



ICA Digest

Issue 54

March 2007

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Third anniversary of ICA and ILO joint programme of action on co-operatives



The ICA and the International Labour Organisation recently celebrated the third anniversary of their joint programme of action. The two organisations have a long history of commitment to the development of co-operatives. Read all about the common programme on page 11.

ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia, on left greets the ICA's President, Ivano Barberini, at the start of the 3rd anniversary celebrations

NZ Co-op Minister reinforces importance of international accounting standards acknowledging co-operatives

The Minister responsible for co-operatives in New Zealand, the Hon Lianne Dalziel, recently met with Sir David Tweedie, the Chair of the International Accounting Standards Board.

Media reports of the meeting indicate that the Minister made clear that

the proposed international accounting standard IRS 32 needs to take account of how co-operatives operate.

This issue has been of real concern to co-operatives throughout the world for some time. The ICA has set up its own working group on

this issue, including representatives from NZ co-operatives.

As well, Sir David Tweedie has been invited to attend the ICA's General Assembly in Singapore in October to speak on this issue.

See [here](#) for NZ media reports.

From the editor's desk



Garry Cronan
Editor

"... 2007 will be a busy year for the ICA..."

Welcome to the fifty fourth edition of the ICA **Digest**. This issue is our first for 2007. It also marks the third anniversary of the launch of **Digest**.

2007 will be a busy year for the ICA. We have our General Assembly in Singapore in October. In addition, we are further advancing our new strategic plans and framework for the whole ICA, while at the same time introducing governance and structural changes.

Apart from changes designed to get our organisation "fit for its new mission" we are also working to consolidate our new business focused programmes, par-

ticularly the **Global 300** initiative.

This month's lead item is a report on the recent 3rd anniversary of the MOU between the ICA and the ILO. This MOU provides a framework for a joint programme of action between the two organisations. Its success evidences the important role ICA can play within the wider United Nations system on behalf its members and co-operatives, generally.

We report on the progress so far of our USA member, NBCA, in its fight against demutualisation. The ICA itself, expects to be taking, an increasing profile over

the coming year, in defending the integrity and character of co-operative and mutual organisations against such attacks.

Also included in this issue is an update on tsunami reconstruction, the Rochdale Pioneers Award, plus sectoral, regional and **Global 300** reports. Our interview this month is with ICA Board member Felice Scavini. Sadly, we also note the passing of three well known co-operators.

As usual we would welcome your comments on or contributions to the **Digest**.

Garry Cronan

New online poll

A new online poll has been recently added to the front page of the www.ica.coop site.

The poll, displayed on the right, asks the question. "Which co-operative principle is the most important?" At the time of writing the leading answer was "All equally important". It is hoped that the poll will draw attention to the important role the ICA plays in articulating and promoting the principles on behalf of the global movement.

In coming months we will be including a range of different poll topics on the ICA's main site seeking user and member responses. Our www.icanews.coop site also includes an online poll. If you have any ideas for future questions please contact webmaster@ica.coop

Website improvements



ica.coop poll

Which co-operative principle is the most important?

- ☐ 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
- ☐ All equally important
- ☐ Not sure

[View results](#)

[Version 2.07](#)

As part of the celebration of the 3rd anniversary of the International Co-operative Alliance and International Labour Organisation's joint programme of action, a new redesigned and updated *Global Co-operative Campaign Against Poverty* website has been launched - www.ica.coop/outofpoverty/index.html

Director-General looks forward to an exciting 2007

It is now the norm for the ICA Board to meet in December every year to discuss and approve the budget for the following year and, of course, the work programme. 2006 was no exception and this took place in Trento, Italy. The difference was that as I reported in the last **Digest** at the end of last year, we spent a lot of 2006 discussing restructuring and strategic development and this had to be reflected in the budget and work programme for 2007.

Being a co-operative organisation, however, rules dictate that major changes in our structure and strategy have to be approved at a General Assembly! Fortunately, our board is not easily distracted and I'm pleased to report that our programme for 2007 embraces many of the concepts introduced in our discussion of the strategic process. We anticipate that this will be accepted by the General Assembly.

Essentially, what we are trying to do is take account of the changes particularly in Europe, adapt the structure of ICA accordingly, agree on a global strategy, and develop a four-year plan with a two-year cycle ... that's all!

Anyway we've made real progress. And, for the first time, we can present a programme with five clear areas of activity covering our global and regional work.

These are:

- membership -- to grow and strengthen our membership base
- communications and intelligence -- to increase global influence by promoting co-operative enterprise
- development -- to support members through the development of co-operative enterprise
- international standing -- to enhance the standing of co-operation in the international community
- administration -- to promote effective financial management and corporate administration

At the same time, we have increased our redistribution of fees to the regions to 35%, reflecting the wish of the board to make decentralisation a reality.

Of course, relying entirely on membership subscriptions limits the scope of developing the ICA into the global influence that we desire, so the budget also in-

cludes challenges to secure new sources of income, particularly in our more exciting activities such as the **Global 300**.

Since the launch of the strategic planning initiative, we have had a very successful meeting involving all ICA's senior regional and global staff together with our strategy planning coordinator, Jim Rennie. We have now progressed to the next stage of developing our four-year plan. I am confident that this will be ready for consideration by our Board in Mexico in May.

The strategy itself, while using some new terminologies, endorses much of our current programme and puts it in a more strategic context with the intent that it will provide a global umbrella encompassing our global and regional work.

The restructuring activity also continues and proposals will be made to our Mexico meeting.

It's all go!

Iain Macdonald

DG's report



Iain Macdonald
Director-General

"For the first time, we can present a programme with five clear areas of activity covering our global and regional work.."

Iain Macdonald

You can read all of the DG's monthly reports by clicking [here...](#)

The Director-General's recent activities have included:

- Organisation of the ICA senior management strategic planning meeting
- Meeting with representatives of the UK Co-operative College over a series of joint projects and funding possibilities
- Meetings with Hagen Henry, the new ILO Co-operative Branch head
- Meeting with leaders of Rabobank, Amsterdam
- Welcoming visitor Amos Rabin, from the Kibbutz Movement, Israel
- Overseeing General Assembly preparations
- Inauguration of the International Workshop at VAMNICOM, Pune, India

Global 300 Support



Ilan Vuddamalay

Member support for the *Global 300* is growing all the time - learn how you can become a supporter or sponsor.....

Co-operative Group (UK) supporting Global 300 research

ICA member, [The Co-operative Group Ltd](#) from the United Kingdom, is actively supporting the **Global 300** project by seconding an intern to work in its head office in Geneva.

Ilan Vuddamalay, is one of a number of graduates in the Co-operative Group's graduate leadership programme.

The focus of Ilan's activities will be:

ties will be:

- Research into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) issues covered by **Global 300** co-operatives and how these are reported and measured amongst co-operatives themselves.
- Developing a set of criteria by which co-operatives' CSR actions can be benchmarked.
- Developing a methodology to collate information and measure the CSR work of the **Global 300** (and other) co-operatives to incorporate work already done on co-operatives' development initiatives.

ogy to collate information and measure the CSR work of the **Global 300** (and other) co-operatives to incorporate work already done on co-operatives' development initiatives.

Ilan can be contacted on global300-4@ica.coop

ICA board members show the way....

ICA Board members warmly welcomed the launch of the **Global 300** initiative at their last meeting in December 2006.

Several board members have also directly assisted the project by providing much needed funding for the initial development phase of the project. The ICA would like to formally acknowledge the generous support of Carlos Palacino, CEO of Saludcoop, Colombia, Dae-Kun Chung, Chair of NACF of Korea and Alban D'Amours, President and CEO of Desjardins Group, Canada.

