

Give co-operatives what they need: a dash of youth, a spark of idealism

The importance to co-operatives of young members has been talked about time and again, in every country around the world, based on the premise that there is no future for the movement if it does not rejuvenate itself with young members.

For this very reason, ICA has nominated a Board member to address questions related to youth and work with regional co-ordinators, with the purpose of formulating a world strategy for youth issues. It has also given a staff member the responsibility of supporting this task. There was a very positive response when the proposal was discussed within the International Youth Co-operative Seminar at the last ICA General Assembly held in Québec in 1999. We are expecting an even larger meeting in Seoul next October, and we have asked ICA members to send their own "young"

representatives of the new generation to Seoul, so that they become more involved in the international co-operative movement.

But the powerful underlying reason for which the presence of these young people is essential, is the role that the co-operative movement is developing on all continents - an almost political role - to defend DEMOCRACY and PEACE.

Co-operatives in all countries are actually generating jobs and helping distribute wealth, and are therefore fighting against social exclusion and concentration of wealth which nowadays are the biggest enemies of democracy and peace.

So there is a new source of co-operative



Roberto Rodrigues
ICA President

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Board strengthens co-operative identity, knowledge and equity

The ICABoard when it met in Rome 18-19 April had a comprehensive agenda focusing on co-operative identity, knowledge and equity, and financial results.

The most important item was Draft Financial Accounts for the year 2000. ICA had a difficult financial year because of staff changes in the secretariat and the unexpected year-end results in some of the regions. The Board has taken measures to ensure a reversal of the negative financial trends affecting last year's results.

The issue of Regionalisation was discussed. It was concluded, that in the light of the present situation, it would certainly not be timely to discuss the issue at this time. The issue is, though, still relevant and it could be desirable to discuss it in the medium and long terms.

The Board decided that the ICA General Assembly 2003 will be held in Oslo, Norway. An agreement to that effect was signed by

the Norwegian co-operative movement and ICA in Rome during the Board meeting.

An important landmark was the adoption of the Constitution of the Gender Equality Committee. A Gender Training Seminar for ICABoard members was held immediately following the Board meeting. The seminar was highly appreciated by the participating Board members.

Another important item discussed by the Board was the creation of a Virtual Global Co-operative Learning Centre, to be made available on the web. A presentation of the concept will be made at the General Assembly in Seoul in October.

The new restricted Top Level Domain "dotcoop" and ICA's role as a partner to National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA) were discussed. The ICA secretariat was authorized to conclude the negotiations with NCBA about conditions for the ICA-NCBA partnership.

Changes at the secretariat and regional offices



MariaElena Chávez-Pirson: has been designated as deputy director-general of ICA. In her new role she will continue her primary responsibilities as director of UN/NGO Relations and as co-ordinator of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives COPAC. Ms Chávez joined ICA in 1987 as UN/NGO liaison officer. In 1996 she was promoted to director of UN/NGO relations and took over the responsibility for COPAC. In 1997 she was appointed secretary of the ICA Global Women's Committee, now called the ICA Gender Equality Committee. She also serves as ICA's computer network administrator.



Vincent Lubasi: will retire as regional director of ICA for East, Central and Southern Africa from 1 July 2001 after almost a decade of dedicated work in the region. He will continue to serve ICA and the co-operative movement as a senior consultant and resource person in Africa. "We look forward to continuing our association with Mr. Lubasi, drawing upon his wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts," says Karl Fogelström, director general.



Bernard Amahaya Kadasia: is named acting regional director for East, Central and Southern Africa as from 1 July . He joined the ICA Office for the region in 1987 and has served as agricultural marketing and price monitoring officer, regional development officer and project manager research, planning and consultancy. Before joining ICA he was a government co-operative officer in Kenya and later head of planning at the Kenya National Federation of Co-operatives. Mr Kadasia has carried out many studies and consultancies on co-operative development and management.



Robby Tulus: regional director for Asia-Pacific, will retire from ICA as of 1 October. Before assuming the position at the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) in 1996, he served for two years as senior policy advisor for the region's policy development and legislative programme, in particular organising and conducting the Co-operative Ministers Conferences. Says Karl Fogelström, director-general: "Robby is excellent in networking and has fostered the active participation of Asia-Pacific members into the ICA activities. He represents ICA effectively not only in the region but also internationally."

