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ICA Specialised Bodies will contribute to upcoming youth conference

The report concerning the ICA Youth Network project delivered to the ICA Specialised Bodies, during their recent meeting, raised an enthusiastic response. [more...](#)

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Co-operatives enter social and community tourism market

Tourism products specifically designed for co-operative members and co-operatives at both ends of the market have recently been developed. In order to pursue this, preliminary business arrangements have been concluded between interested cooperatives. These were the concrete results of the Inter Coop Tourism Seminar held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 11 to 13 June 2001.

The seminar looked at the global tourism market, including tourism products and services now offered by co-operatives. Special attention was given to social and community tourism, where co-operatives can occupy a special niche.

Thirty-seven participants representing cooperatives engaged in travel and tourism in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines participated in the seminar. They included school cooperatives in Malaysia that promote, among others, domestic tourism.

The seminar was organised jointly by the ICA Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific and the National Co-operative Organization of Malaysia (ANGKASA), in collaboration with the International Association of Tourism Co-operatives (TICA). The World Tourism Organisation based in Spain provided valuable inputs during the seminar.

Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheik Fadzir, the Minister of Culture, Arts & Tourism of Malaysia, officially opened the seminar.

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Tourism workshop has excellent turnout

Following successful results in enabling Tourism International Co-operative Association (TICA) members not only to network but also to consider future business collaboration, the joint organisers of the annual commercial workshop, have decided to start-over next year. This event, held on 16 May in La Colle sur Loup, near Nice, France was organised by the International Association of Social Tourism (IAST) and TICA.

Hosted by VVF (Villages Vacances Familles), an important french tourism association, Some 110 tourist organisations participated.

Catalogues and further information available from Maurizio Davolio, TICA Chairman mdavo@tin.it

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Social Capital of the Future – major event for co-operators

The second Social Economy and Co-operative Research Conference in Gävle, Sweden, attracted some 65 researchers mostly from Europe and generated interesting studies on co-operatives and social enterprises: identity, governance, legislation, issues and trends.

A large participation of researchers from Eastern and Central Europe gave a strong focus on transitional economies to the workshop. Reports on governance, social economy and employment were among the best findings during this conference. Swedish researchers showcased a wide range of social enterprises in Sweden.

The conference was held on 7-9 June in conjunction with the 7th European Conference on Social Economy. It was sponsored by the University of Gävle, the National Administrative Board and the Department of Economics of the Swedish government. They also provided scholarships for Eastern and Central European researchers. The conference was co-organised by the Network for Co-operative Studies in Sweden and the Scandinavian Countries, CIRIEC and the ICA Research Committee.

The next gathering of co-operative researchers will take place in Seoul on 12-13 October in conjunction with ICA General Assembly. The theme will be "Civil Society, Co-operation, Rejuvenation."

The Latin American researchers will also meet in Buenos Aires in September.

[Roger Spear](#)

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ILO recognises co-operative principles and values in new instrument

Autonomy and the other co-operative values and principles are firmly rooted in the new ILO draft policy framework. ICA participated in the two-week deliberation of the Committee on the Promotion of Cooperatives together with the ILO constituents - governments, employers' and workers' organisations. At the opening of the session, ICA formally presented its position, regarding the role of the state in enabling co-operative development and put forward four fundamental elements which delegates were requested to keep in mind if they wished to have a focused, useful and appropriate new instrument on co-operatives.

ICA stressed the need to ensure co-operative autonomy and to include the ICA Identity Statement (the internationally recognised definition of a co-operative and its values and principles) in the new instrument so as to ensure a "level playing field" for co-operatives. ICA also stressed the need to ensure that the new instrument does not restrict the types of activities in which co-operatives can engage: co-operatives are for everyone.

ICA lobbied governmental representatives prior to and throughout the deliberations providing them both documentation and an on-going commentary on the proceeding. A briefing session was held on 6 June prior to the opening of Committee discussions and a formal statement to the ILO plenary was also delivered on 11 June. ICA lobbying efforts were assisted by the fact that a number of co-operators were found on governmental, workers' and employers' delegations.

The ILO Committee undertook a line-by-line discussion over fourteen sessions. In this first discussion, it agreed on a new text to replace the ILO recommendation 127 of 1966. The second and final discussion on the instrument will be held in June 2002 where the final text of a universal instrument to apply to all countries and to all types of co-operatives will be adopted.