ICA head office is currently negotiating with a range of other co-operative organisations interested in either offering core programme funding or in one of the **Global 300** sponsorship packages now available. Contact: Garry Cronan cronan@ica.coop



Carlos Palacino,
Saludcoop



Dae-Kun Chung, NACF



Alban D'Amours,
Desjardins

Global 300 supporters



the Co-operative Group



Do co-operatives make economies more competitive?

Global 300

The [World Economic Forum](#) recently released a ranking of the most competitive economies in the world.

It is interesting to compare the top three most competitive economies with the top four countries which have the highest percentage of GDP coming from co-operatives listed in the **Global 300** ranking.

There is on the surface a strong correlation between economies with a significant % of co-op activity and that of competitiveness. We need further research, but

Country	Global 300 turnover % of GDP	Ranking Global 300 turnover % of GDP	Davos global competitiveness ranking 2006
Finland	21.1%	1	2
New Zealand	17.5%	2	23
Switzerland	16.4%	3	1
Sweden	13.0%	4	3

this result indicates that many governments and others may have underestimated the importance of a strong co-op sector contributing to a balanced competitive economy.

The top 3 economies in the world have a strong **Global 300** co-op presence!

For more information contact **Global 300** Director, Garry Cronan cronan@ica.coop also see www.global300.coop

Global 300 - a resource for schools

The ICA's **Global 300** listing is now being used as part of a project to raise awareness of co-operatives in schools in the UK, and as part of a project led by the UK Co-operative College working with a network of ten specialist Business and Enterprise Colleges sponsored by the Co-operative Group.

Through the project a wide range of new curriculum materials have been developed, using the global co-operative movement as a learning resource.

College Principal Mervyn Wilson commented, "Co-operative enterprise for far too long has been virtually invisible in our education system. The schools project sponsored by the Co-operative Group aimed to address this. We had already developed a wide range of materials working with the schools, using the

global co-operative family to demonstrate the strength and diversity of co-operative enterprise. The **Global 300** list enabled us to develop new exercises with the schools, building on case studies and other resources that help demonstrate their global application."

The new materials are part of our CD based resource on the theme *Co-operative Enterprise as a Learning Resource* which has recently been distributed to over 2,000 secondary and special schools in England by the national Schools Enterprise Education Network. A new website www.school.coop has been developed.

Mags Bradbury, the Co-operative Group's Project Manager added "This project has been a partnership between the College, the schools and the Co-operative Group. Members of staff and



teachers have shared expertise to develop materials which are relevant to schools today. The website will allow the College and The Group to continue to build and update these resources, which will not only be useful to schools in England, but much wider, and it is great to have resources like the **Global 300** included."

For more details about the CD resource contact school.coop@co-op.ac.uk. The website is now accessible, with substantial new material being added in the coming months.

The 2007 **Global 300** listing will be launched at General Assembly in October

ICA President

ICA President visits Czech Republic

ICA President, Ivano Barberini, recently visited Prague at the invitation of Zdenek Juracka, President of the Board of the Co-operative Association of the Czech Republic (DACR).

are:

- Union of Czech and Moravian Consumer Co-operatives – Mr. Juracka
- Union of Czech and Moravian Production Co-operatives – Mr. Wiesner



ICA President, Ivano Barberini second from right next to the President of the Chamber, Mr Vleck and representatives of the Co-operative Association of the Czech Republic

The purpose of the visit which lasted from 22-25 January 2007, was to discuss future relations between the ICA and DACR – and to supply information to the President of ICA concerning the situation in the Czech co-operative movement.

Having been welcomed by the President of the Board of DACR, Ivano Barberini met with each of the presidents of the boards of the members of DACR which

- Union of Czech and Moravian Housing Co-operatives – Mr. Vanicek
- Agricultural Association of the Czech Republic – Mr. Jirovsky

The ICA President was informed about the conditions for co-operative enterprises and their activities in the Czech business branch and about the future aims of the whole Czech co-operative sector.

On the 23 of January Mr. Barberini visited the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and met with the President of the chamber – Mr. Vlcek.

They discussed the role of ICA within the international organisations and about the 3rd Cooperative Convention which will be held in Prague 28 – 29 June 2007.

There is a hope that the visit of ICA president at the Chamber of Deputies will help the Czech cooperative sector to gain a support and more interest from the government in the future.

The following day Mr. Barberini was guest of the Union of Czech and Moravian Consumer Co-operatives and together with the management he visited premises of the related company – the Managerial Institute Co-op at Klanovice and the secondary school for gastronomy, hotel business and tourist industry which was established by the UCMCC.



Mervyn Wilson, Principal of the UK's Co-operative College

ICA support for co-operative heritage appeal

Where did the principles of co-operation spring from?

As ICA President, Ivano Barberini reminds us "there are many sources from which our values, principles and practises are derived." In particular he identifies the crucial role played by the late 19th century, the UK movement and the Rochdale Pioneers.

Fortunately the endeavours of the pioneers have been well-documented by the UK's Co-operative College.

The College is committed to ensuring that the digitalised historic documents are just a mouse click away, but this costs money. To date, co-operative societies in the UK have committed around EURO 140,000 per annum to the Co-operative Heritage Fund, a restricted fund within the Co-operative

College Trust. The fund's target of EURO 200,000 per annum is all in aid of managing the National Co-operative Archive collection and the Rochdale Pioneers Museum.

That's where ICA members can make a difference. The ICA President has recently written to all members seeking their financial support for this project. For more information contact Mervyn@co-op.ac.uk

Past winners of the Rochdale Award

2001



Dr Venghese Kurien,
India

The ICA introduced the Rochdale Pioneers Award in 2001.

The award is designed to acknowledge the important contribution either individuals or co-operative organisations make on behalf of co-operative members either nationally or internationally.

Sixteen nominations were received for the first award in 2001 which was won by Dr Venghese Kurien, archi-

tect of India's modern dairy industry and the father of White Revolution ushered in by the Anand-pattern (Amul) dairy co-operatives established under the Operation Flood.

Joint winners in 2003 were Francisco Luis Jimenez Arcila, from Colombia and Lloyd Wilkinson, from the UK.

The 2005 award was a very tight contest. The three joint winners were, Hans Dahlberg for his work on behalf of international co-operative insurance; Ian MacPherson for his contribution to Canadian co-operation and his co-operative research and principles work; and Yehudah Paz for his championing of the co-operative cause within Israel but also especially internationally.

Rochdale Pioneers



The original Rochdale Pioneers

2003



Francisco Luis Jimenez
Arcila, Colombia



Lloyd Wilkinson,
United Kingdom

2005



Dr Ian MacPherson,
Canada



Yehudah Paz,
Israel



Hans Dahlberg,
Sweden

Do you know of someone or some co-operative organisation which should be recognised for their important contribution?

For further information please contact the ICA's Director-General, Iain Macdonald macdonald@ica.coop

The winners will be announced at the 2007 General Assembly in Singapore in October this year.

Nominations for the 2007 ICA Rochdale Pioneers Award will be called for in early April 2007.

Sectors

Banking



Jean-Louis Bancel

Big or small, co-operative banks are better off working together - Jean-Louis Bancel

New International Co-operative Banking Association (ICBA) Chair, Jean-Louis Bancel, has a checklist when it comes to better exchanges between co-operative banks that come under the ICA umbrella.

His first step is updating the directory of ICA banks, followed by widening the composition of the ICBA by recruiting new members.