Mr Tulus pioneered the credit union movement in Indonesia in the late 1960s and co-founded the national credit union association (CUCO-Indonesia) which he headed from 1970 to 1981. Then he spent two years with the Asian Confederation of Credit Unions promoting thrift and loan societies in South Asia. In 1983 he joined the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada as Asia training advisor, and from 1983 to 1993 he served the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) as regional director for Asia.

Commodity price fluctuations: ICA helps agricultural co-operatives cope



Working with the World Bank International Task Force (ITF) on Commodity Risk Management, ICA hopes to assist farmers and their co-operatives better manage commodity market volatility and price fluctuations. It is exploring new market-based commodity price insurance which would stabilise the returns for co-operatives and farmer organisations when export prices are low or import prices are high.

The liberalisation of commodity markets has increasingly exposed farmers in developing countries and their co-operatives to price fluctuations. Small farmers have been hardest hit resulting in poverty levels on the rise. The ITF is looking at ways of providing co-operatives and farmer organisations the opportunity to better serve their members by serving as channels for facilitating access to insurance technical assistance.

ICA in collaboration with the other ITF members has helped identify and develop case studies that include co-operatives. It will now assist in analysing the information provided by the prototype test cases for defining the future modalities and strategies to be implemented.

The involvement of co-operatives and farmer organisations in the new mechanism will demand creativity, adaptability, business and management capability. Co-operatives and farmer organisations will require technical assistance to build their capacity to help them to engage effectively with private sector providers of price insurance products.

ICA throughout its regional offices will continue to seek partners to implement or extend its co-operative development programmes which support agricultural co-operatives to assist co-operatives adjust to changing economic conditions.



Supporting consumer co-operatives in St Petersburg and Pskov

Consumer Co-op International (CCI) at its Board meeting held in San José, Costa Rica, in April approved a project proposal for support to Russian consumer co-operatives in St Petersburg and Pskov.

The Board also discussed the use of dotcoop on the Internet and the result of the first two years of activities of the young organisation.

The programme for the Board meeting included visits to several consumer co-operative food shops in and around San José. The consumer co-operative movement in Costa Rica is relatively young, but has been growing quickly for the last 10 years.

CCI is an ICA specialised organisation.



Gerardo Bermudez (left), ICA project manager, with Osvaldo Morillo, a board member of CCI, in Costa Rica

Co-operation and peace: a historic link that points the way

Rita Rhodes
 Visiting Research Fellow
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In 1928 the International Co-operative Alliance sought to nominate a prominent co-operator for the Nobel Peace prize. The attempt failed but illustrates how closely ICA saw the link between co-operation and peace. This remains strong to the present day, although co-operators have necessarily had to update their positions as circumstances have changed. Such a change is now occurring with the accelerating trend towards the globalisation of trade, labour and capital. It is good, therefore, to learn that the ICA General Assembly in Seoul this October will consider the question of *Co-operation and Peace in the Era of Globalisation*.

ICA's previous concerns for peace have been illustrated in various ways. Many of its congresses have passed peace resolutions, as have meetings of its earlier Central Committee and specialised bodies such as its Women's Committee. Its adoption of the rainbow flag in 1924 was another indication of its dedication to peace, as were its contributions to UN Special Sessions on Disarmament and frequent references to peace in its annual International Co-operative Day messages. More recent examples include the appeal by Mr Takemoto, president of the Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union, to the ICA's 1999 Congress in Québec, and the Rio Declaration last December pledging co-operators' support "in the quest for peace, solidarity, equity, justice...."

Adapting to change

Throughout this long tradition, ICA has readily adapted to changing circumstances. It proposed arbitration treaties between European powers as a way of reducing the tensions that led to the 1914-18 War. It strongly opposed the two World Wars. It welcomed the League of Nations as "a younger sister," and the United Nations no less warmly. It participated in UN rehabilitation schemes after 1945. It strongly opposed fascism and nazism in the inter-war

years and tried to help co-operative movements adversely affected by such regimes. It renewed calls for peace during the Cold War and re-stated co-operatives' position after the collapse of communism.

Its debate in Seoul will no doubt recognise a new international-relations order in which, for the time being, only one super power remains and in which the previous prevailing influence of nation states has declined. One reason for the latter has been a welcome decline in the kind of nationalism that led to two World Wars. Another reason has been the growth of groups, or unions, of nations. By and large, ICA has welcomed these particularly where, as in the case of the European Union, they emerged as attempts to prevent future wars. More often, though, they have been trading blocs which have hastened globalisation. That trend has been strengthened by modern communication systems, information technology and ever faster transport. Increasingly the world is becoming a global village within which global trade is only natural.