[MariaElena Chavez](#)

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Joint seminar for HABITAT/ICA on 2002 agenda

Co-operatives were given a large role to play when the United Nations Summit HABITAT II met in Istanbul five years ago.

ICA was represented by Claus Hachmann, Ivan Prikryl, Jan-Eirik Imbsen, and Mats Ahnlund at the UN special session on housing and shelter called HABITAT II+5 early June. Co-operatives were on the agenda of the "Committee of the whole", the body that allowed all NGOs to speak. ICA was also present at a special seminar on housing finance. Dr. Hachmann was a guest speaker.

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ICA took this opportunity to present the co-operative manner of dealing with Habitat issues by promoting the booklet entitled "Best Practices – innovative approaches to Co-operative Solutions of Housing problems of the Poor", which is a collection of case studies, published by ICA Housing and edited by Professor Hans Münkner.

Future HABITAT/ICA activities include a joint seminar in 2002 and eventual collaboration in development activities.

[Mats Ahnlund](#)

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Congress gives impetus to UK co-operative movement

By voting in favour of the Co-operative Commission report, at the annual congress, on 26 and 27 May, the British movement agreed to make a particular effort to improve their business performance, hence the co-operative image. They also supported what John Monks, Commission chairman said: "The movement needs to improve its business performance in order to meet its co-operative and social goals. By strengthening its social goals it will enhance business performance and thus strengthen the co-operative advantage."

To support the Co-operative Commission, certain actions have already been taken: a new Co-operative Foundation has been created to promote co-operation, develop community projects and as Graham Melmoth, Co-op Group chief executive said, be a vehicle which can make things happen from the ground up. Delegates voted for Co-op Union to be a dotcoop founder which will entitle Co-op Union members to benefit from founder-membership and become part of the dotcoop Founder Advisory Council. Dotcoop is the new internet top level domain name, which can be used by co-operatives only.

The outcome of the congress shows a strong willingness of the UK co-operative movement to move on to the next step, boost performance and compete in the globalised economy. The Co-operative Commission Report is a publication of 60 action programmes which are ambitious, forward looking and will give renaissance to the movement. "Recommendations in this report, although meant for the UK, could inspire co-operatives worldwide to strengthen the co-operative advantage, give impetus to our development and enhance our identity", says Karl Johan Fogelström, ICA Director General.

A special congress will be held before the end of the year to discuss the implementation of the Co-operative Commission report.

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JCCU has become an indispensable part of consumer's lives

ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues was among the 750 people gathered in Tokyo to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU).

"JCCU is the most active member among the network of International co-operatives and stands out as a model from which others can learn," says President Roberto Rodrigues. Guests present at the 16 May festivities included heads of political parties, diet members, co-operative representatives and business associates from throughout Japan.

With a 21.6 million nationwide membership indicating that 30 per cent of all households in Japan have joined a co-operative, a sales turnover reaching 3,300 billion yen and a 5% share in the Japanese food market, it is clear that the Japanese consumers' Co-operative Union has become an essential part of Japanese society and an indispensable part of consumers' lives, stated JCCU President, Mr. Takemoto in his opening speech.

The Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Mr. Sakaguchi went on to say that co-operatives have been and continue to be in the forefront for promoting food safety, recycling, environment preservation and care to the elderly, thus making tremendous inroads into gaining consumer's confidence and contributing to society at large.

A banner reading "It is very important to eat" attracted everyone in attendance to taste the various dishes prepared by the famous Japanese specialist on food and cooking, Katsuyo Kobayashi.

Participants showed their gratitude to JCCU for this enjoyable event.

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Solidarity among human beings to be the basis of new values in the 21st century

Centered on the theme "The Strength that comes Out of Connections of the Heart", participants at the 30 May celebrations in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union, discussed and shared the meaning of the great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and the importance of helping one another.

The solidarity shown by various volunteers from all over the world, including Co-operative members, following the Hanshin earthquake, was commended by Yoshinaga Noriaki who says that this "sense of solidarity among human beings will become the basis of new values in the 21st century".

A keynote speaker, Fujimoto Giichi speaking on the theme "Heart - A Collective Human Property" focused on how people who lived through the tragic experience of losing their families and houses in the earthquake exposed their true feelings. This had a great impact on the lives of those who were there to listen at the evacuation centers. Survivors spoke not only of the importance of physical health but also that of "caring of the heart."