To increase contacts and exchanges between members, Bancel plans to alternate ICBA meetings in different world regions. The next meeting will coincide with the ICA Americas Congress to be held in Puerto Rico from 11-12 May 2007.

Casting the co-operative

net even wider, the new ICBA Chairman has his sights on increasing contacts with representative organisations such as EACB, CIBP and IRU, to name but a few. How does he plan to mutually strengthen co-operative banks and identify better ways of collaborating? In his opinion, organising common interest seminars would be a good starting point.

"As part of our mission to defend and develop the co-operative banking model all over the world, I also want to put a special focus on co-operative banks in southern countries," says Jean-Louis Bancel. In that regard he welcomes proposals on creating and strengthening financial and banking co-operatives in developing countries.

He draws members' attention to the fact that the financial sector occupies 25% of the **Global 300** list, just behind agriculture. "We can be proud of our strength without forgetting that it also leaves us with the responsibility of continuing to play the game of inter-cooperation between co-operative banks."

Vice Executive Chairman of Credit Coopératif, the French co-operative bank with a strong market share in the French co-operative sector and innovative SME enterprises, Jean-Louis Bancel maintains that "I want ICBA to be this common house where big and small co-operative banks recognise each other and exchange together, helping each other to become stronger and better."



"The overall impact of a higher co-operative presence on bank stability is positive on average".

IMF Report

IMF paper finds co-op banks more stable

A technical paper published in January 2007 by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on financial stability notes that co-operative banks and credit unions are an important, and growing, part of many financial systems that contribute to financial stability.

The authors argue that the importance of the co-operative banking sector (co-operative banks, savings and credit co-operatives and credit unions) — and in particular the implications of their specific nature for financial stability has not yet received appropriate attention in economic literature. They note that despite the prevalence (10 %

of banking system assets in advanced economies and emerging markets, reaching as much as 30% in some countries in terms of assets) and high market shares, proportionally the attention given to the co-operative sector is negligible.

Readers are reminded that the co-operative banking sector has market shares of 60% in France, 50% in Austria, 40% in Germany, Finland and the Netherlands, 20% in Italy and 10% in both Spain and Portugal.

The technical paper reviews data and compares the financial stability of co-operative versus commercial banks. Its conclusion is that co-operative banks,

savings and credit co-operatives and credit unions are more stable than commercial banks due to the lower volatility of the co-operatives' returns, which more than offsets their lower profitability and capitalisation. This may be caused by the fact that co-operative banking institutions in normal times pass on most of their returns to members, but are able to recoup that surplus in weaker periods. The authors also find that in systems with a high presence of co-operative banking institutions, weak commercial banks are less stable than they would be otherwise. See www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2007/wp0702.pdf

Insurance co-operatives fight social exclusion and poverty

Insurance

Signing up to an initiative of the STEP programme, the International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) has created the network *América Cooperativa y Mutual (ACYM)* in which they also participate as members of the AMA (American Mutual Insurance Alliance) and the AAC/MIS (Americas Association of Cooperatives and Mutual Insurance Societies).

Sponsored by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), STEP is short for the Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty programme.

How will the ACYM network make a difference? By interacting with organisations interested in learning about the role of co-operative insurance in the region, the new network intends to become a useful tool in extending social protection in the American continent.

What's the plan? Regularly exchanging information and experiences among professionals is a key step. So is documenting successful initiatives and innovations for fu-

Cooperativa y Mutual (ACYM) will develop a communication and information strategy that covers the mechanisms of co-operative and mutual insur-



Dr José C. Guisado, President of IHCO, on left meets ILO representatives in Madrid

ture reference. The resulting database will facilitate access to methodological tools that contribute to the future development of insurance co-operatives. Last but not least, the network plans to promote the technical capacity of those involved in the wider scope of the co-operative and mutual insurance companies it represents.

With this in mind, América

ances, creating an interactive website, producing and disseminating newsletters and elaborating timely relevant studies.

The IHCO Board will meet on 24 May in Stockholm. www.ica.coop/ihco/about.html

Health co-operatives currently serve at least 100 million households around the world

2007 General Assembly - "something not to be missed" says DG!

The General Assembly in Singapore in October is shaping up to be a very exciting occasion, says ICA Director-General Iain Macdonald.

"As usual we have a variety of events preceding the actual Assembly itself with the involvement of almost all of our thematic and sectoral groups.

Worth highlighting at this stage perhaps is the global youth conference on 14 October and the global workshop on university co-ops on the 16th. As far as

the Assembly itself is concerned, the theme this year is *Innovation in Co-operative Business* with a particularly environmental emphasis.

We are very hopeful of securing speakers on this subject from the very highest of international circles.

I am also aware that some of our members are considering submitting resolutions on the reduction of carbon emissions so this could end up being a very significant and timely Assembly.

In addition we will be launch-

ing the latest edition of the **Global 300** list which will have been greatly developed and improved from the first one.

All events therefore, as well as the Assembly itself are due to showcase ICA in its new business oriented and socially aware direction.

Not to be missed!"

General Assembly



Research

Co-operatives & Chains research workshop in Ethiopia



Jan-Eirik Imbsen, ICA
Director of Development

“...the research will examine how commodity and market structures influence the supply chain and governance...”

As reported in **Digest** 52, the ICA last year entered into a research collaboration with Agriterra (the Netherlands) and the Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN), on Co-operatives and Chains (linking smallholder organisations to agricultural markets).

The Dutch Science Council selected the proposal for further development. A workshop was held in Ethiopia 15-16 January to elaborate on the details of the proposal.

ICA Director of Development, Jan-Eirik Imbsen, attended the meeting, which brought together experts to define the research strategy, review the research methodology and to identify suitable case studies.

ICA's contribution - together with Agriterra - is very important in identifying prospective case studies that demonstrate new capacities for dealing with market demands.

Co-operative organisations may choose different pathways to respond to the increasing demands resulting from the integration of the vertical supply chain. Among the issues the research will address is the question of how co-operatives adapt to changing markets and institutional environments (what are the changes in governance, member heterogeneity, member-co-operative relationships, equity requirements and so on?).

Research will examine how commodity and market structure influence the supply chain and governance, and how the integration and governance of the supply chain influence incentives for collective action. It will also look at how different organisational forms respond to these incentives, and what impact alternative co-operative forms have on smallholder welfare and on the performance of the whole co-operative sector.

Research will be carried out over five years in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It aims to improve the role of farmers'

organisations in development by identifying policies and strategies that strengthen co-operative performance. An instrument for assessing performance and strength of agricultural co-operatives that can be used by institutions involved in rural development, will also be developed.

If you would like more



information on the proposed research you can contact Ruerd Ruben, Director Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN) at Radboud University, Nijmegen.

For further information contact : R.Ruben@maw.ru.nl and Jan-Eirik Imbsen, Imbsen@ica.coop

Digest

The ICA wants to feature more member news in the **Digest**.

If you have anything you would like included please contact us

Associate editors taking larger role in 2007

The first ICA **Digest** was produced in February 2004. Up until this issue, most of the responsibility for its production has resided with the editor, assisted over the last year by our two associate editors.

From the next issue, both Suzanne and Melina will assume more overall responsibility for its production. They will be contacting members and others for news, so please assist them.



Suzanne Henderson, Joint
Associate Editor



Melina Morrison,
Joint Associate Editor

ICA/ILO 3rd anniversary meeting held in Geneva

ILO/ICA

The third anniversary of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ICA and the ILO was celebrated in

Geneva on 1 March 2007.

Reports were received on the activities of the past years, plus an outline of the main focus of the joint programme for 2007 was provided by Iain MacDonald for the ICA and Hagen Henry for the ILO. A document, *Partnership in Progress*, see left, has been produced which provides details of the joint programme.