Well placed to publicise examples of success

At Seoul ICA needs to assess the effects of globalisation on co-operatives. It will also need to examine what threats globalisation poses to peace. In the case of the former we have already seen the difficulties that societies in the agricultural and financial sectors have experienced in countering privatisation and deregulation. Along with a push towards free trade, they are important elements within globalisation.

ICA, as a global organisation itself, is well placed to publicise examples of co-operatives successfully adapting or innovating to meet these challenges. Its long history also enables it to re-visit some of its past debates that have contemporary significance. Those on free trade and monopolies come readily to mind. However, they should be reviewed against today's background in which the turnover of some multinational companies exceeds the budgets of some smaller nations. Besides hastening the decline of nation states, such power

Increasingly the world is becoming a global village in which global trade is only natural....But the turnover of some multinationals exceeds the budgets of some smaller nations.

to securing the movement's future in the new global order

threatens peace. Any recession quickly becomes global and leads to economic instability.

Although globalisation has made the world a far more hostile place for co-operatives, they need to survive for many reasons. Important among these is their role in co-operative development. Not only has that helped to promote peace, it has also assisted people to become economically enfranchised. That has given them a stake in society and an interest in avoiding conflicts which threaten it. As member-based organisations, co-operatives are also well placed to reduce the effects of war. In past conflicts they have introduced rationing schemes to ensure their members an equitable supply of scarce goods. They have also assisted government rationing schemes by providing ready-made distribution systems. They have given shelter and sustenance to co-operative refugees from war-torn countries. And they have a strong record in urging the governments of their countries to pursue ethical foreign policies that lessen the risk of war.



Partnering with aid agencies

Co-operative movements have also aided post-war reconstruction. Besides organising relief funds they have provided equipment and materials to movements damaged by war. Co-operatives have helped resettle men demobilised from the armed forces through land settlement schemes, co-operative housing and job creation schemes; also, as in South Korea after the Korean war, thrift and credit co-operatives have encouraged members' savings, thus improving their financial security.

Besides such direct help, co-operatives have joined with aid and development organisations to bring help to war-torn areas. A recent example was that of Korean

livestock co-operatives. Last year they joined with voluntary and religious organisations to send 20 million eggs to North Korean children in an attempt to help relieve malnutrition. Another example of joint action is that of Kooperativ Forbundet. With other Swedish partners, it has been involved with co-operative development with an emphasis on peace. A case in point is the project that encourages links between Israeli and Palestinian co-operatives, which was unlikely to have occurred without the help of an intermediary co-operative organisation.

Co-operative experience can also prepare people for work in peace processes. Recently, John Hume, Nobel Peace prize-winner, British MP, and a member of the European Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly, spoke of how he had been helped in his work of conflict resolution by his earlier involvement in the Irish credit union movement.

These examples show a clear link between co-operatives and peace. They also give some hope that co-operatives can continue to help ordinary people overcome the instabilities caused by globalisation. First, though, co-operatives need to ensure their own viability as co-operative businesses.

Co-operative development is important to offset the adverse effects of globalisation. Not only has it helped promote peace, it has also assisted people to become economically enfranchised.



The ICA During War and Peace by Rita Rhodes. Based exclusively on ICAarchive materials, this book charts the ICA's course through the two world wars and the cold war which posed the greatest threat to it. Please order from the ICA secretariat, [e-mail info@coop.org](mailto:info@coop.org)

The Co-operative Advantage

International Co-operative Day, 7 July

Members urged to show support for Rio Declaration

The ICA Board decided on 17 April to adopt the Rio Co-operative Declaration and in mid-May sent it to the 251 members of ICA asking for their support.

A covering letter with the Declaration urged members to work with the ICA regional offices in developing and carrying out programmes to promote it.

Another way to show support for the Declaration would be through the ICA website where any co-operative member can write down its name in an electronic signature.

The Rio Co-operative Declaration was made during the RioCooperativo event in December, with the Nobel Peace Prizewinner Oscar Arias the first to sign on as a supporter. A large 3,000-strong gathering in Rio - maybe the largest co-operative meeting ever held - decided on 6 December to adopt it.

The Rio Declaration is a commitment from the co-operative movement to rally the support of millions of co-operatives in the quest for peace, solidarity, equity, justice, equality, environmental protection and sustainable development.

The new ICA flag

The new ICA flag will carry the ICA logo, replacing the traditional rainbow flag. This was the decision of the ICABoard at its meeting in Rome in April.

