.

Developing Countries

ICA's policy on support to co-operatives in the developing countries was defined in the Long-Term Programme of Technical Assistance which was adopted by the ICA Congress in Lausanne in 1960. Two regional Offices were opened, the New Delhi Office for South East Asia in 1960, the one in Moshi in Tanzania for East and Central Africa in 1968; a third office is likely to be operative in 1980 in West Africa, located at Bingerville (Ivory Coast). The principal purpose of these three Regional Offices is to promote and support co-operative activities in various parts of the world in consultation with our member organisations who constitute a Regional Council for each Office, which advises on our programme of work there. Much of this work is carried out in collaboration with national technical assistance agencies.

Secretariat Services

The Headquarters Secretariat provides a wide range of services and activities. These cover agriculture and fisheries; education and training, including the holding of an annual specialised seminar; development work including the Co-operative Education Materials Advisory Service (CEMAS) Project aiming to provide appropriate training manuals for movements in developing countries; press and publications including a range of occasional publications on specialised topics as well as the ICA's official journal "Review of International Cooperation"; Research services; Library; Women's Work; relations with the UN and its specialised agencies;

The core resources of the Alliance come from subscriptions of member organisations, approximately £400,000 per annum with additional allocations from some member organisations for work in the Third World. Some bi-lateral national agencies give extra-budgetary financial support for specific technical assistance projects in developing countries.

The slender resources of the ICA mean a small staff which totals 25. The Secretariat aims to provide an efficient service to its member organisations in keeping with these resources.

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