The newly redesigned website for the *Cooperating Out Of Poverty* www.ica.coop/outofpoverty was launched to mark the



Participants at the 3rd anniversary meeting

occasion.

There was also much interest expressed by the ILO in working with the ICA on the **Global 300** project particularly focusing on the employment aspects of the **Global 300** co-operatives.

“..the meeting endorsed the 2007 programme...”



UN report on co-operatives and employment

United Nations

ICA is asking members to assist the United Nations in compiling information on the role of co-operatives in promoting full and productive employment for the preparation of the 2007 UN Secretary-General's report on co-operatives.

The UN prepares a thematic report on co-operatives every two years and recommendations from the report form the basis for future UN action in co-operative promotion.

The UN primarily seeks input from governments, its members. Accordingly a questionnaire was sent to governments earlier in the year asking for specific information on job creation and maintenance of employment through co-operatives, including information on na-

tional policies on co-operatives, the implementation of UN instruments regarding co-operatives (UN Guidelines and ILO Recommendation 193) as well as statistical data on how many jobs are created and maintained directly by co-operatives. The ICA and other members of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives (COPAC) will also assist providing additional information for the report.

ICA encourages members to make contact with their governments to ensure that the questionnaire is returned to the UN. ICA members wishing to also provide input directly to the UN may also do so. The questionnaire is available on the UN website in English only at: www.un.org/esa/socdev/

poverty/subpages/survey.htm

The final report will be submitted to the 62nd UN General Assembly in October 2007 and a resolution on UN activities related to co-operatives for the next two years will be submitted towards the end of the year.

Previous UN SG reports on co-operatives can be found at: www.copac.coop/unpubs.htm#sg.

For further information, please contact Maria Elena Chavez Hertig - chavez@ica.coop



The new United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Members' News from Italy

Federabitazione's project wins Sustainable Energy Award

The SHE project (Sustainable Housing in Europe), a project promoted and coordinated by Federabitazione, the housing federation of [Confcoopera-](#)

of sustainable housing and communities.



CONF COOPERATIVE
CONFEDERAZIONE COOPERATIVE ITALIANE

"SHE focuses on raising awareness among end-users and wants to improve the lives of citizens by offering healthy and sustainable environments.

"The partnership is demonstrating an integrated approach to the development and construction of sustainable housing by making the extraordinary ordinary. By the end of the project, 600 families in Denmark, France, Italy and Portugal will be living in sustainable dwellings.

"SHE will develop best-practices guidelines so that sustainable dwellings can be replicated by others."

Concretely, the Jury emphasised that :

- housing cooperatives are a key element of the integrated urban sustainable development
- the pioneer action of social housing cooperatives is paving the way for eco-friendly houses in more sustainable communities
- the project is now considered as best practice and will be of great inspiration

for other housing promoters as well as private and municipal clients. This new and prestigious award has been dedicated to a more intelligent use of sustainable energy in Europe with the objective to raise the awareness and to change the landscape of energy.

The positive feedback is a significant recognition of cooperative efforts to accelerate the integration of sustainable issues in the housing sector and to realise dynamic and environmentally friendly cities.

The SHE project, which was presented during *Cooperatives Europe* Assembly in Manchester last November was one of only five projects to receive an award - the others include Sony, Electrolux, Cmbh and the municipality of Växjö in Sweden. Contact: Enzo Pezzini enzo.pezzini@confcooperative.coop Links www.she.coop www.sustenergy.org VIDEO of the campaign and winners- www.mostra.com/see/



[tive](#), won the European Commission Sustainable Energy Award 2007 as best project in the category *Private-public partnership for saving energy*.

The judges noted:

"SHE represents a shining example of a public-private partnership where social housing co-operatives on a local, regional and European level have partnered with building companies, scientific institutions and technical organisations to demonstrate the feasibility

Co-operative credit banks represent 11.3% of all Italian banking branches,

Italian co-operative banks re-elect president

Federacasse, the Italian Federation of Co-operative Credit Banks, has re-elected its president, Mr. Alessandro Azzi for another three-year term. Federacasse, formed in 1950 is the banking federation of Confcooperative. Mr Azzi said the Banche di Credito Cooperativo (Credit Co-operative Banks) had experienced greater growth than commercial banks in the last few years. He noted that there is a pressing need to preserve the greatest assets of Credit Co-operative Banks – their reputation, stability and sound management. Co-operative banks must focus on improving mutuality and the members' role, strengthening partnerships with SMEs, guaranteeing a sound and efficient network, promoting credit co-operatives for younger generations, and setting up a new guarantee fund. Contact Marco Reggio: mreggio@federacasse.bcc.it



US credit unions buck global demutualisation trend

Last year's October issue of the **Digest** reported on the latest demutualisation bid aimed at converting a member owned credit union into an investor-owned bank (see Issue 52, p.16 for the full story). In a positive post-script to that story, we are delighted to announce a major victory for the co-operative movement.

In mid-January, the Lafayette Federal Credit Union conversion bid in the United States was abandoned, with government officials looking into an extremely close member vote and the board reluctantly pledging to continue to operate as a credit union. Meanwhile, members loyal to the credit union were mounting a petition drive aimed at ousting the pro-conversion board.

About 30 out of 9,000 U.S. credit unions have converted to thrift or bank charters in the last decade. But conversions are attracting increasing attention, even spawning a network of conversion consultants who woo credit union leaders with talk of million-dollar stock windfalls if they demutualise.

The arguments put forward in the Lafayette conversion were similar to those in other recent cases. The credit union's board and leadership said it needed to convert to continue to grow and, in particular, to offer more business loans. They denied charges they were motivated by greed. Opponents, however, said the board had not presented a balanced picture

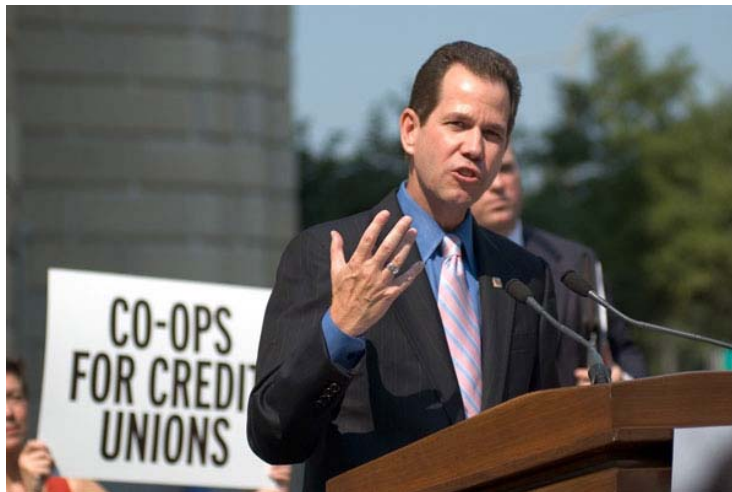
or allowed arguments against demutualisation to be presented to members.

When Lafayette announced in December that conversion had been approved by a mere 18 votes out of more than 5,000 cast, loyalists appealed to federal regulators citing various irregularities in the voting process.

As federal officials were looking into the allegations, Lafayette's independent election supervisor, accounting firm RSM McGladrey, withdrew its certification of the vote. A week later the Lafayette board withdrew its conversion bid, blaming McGladrey for "errors...in the tabulation process" that "irredeemably compromised" the balloting process. By late January, loyalists were looking for the last 100 of 750 signatures needed to call a special meeting of the membership. The petition drive was designed to vote out the board, which unanimously favoured conversion.