The ICA logo on the new flag was initially designed for the ICA Centennial. It depicts doves of peace emerging from a rainbow, and represents the unity of ICA's diverse membership.

The flag was changed to clearly promote and strengthen the co-operative image. The rainbow flag, used by a number of non-co-operative groups, led to confusion in several countries around the world.



This photograph epitomises celebration of the International Co-operative Day

in the third millennium

Values, principles, ethics and business competence make up the co-operative advantage for members and for the communities in which they operate, and these will enable co-operatives to successfully address the challenges of the new millennium.

This is the essence of the message of the International Co-operative Alliance for this year's 79th International Co-operative Day and the 7th United Nations International Day of Co-operatives, which will be celebrated worldwide on 7 July.

In its message, ICA underlines the uniqueness of the co-operative model of enterprise that allows people to determine how to improve their lives - a choice and course of action that help improve the lives of other users of the enterprise and build better communities. However, if co-operatives are to be successful in their economic, social and cultural roles, governments must create and maintain an enabling environment for

autonomous co-operatives to develop and grow, adds the message. It is for this reason that the present intergovernmental processes at the International Labour Office and the United Nations are indeed so important. ICA has been working with the constituents of both of these organisations to ensure that appropriate policy frameworks are formulated.

The message ends asking members: to celebrate the International Co-operative Day by undertaking to:

- "Promote the co-operative advantage through ever improving service to members.
- "Use, benefit and promote the new .coop internet domain name to show your co-operative difference, open and strengthen dialogues with your government to ensure that policies enable co-operatives to thrive."

Co-operative Spirit for mutual cooperation through which, people support with each other. A basic idea for new values by which we have to create a future for all human beings

Enterprises with a soul...

"Unity regardless of ethnic and social origins"

Recognises the need to earn a living without compromising ethics;

Balances commercial needs with social responsibility

"It is essentially the benefits and strength of people coming together to meet specific needs in a collective manner."

"The most important and precious thing is the fact that co-operatives provide for a chance for survival and development."

Programme for ICA Youth Seminar Seoul Korea

October 13 (Saturday)

09:30 - 09:40	Opening Speech by ICAPresident
09:40 - 10:30	Report ICA resolutions for youth network will be reported by the youth Coordinator in ICA.
10:30 - 12:30	Lecture and Discussion Topic A : The youth commitment for vitalizing cooperative society
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 16:00	Lecture and Discussion Topic B : The participatory roles of youth staff in their cooperative movement Topic C : The future of cooperative movement what youth want
16:00 - 18:00	Group Discussion and Report Group 1 : Agriculture, Consumer, Fishery How co-ops meet the challenge of guaranteeing safe food? Group 2 : Banking, Insurance, Credit Co-operative financial services - Is the co-operative advantage "on-line"? Group 3 : Health, Housing, Workers, Tourism, Energy Service co-ops in development - solutions with care
Oct 14 (Sun)	Specialised Bodies Meeting
Oct 15 (Mon)	Specialised Bodies Meeting Welcome Reception
Oct 16 (Tue)	General Assembly
Oct 17 (Wed)	General Assembly Business Forum Farewell Dinner
Oct 18 (Thu)	Visit to Agricultural Cooperative college and local cooperatives
Oct 19 (Fri)	Departure

Terms of Reference

Date of Seminar	13 Oct 2001 (Sat)
Venue	COEX, the venue of ICAGA
Qualification	Youth participants : 18 - 30 old, Active in organizations and their affiliates
Registration fee	USD 100
Official Language	English
Host Organisation	National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF)
Contact Person for The Seminar	Mr. Jo Nam-Kook
Organising Committee for the ICA General Assembly, NACF	
Tel (822) 397-5275	
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Website:	www.icaseoul.org/youths
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Welcome the young

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action that must be nourished with idealism – for it is strong idealism, unfettered by hesitation or doubt, that can unfurl the universal flag of peace, with real action linked to the social economy.

We all know that idealism is an intrinsic feature of youth. We know, too, that young people are inspired by the hope of a better future and that all their actions are fed by dreams, ideals of justice, solidarity and love.

This is what we need in co-operatives: this idealism that rejuvenates all of us in our quest for a world of solidarity and fairness, a world of happiness and peace for men and women across the world.

Let us welcome the young!

ICA signs agreement for GA 2003



ICApresident Roberto Rodrigues (left) signing the agreement for the 2003 General Assembly. Standing is Karl Fogelstrom, ICA director general, and right is Steinar Dvergsdal (Representative from the Norwegian Co-operative Committee.)

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