The [National Cooperative Business Association](#) (NCBA), the umbrella group of U.S. co-ops headquartered in Washington, vocally opposed the demutualisation proposed in its own backyard. It spoke out repeatedly against the conversion and assisted loyalist members in several ways,

including helping them set up a website,



www.savemycreditunion.co.op.

NCBA President Paul Hazen, an ICA board member, said he hoped other credit union boards would learn from Lafayette's experience. "What I'm hoping is that people out there thinking about conversion will think twice, because we are starting to get some traction," he said.

Hazen noted that four out of six well-publicised U.S. credit union conversion bids since 2003 have been successfully opposed. In each case, he said, loyalist members worked with co-op and credit union organisations to oppose conversion plans. "It's really positive what we were able to accomplish here," he said.

The Lafayette case shows the global trend for demutualisations is meeting with growing opposition from the co-operative sector. We congratulate the NCBA on their successful campaign.

Member News from USA

Paul Hazen speaking at a demonstration in support of the Credit Union

"...NCBA vocally opposed the demutualisation proposed in its own backyard. It spoke out repeatedly against the conversion and assisted loyalist members in several ways..."

Recent US media reports suggest however that the proponents of the Lafayette demutualisation are continuing [see](#)

Asia - Pacific

Fair Globalization through Co-operatives - 8th Ministers' Conference on Co-operative Legislation and Policy

For the past 17 years, ICA Asia-Pacific has actively pursued the development of progressive policies and legislation reforms to

of the Ministers' Conference since 1990, focusing on the underlying goal of exchanging effective dialogue between policy makers and stakeholders on critical areas enveloping the co-operative sector.

importance of co-operatives holding regular meetings and elections; working for clear legislation and by-laws prescribing the role of members, leaders and managers; as well as defining and working to an agreed code of conduct.

In the *Inherent Strength of the Co-operatives in Protecting Weaker Sections of the Society* session, the Honourable Minister of Indonesia will maintain that co-operatives through good education and guidance can play a role in reducing the vulnerability of people whose voices are rarely heard, or whose day-to-day livelihood is threatened by poverty, gender bias and disasters.

A special presentation made by ICA head office Geneva – *Co-operatives As Global Business Enterprises* – will contend that co-operatives as business enterprises the world over have created success stories by dint of the co-operative advantage, reflected in the form of value-based governance systems and their membership strength. The ICA recently launched the **Global 300** listing - a ranking of the largest 300 co-operative and mutual businesses in the world.

The conference will be rounded out by presentations on *Best Business Practices in Co-ops* from India (IFFCO, Amul), Korea (NACF), Singapore, (NTUC Fair Price Shops) and Sri Lanka (SANASA). A special session will address *Analysis of Co-operative Laws in the Asia-Pacific Region*.



A scene from the last Asia-Pacific Co-operative Minister's Conference

help co-operatives adapt to the fast changing global scenario.

In March 2007, the ICA will continue its commitment with ICA President, Ivano Barberini expected to participate in the 8th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference on Co-operative Legislation and Policy, to be formally inaugurated by the Honorable Abdullah Bin Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Hosted by the Malaysian Government and attended by Ministers in charge of co-operation from countries in the Asia-Pacific including India, Iran, Korea, Singapore and Sri Lanka, the *Fair Globalization through Co-operatives* conference will be held from 12-15 March in Kuala Lumpur.

The Regional Director of ICA-Asia Pacific, Shil Kwan Lee, will address the history

sage is that co-operatives deserve to be enshrined in the constitution of the country for uniform and smooth development of the nation.

A case study from Iran will argue that governments should recognise co-operatives as unique entities with a blend of economic and social responsibility. This session – *Co-operatives – feasible options for implementation of national development* will addresses the crucial role that co-ops play in implementing national development plans alongside the public and private sectors.

A presentation by the Malaysian co-operative movement will explore the key role that enlightened and informed memberships play in building successful co-operatives. *The Role of Leaders and Active Members of the Co-operatives* conference session will highlight the

The theme for the 8th Co-operative Minister's Conference is *Fair Globalisation through Co-operatives*

Raising farmers' income, decreasing poverty training underway

The first training course addressing *Enhancement of Farmers' Income and Poverty Reduction through Co-operatives* is currently being held in India, Thailand and Japan, running from 15 December 2006 to 22 April 2007.

The FMDI (IFFCO) segment of the course was inaugurated on 11 January 2007 by D.K. Bhatt, Marketing Director of Indian Farmers' Fertilizer Co-operative (IFFCO). Hailing from Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, the 12 participants were ad-

dressed by Shil Kwan Lee, ICA Regional Director, Ikuo Ashikari, General Manager, IDACA, Hisashi Sakata, First Secretary at the Embassy of Japan in India, and Mr. Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive of National Co-operative Union of India.

R.N. Kundu, Chief Manager, welcomed the participants while Dr. Bhattacharya, General Manager, HRD, gave the vote of thanks.

On 25 January the trainees moved to the Institute of



Rural Management (IRMA) India, and attended the IRMA segment of the course.

Participants at the recent event

From 27 February to 8 March students will be involved in field studies in Thailand, with the 3rd part of the programme to be held at IDACA, Japan, from 9 March-21 April 2007.

Pune hosts international co-operative workshop on HRD

Human resources took centre stage in Pune, India, on 25-28 February 2007 with the staging of an *International Workshop on the Strengthening of HRD and Networking of Co-operative Training Institutions for Asia-Pacific Region*.

ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald opened the event which was held at the Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Co-operative Management (VAMNICOM) premises.

The event was hosted by the National Co-operative Union of India (NCUI) and the ICA Asia Pacific, it is being organised by Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive of NCUI and Chairperson of the ICA committee on HRD and Research for Asia-Pacific.

The key aims of the workshop are to help representatives share HRD practices in their respective countries and to seek suggestions for improving the effectiveness and usefulness of the Global



Human Resources Development (GHRD) portal.

A scene from the workshop

For information contact bhawatiiprasad47@hotmail.com.

Never too young to co-operate in Singapore

ICA's longstanding engagement with the next generation culminated in the first ever meeting of the ICA Regional Committee on Youth Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific.

The meeting was held in Singapore from 2-3 February 2007 in collaboration with the Singapore National Co-operative Federation.

The ICA's Youth Network links over 200 young people, with delegates from India,

Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam attending.

Teo Say Hong, one of ICA's Asia-Pacific youth delegates



Europe

CoopEst gives Central and Eastern Europe's social economy a boost

“...CoopEst is committed to helping the social economy....”

Supporting commercial handicraft industries, agricultural co-ops and social housing staffed by the unemployed or disadvantaged? Fostering renewable alternative energies, organic agriculture and small business development?

Such socially-responsible projects based in Central and Eastern Europe have a new champion in the Brussels-based CoopEst.

Established in 2005 and targeting local established financial institutions, the organisation is committed to helping the so-called “social economy” – co-operatives, mutual societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises – to get off the ground by providing leverage funding and support

with loans of EURO 500 to 2 million up to 10 years.

What prompted CoopEst? Weaknesses of financial structures in Central and Eastern Europe limit access to long-term private and public financing. This makes it difficult for small and medium enterprises (SME) to start up in target countries such as Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Bulgaria, to name but a few.

A limited liability company operating under Belgian law, CoopEst sees its role as initiating and fostering the development of the social

economy.

It does this by providing long term financial support in terms of equity (subordinated loan), long term loans and guarantees to sustainable and socially responsible projects in target countries, allowing them to leverage further development funding.

Press release about funding for co-operatives etc in Central & Eastern Europe www.coopseurope.coop/article.php3?id_article=297 Republished with the kind permission of CoopEst. See also www.cecop.coop/article.php3?id_article=482



“Mapping” a Europe-wide Co-operative News agency

“...strategic objective - to enhance and reinforce the co-operative image...”

In pursuit of one of its Strategic Objectives for 2007 – to ‘enhance and reinforce the co-operative image’ – Co-operatives Europe is undertaking a mapping exercise of the Europe Region to collate information about the publications our members produce and what

‘communication tools’ they generally use.

Co-operatives Europe will be analysing the results to determine the feasibility of producing common communication tools as well as the establishment of a European Co-operative News agency.



Ray Collins, in charge of communications for Cooperatives Europe

The following people were elected to the board of Co-operatives Europe at the Regional Assembly held in Manchester late last year.

Pauline Green, Co-operatives UK, Co-President of “Cooperatives Europe – Europe region of the ICA and as Vice President of the ICA for Europe. Etienne Pflimlin, Confederation Crédit Mutuel, Co-President of “Cooperatives Europe – Europe region of the ICA” and as Chair of the EU Coordination Committee.

Anne Santamäki, SOK, FI ; Daniel Pavel, CU, SK ; Galina Kiseleva, Centrosojuz, RU; Jean-François Hoffelt, Febecoop, BE; Jan Wiesner, DACR, CZ; Giuliano Poletti, Legacoop, IT; Leif Linde, KF, SW; Zoltan Szöke, AFEOZ, HU; Juan-Antonio. Pedreno, COCETA, ES; Carl-Friedrich Leuschner, DGRV, DE; Petar Stefanov, CCU, BU; Jean-Claude Detilleux, GNC, FR; Alfred Domagalski, NCC, PL; Felice Scalvini, CECOP; Vicente Diego, CECODHAS – Co-operative Section; Marc-H Cornély, UEPS.

Lobbying and Co-operative Development

In December 2006, the Intercooperative Agricultural Cooperative Limited Confederacy (CONINAGRO), organised for COOPERATING – Co-operative Confederacy of the Republic of Argentina, and the International Co-operative Alliance – Americas (ICA) teamed up to present a new course Guide to the preparation of lobby plans.

The course was designed to

help co-operatives strategically plan to make better use of the political, social and economic opportunities at national and international levels.

It was presented at the head office of the Cooperative Federation of Telecommunications (FECOTEL) and the Intercooperative Agricultural Co-operative Limited Confederacy (CONINAGRO). President of COOPERAT-

ING, Juan Carlos Fissore, President of CONINAGRO, Fernando Gioino, young people and a host of federations and base co-operatives participated in the programme.

Alberto Mora Portugués, ICA-Americas Project Official, developed the course, with support from the Swedish Cooperative Center (SCC).

Americas



Alberto Mora Portugués

Co-operative International Forum

One hundred and twenty co-operatives participated in the International Forum *The Co-operativismo and its Historical and social validity* organised by the Co-operative of Saving and Credit "Petroperú" Ltda, on January 19 in Lima, Peru,

The ICA-Americas took part in this activity with Alberto Mora, Project Official opening the forum on

behalf of the President of ICA-Americas, Dr. Carlos Palacino Antía and the Regional Director, Dr Manuel Mariño.

The key themes were: *Co-operative promotion and social and economic development and, Supervision of co-operatives in Latin America: Problems and Challenges.*



Visit ICA Americas website for more information www.aciamericas.coop

Latest ICA Member Directory available

The latest edition of the ICA's Member Directory has recently been dispatched to members. ICA members in the Asia-Pacific region did not receive copies because they recently received a regional directory.

Contents include the

names of all ICA members and associate members, their addresses, telephone and fax numbers, email and website addresses as well as the main contact person.

If you are a member and would like to receive a copy please contact Gretchen Warner at warner@ica.coop

ICA is always seeking the latest information on its members, key contacts and their activities. If we have your latest information we can better serve your needs. Please assist us by ensuring you make us aware of any changes to your organisation.

Members



Tsunami

Reconstructing co-operatives after the tsunami – ICA's tactical response

We all remember how killer waves devastated thousands of coastal settlements in the Asia/Pacific area over two years ago. This brief report summarises how the ICA and the co-operative world mobilised its members in

carried out with funds collected from members, as well as on impressions gained from our visits to the tsunami stricken areas.

Although the funds collected by the ICA have now been transferred to the field, the work is far from over. A Rapid Survey was carried out to validate a proposal for the expansion of the Indonesian project, and the UK movement, which has contributed so much to the reconstruction efforts in India and Indonesia, still hopes to collect more funds to continue this work.

ICA's global response

Recognising that the emergency and relief stages are best left to experienced international and non-governmental organisations, the ICA adopted an approach to support long-term and sustainable livelihoods among the surviving co-operative members and their families.

A COPAC meeting of co-operative development agencies in January 2005 established a forum to exchange information and prioritise the essential reconstruction assistance using ICA as the central platform.

Robby Tulus was appointed special envoy to work alongside ICA Asia-Pacific,

members and partners in the field. A needs assessment and action survey identified Indonesia as requiring the most urgent attention. A funding proposal was circulated to all members in the hope of attracting funds to undertake the work.

Early reconstruction activities included restoring primary co-operative infrastructure at the village level to enable the rebuilding of co-operative businesses, and capacity building.

In Indonesia, a relatively small bridge fund made available by ICA members through the ICA head office was used to support the day to day management of DEKOPINWIL and carry out the crucial work of motivating members and keeping the movement functioning. These funds were also used for education and training of board members, supervisors and members of the six model co-operatives chosen for intervention. Each received funding towards activities like the registration of members (a necessary step to take stock of co-operatives that lost members and documents following the tsunami), office rent and income subsidy for staff members for five months as well as the provision of small loans to members. These funds were crucial in ensuring the continuity of these co-operatives in the period immediately following the disaster.

The COPAC report on co-operative development



Stirling Smith, UK College second on left and Rajiv Mehta, on a post tsunami visit to India

the aftermath of the tsunami.

The ICA's pro-active role and its achievements were made possible thanks to the generous contributions of ICA members and partners. The report also examines how the communities that bore the brunt of the devastation have taken charge, rebuilding their own lives and settlements.

Donations that followed the appeals by ICA head office and the regional office in Asia/Pacific (ICA AP) were given directly to the affected co-operatives or channelled through Red Cross and other relief organisations. The money collected was also used to set up a disaster fund for reconstruction.

In previous **Digest** articles we reported on the work

“..ICA's pro-active role and its achievements were made possible thanks to the generous contributions of ICA members and partners...”

Reconstructing co-operatives after the tsunami – ICA's tactical response.....continued

Tsunami

activities undertaken in the tsunami stricken areas included a proposal for future action and an agreement to improve disaster preparedness by establishing a protocol for co-operative response to disaster reconstruction. A draft protocol prepared by the ICA has been distributed to all CO-PAC members.

The guiding principle for this protocol focuses on reconstruction and support for co-operative empowerment and sustainable development. The signatories to the protocol will pool needs assessments and fact finding and be encouraged to channel relief through strategic partnerships with organisations that recognise co-operatives as long-term reconstruction agents. The autonomy, independence and leadership of local co-operative movements and local cultural practices will be respected and it is hoped that the protocol will serve to increase the preparedness and effectiveness of the co-operative movement to respond when disaster strikes.

ICA head office has, throughout this period, participated in project planning and negotiations with ICA Asia-Pacific and other stakeholders.

Towards the end of 2006, the last of the collected funds were transferred to Indonesia to finance an expansion of the on-going project based on a rapid validation survey. These funds will be used to rehabilitate the co-operative distribution network.

ICA's regional response

ICA's primary concern has been to rebuild long-term and sustainable livelihoods among the surviving co-operative members and families in the communities hit by the tsunami.

ICA's long-term approach rested on the assumption that victims would receive help from their local communities and primary co-operatives before international organisations could arrive in the disaster zones. SANASA -- a member of ICA -- is a perfect example of how its primary member co-operatives took the first initiative to help the tsunami victims in Sri Lanka, and subsequently called on international agencies to provide additional emergency aid. We saw examples of the same in Indonesia and India.

ICA Asia-Pacific carried out a number of fact-finding missions to the affected areas in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. These missions, financed by movements in the UK (UK co-operative movement); Singapore (NTUC Income); Israel, Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED); and other countries, resulted in project proposals that were shared with co-operative development agencies and members. The UK, Singaporean and Israeli movements



A new fishing vessel made possible with co-operative funds

also helped finance and launch a number of reconstruction activities in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. This report was co-authored by:

- Jan-Eirik Imbsen, ICA Director of Development
- Robby Tulus, ICA Special Tsunami Envoy
- Rajiv Mehta, ICA Asia-Pacific Office Director
- Suroto Ph



The next issue of the **Digest** will contain a detailed report on the post-tsunami reconstruction work in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India

Obituaries

Number of co-operative stalwarts pass away.....

One senses that we are in a time when a generation of co-operative thinkers and leaders are passing away. We note in particular the recent deaths of a number of co-operative researchers - two from the UK and one from India. Dr Rita Rhodes who worked with and knew all three reflects on their contributions to the wider co-operative movement.

Madhav Madane (India)



Madhav Madane

Madhav Madane was a student of the UK Co-operative College in the late 1950s. In the 1970s he was Project Director with the ICA's Asia-Pacific region.

He also worked for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

In 1990 he published *Agricultural Co-operatives in Japan*. Madhav's other publications include many co-operative research papers as well as works of fiction.

In 2001 he took over the chairing of the ICA's Asian Research Committee and in 2004 he hosted the International Colloquium in Pune celebrating a centenary of the

Indian Co-operative Credit Societies Act 1904.

He was very active also in the Indian Society for Studies in Co-operation.

Madhav Madane devoted his life to co-operative development and studies. His quiet, thoughtful and graceful presence added to any discussion on co-operative issues.

Garth Pratt (UK) 1933 - 2007



Garth Pratt

Garth Pratt was "a giant of the movement". Physically large, with a luxuriant beard, he also had a large personality, voice and vocabulary.

He studied at Oxford university where he was elected Union President. In 1970 he became UK

Co-operative Union Sectional Secretary in Leeds and eight years later the Union's head of research.

In both positions he became a well known figure at UK co-op gatherings and a respected speaker and writer.

He moved into international

co-operative circles when he was elected Chair of the ICA's Research Committee.

At the time of his death he was preparing a PhD. thesis on the history of the British consumer co-operative movement.

Muriel Russell (UK) 1917 - 2006



Muriel Russell

Muriel Russell who died on 15 December 2006, served the co-operative movement faithfully and well from her youngest years until old age. She did so with distinction in a wide variety of positions within the UK and internationally. She was 89.

In 1945 Muriel joined the first intake of students of the UK Co-operative College after its move to Stanford Hall,

Loughborough. After studying at the College, Muriel served the British co-operative movement with distinction in two main areas. The first was on the Board of her Enfield Society from where she was elected to various co-operative national committees.

Muriel moved into the international co-operative arena in 1963 when she was appointed Women and Youth Officer of the International Co-operative Alliance. As such she became Secretary

to the ICA's Women's Committee which had resulted a year earlier from the International Co-operative Women's Guild transferring its funds and engagements to the ICA.

She held this post until her retirement in 1978, becoming well known and respected in the international co-operative movement and travelling to most parts of the world.

Hagen Henry new head of ILO's Co-op branch

The ILO's Cooperative Branch has a new chief. Hagen Henry commenced his appointment on 1 January 2007. He replaces Jürgen Schwettmann.

Hagen's postgraduate studies were on development issues and development law in Geneva and Paris,

LL.D (Helsinki). His work experience includes: being a magistrate, public prosecutor and a civil servant with the German Federal Ministry of Economy.

Since 1993 he has been consulting at a national, regional and international level with governmental and non governmental organisations,

including the ILO and ICA, in Africa, Asia, Central and South America and Europe on co-operative legislation and, to a lesser extent, on co-operative policy.

His most recent position was as Adjunct Professor of comparative law and researcher at the University of Helsinki.

People



Hagen Henry

David Griffiths new webmaster for www.ica.coop

ICA has appointed a new (part-time) webmaster for its main www.ica.coop site.

David Griffiths from www.australia.coop has replaced Krisztina Koszo as the new webmaster. David comes to the job with a wealth of co-operative and web experi-

ence. He runs on behalf of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria in Australia (CFV) the www.australia.coop website. It is one of the more active and visited co-op sites on the web.

He is also a long-time co-operator and is a former Chair of CFV and now its current part-time secretary.

David will remain based in Melbourne while accessing the site remotely. Immediate priorities include routine updating of the ICA's site while working closely with regional and sectoral organisations to ensure timely and accurate information is on the site.

David can be contacted on webmaster@ica.coop



David Griffiths

Graham Mitchell webmaster for www.icanews.coop

Since June last year the ICA has been running its news aggregation website and analysis service, see www.icanews.coop.

Most of the development and subsequent maintenance work on the site has been carried out by Graham Mitchell from

the United Kingdom.

The ICA is in the process of completing negotiations to formally confirm Graham as the ICA webmaster for this news site.

Graham is a strong advocate for co-operatives using open source software and plat-

forms. The icanews.coop website has been developed using Drupal, an open source application.

Since its launch the site has been receiving an increasing number of visitors. It also has now over 12,000 co-operative news links in its searchable database.



Graham Mitchell

Vivianne Dubini has left the ICA after 23 years

The ICA would also like to acknowledge the work of Vivianne Dubini who regrettably concluded her employment with the ICA due to restructuring during the last year.

Vivianne joined the ICA on January 1st 1983 as a secretary/typist in its then new offices in Geneva.

After 3 years she became an accounts assistant eventually being promoted to Finance and Administrative Officer assisting the Deputy Director-General in financial operations and personnel administration.

She was as such responsible for support and guidance to the ICA secretariat, globally and regionally with re-

gard to finance and accounting; cash flow management; and staff/office administration. Most recently she worked as Membership Administration Officer.

Vivianne was one of the longest serving members of ICA's staff and we thank her for her commitment to the ICA over this time and wish her well.



Vivianne Dubini

Feature interview

ICA Board member Felice Scalvini is this month's interviewee

This month the **Digest** talks to Felice Scalvini, one of Europe's most experienced and dedicated champions of social co-operation. Felice reflects on his long-standing career in the co-operative field, what has inspired and challenged him, his contribution to legislative reform and co-operative development, and how he sees all forms of co-operation between co-operatives, at all levels, as essential in the third millennium.

Digest: How did you become involved in the co-operative movement?

FS: I started my career in the co-operative movement



Felice Scalvini

in 1975 as a volunteer promoting a social co-operative with a group of friends who were managing a community of children with serious family difficulties.

After six years in the heart of Milan's financial world, I returned to my home city of Brescia in 1981 to collaborate with the local structure of Confcooperative. I was soon involved in the start up of workers' co-operatives and, in particular,

those co-operatives which fell into the category of "social".

This new incarnation of the co-operative formula, although integrated into an ultra-centennial history, had distinctive features that didn't correspond with the existing laws. As so often happens, social needs and responses preceded the drawing up and consolidation of legal frameworks. To get suitable recognition for social co-operatives.

I drafted new legislation in 1981 that after lengthy and complex discussions was finally approved on 8 November 1991. The resulting legislation has worked well and had positive effects, proving itself capable of meeting the needs of development and transformation for which it was originally conceived. Accordingly, social co-operation shifted from the pioneering, experimental phase and transformed itself into one of the most vital sectors of the co-operative movement.

In 1996, thanks to my experience in the co-operative movement and, in particular, the workers and social co-operatives sector, I was elected to the chair of CECOP.

In 1998 I joined the Council of ICA Europe (now Co-operatives Europe) with the aim of offering my experience for the development of the European co-operative movement.

In this latter context I feel I have made a significant contribution to the evolution of the representative structure of the European co-operative movement as approved by the Assembly of Manchester in November 2006.

Digest: What does your current work in the co-operative movement involve?

FS: Having founded and chaired the initial phase of the Confcooperative Federation and national consortium for social co-operatives, and serving one term as Vice-President of Confcooperative, I am currently involved in national level financing activities as President of CFI, a private equity society dealing with the financing of worker and social co-operatives.

At the local level, as Vice-President of Confcooperative Brescia, I am involved with training new co-operative managers and leaders.

At the European level, I am President of CECOP and a council member of Co-operatives Europe (the ICA regional organisation for Europe).

At the international level, I am Vice-President of CI-COPA, and as an ICA Board member, I am committed to bringing the organisation

"I am committed to bringing the ICA closer to members' needs through strengthening of regional structures..."

Felice Scalvini

Felice Scalvini interview...continued

Feature Interview

closer to members' needs through strengthening of regional structures.

Digest: *In your view, what are the main challenges for the co-operative movement globally?*

FS: As I see it, the greatest challenge of the third millennium is dealing with the ICA's sixth co-operative principle (co-operation between co-operatives) at all levels and in every conceivable form.

A local challenge for communities, cities and territories, it is also a challenge at the national, European and global levels.

To bring this to fruition, we must overcome sectoral barriers and create co-operative networks that offer citizens global opportunities at the local level (consumption, jobs, housing, savings, and welfare).

At national, regional and global levels, I see that it is crucial to promote an envi-

through specific legal tools.

In this regard, the Italian experience of large inter-sectoral organisations is proof-positive that it is possible to generate strong co-operative development.

At the global level, in my opinion, ICA should actively work towards the development of such intersectoral organisations in every country and region of the globe, buoyed by the experience of *Cooperatives Europe* and consolidation processes of regional organisations.

Digest: *You are involved with many peak bodies in the co-operative sector (Concooperative Bresica, ICA Europe, CECOP and CICOPA to name a few).*

In your view what are some of the main benefits of social enterprise, social co-operation and the third sec-



tor for the communities they serve?

FS: First social co-operation represents "the entrepreneurial soul" of the entire non-profit universe that is already developing in every part of the world.

This is of a great importance because the development of non-profit economic activity is the only way to meet the welfare needs of citizens vis-à-vis the failures of the market and the limits of public sector intervention.

The fact that co-operatives take the leadership of this vital dynamic guarantees a democratic, "hands-on" management at all levels.

Felice Scalvini addressing a recent meeting

"...social co-operation represents the entrepreneurial soul of the entire non-profit universe that is already developing in every part of the world...."

Felice Scalvini



A social co-operative in Italy where disadvantaged people make wooden products

ronment, where all forms of co-operation are recognized, promoted and supported,

**INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATIVE
ALLIANCE**

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www.ica.coop

*Have you seen the
video
“Impressions of
a Co-operative
Grocer” on You-
Tube?*

[click here.....](#)

[Click here for further
2006 ICA and related
events.....\)](#)

Copies of the ICA
Digest are archived
on the ICA's web-
site www.ica.coop

2007 Calendar of ICA events and related co-operative activities

8-9 Feb	International Co-operative Housing Conference on the theme - Disasters and Calamities : The role of Co-operatives, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. See www.nchfindia.net
22-24 Feb	III Meeting Co-operative Education, Lima, Peru. Further information proyectos@aciamericas.coop
26-28 Feb	ICA and National Co-operative Union of India, International Workshop on Strengthening of HRD and Networking of HRD Institutions. Further information: www.icarop.coop
7 March	ICA Americas Executive Committee meeting, Rio de Janeiro Info: member@aciamericas.coop
7 March	Finance Committee ICA Americas, Rio de Janeiro . info: member@aciamericas.coop
8 March	International Seminar ICA Americas/OCB, Rio de Janeiro, info: member@aciamericas.coop
8 March	International Women's Day 8 March, Lima Peru. Org: Credicoop and CRAMC/ICA Americas: info: formacion@aciamericas.coop
12-15 March	ICA-AP/Govt. of Malaysia and ANGKASA, 8th Regional Co-operative Ministers' Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Further information: www.icarop.coop
4-5 May	ICA Board meeting, Mexico. Contact: Iain Macdonald macdonald@ica.coop
11-12 May	ICBA meeting, ICA Americas Congress. Puerto Rico.
14-15 May	Mutual Insurance Trade Association Meeting (MITAM), Paris, France Hosted by FFSAM, ROAM, GEMA, FNMF.
22-24 May	International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) Board meeting, Stockholm, Sweden. Contact: direccion@fundacionespriu.coop
28 May - 1 June	ICA Research meeting, Saskatoon, Canada. Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. See www.usaskstudies.coop
6-7 June	Cooperatives Europe/FNCUMA Partnerships, Bourg-en-Bresse, France
27 June	Cooperatives Europe Board meeting - Prague, Czech Republic. Contact Rainer Schluter, r.schluter@coopseurope.coop
28-29 June	3rd Co-operative Convention on European Social Dialogue. Prague, Czech Republic. Details will be posted on website at www.coopseurope.coop/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=51
12-15 July	International Co-operative Trade Fair organised by the Indonesian Co-operative Movement in collaboration with the ICA-AP. Bali, Indonesia. For further information contact: Sethumadhavansethu@icarop.coop and Rajiv Mehta rajivmehta@icarop.coop
29 July - 1 Aug	World Credit Union Conference, Calgary (Canada). More information : www.woccu.org/calgary07
24-29 Sept	ICMIF World Congress, Brussels, Belgium. Contact: Shaun Tarbuck, shaun@ICMIF.org
25 Sep	ICMIF Board Meeting, Brussels, Belgium. Hosted by P&V Contact: Shaun Tarbuck, shaun@ICMIF.org
9 Oct	Simposio Internacional: Cooperativismo en Alemania y Venezuela. Reflexiones en Ahorro y Crédito, Vivienda y Agricultura. Auditorio Naranja de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales – FaCES de la UCV. See program (only in Spanish)
13-14 Oct	Series of pre General Assembly ICA meetings, Singapore.
15 Oct	Meeting of ICA Sectoral Organisations Chair, Singapore Contact Dr Kim kim@ica.coop
16-17 Oct	Meeting of sectoral organisations and thematic committees. ICA General Assembly, Singapore.
18-19 Oct	ICA General Assembly, Singapore. See www.icasingapore.coop/
22-24 Oct	1st World CIRIEC research conference on the Social Economy, Victoria, British Colombia.
8 Nov	Meeting for co-operative development agencies, UK Co-operative College. Contact: Mervyn Wilson, Mervyn@co-op.ac.uk