Specialists on disasters and disaster volunteers agree that solidarity is a positive outcome of a negative happening. "This touching of hearts between people will help to contribute to the progress of co-operation," says head of Radio Kansai, Yamaguchi Kazuchi, speaking about the role of the media and information diffusion at the time of the Kobe disaster.

In July and September, JCCU will continue 50th anniversary celebrations and focus will be given to environmental, agricultural and food safety issues.

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Australian co-operative farmers explore ways of raising capital

"Equilibrium model" is the name given to the strategy of the Dairy Farmers Group (DFG), a major Australian dairy processing co-operative, to raise capital. The strategy is to facilitate access to external funds while retaining members' control and co-operative principles. It is expected to attract future external investors and meet members' needs being:

- A competitive and fair price for milk
- an income, plus a return on their ownership
- an access to short-term liquidity from their current investment in co-operatives.

The equilibrium model proposes that the operational business of DFG forms a supply co-operative which will hold ownership in the newly formed company called Dairy Farmers Limited (DFL). DFL will become a publicly listed company and will eventually be traded on the Australian Stock Exchange. The supply co-operative will function under the co-operative tradition: "one member one vote" while DFL will be a "one share one vote" system.

At the initial stage, supply co-operative will hold 75% of DFL. There will not be a minimal share holding of the supply co-operative in DFL, however it will have a first option on any issue of DFL shares. In order to retain farmers' control, the supply co-operative will have to buy additional shares of DFL. Ian Langdon, chairman of DFG estimates that effective control on DFL will be retained with a 35% ownership.

"The equilibrium model represents the brave new world of co-operative enterprise as it struggles to compete in a globalised market environment" says Ian Langdon. He adds that "overseas experience suggests that those dairy farmers who lose control of their co-operative or fail to respond to the challenges of their evolving marketplace, often head rapidly towards extinction".

Members of DGF will vote before the end of June on the adoption of the equilibrium model.

(Source: Co-op Update N°33 May/June 2001)

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Free and easy access to information on co-operatives through inter-linked websites underway

The British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies (BCICS), a catalyst for research, learning and teaching co-operative practices have a large capacity online database with a particularly strong search engine capable of managing the "Galleria".

The Galleria is amongst the few sites featuring information on grassroots co-operatives including the rationale behind the creation and the functioning of a co-operative. Presently, the Galleria contains a collection of stories about British Columbia's co-operatives. Ambitious plans to go national with the Galleria means investing 100-110,000 dollars a year, BCICS can cover one third of this cost.

With a particular interest in forestry, fishery and social co-operatives, BCICS would like to develop partnerships with other organisations interested in working together and is calling for partnerships in order to develop a secure financial base.

For further information, please contact: Cluny@uvvm.uvic.ca

<http://web.uvic.ca/bcics>

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Developing intercooperation on International Co-operative Day

"Co-operation among co-operatives", the 6th co-operative principle will be put into action by the Scottish and South-African movement on 7 July. They will celebrate the International Co-operative Day by sharing information and ideas, through video conferencing, on the establishment of manufacturing co-operatives in South Africa which will be supported internationally.

The project is expected to lead to the creation of wealth, resulting in a fairer trade. This will be achieved through better managed partnership among nations and continents. "The social economy has to succeed in the global economy, we all need to work together and take full advantage of economies of scale in our region" says Norman Chipakupaku. He calls for a new strategic partnership and for closer links between co-operators the world over.

The National Co-operative Association of South Africa (NCASA) provided a case study in the development of a Castor Processing Co-operative, operating internationally, based in South Africa. An internet-based discussion, open to all co-operators, has started on www.co-opday.org and contributions will be included in materials for the video conferencing which will be held on 7 July, on the International Co-operative Day.

Co-operators may attend the conference online or on site at the University of Glasgow's Boyd-Orr building in the West End of Glasgow.

For further information, please visit www.co-opday.org

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How will the social economy survive in the era of globalisation?

"You are the future" were the closing words of Mr. Lorimer Mackenzie, Director of DG Enterprise of the European Commission at the 7th European Conference on Social Economy in Gävle, Sweden on 7-9 June. Some one thousand representatives of co-operatives, mutuals, associations and foundations attended. "The Social Capital of the Future" was the title of the Conference.

An important objective of the conference was to reach results that strengthen the ability of the social economy to play a significant role in the future. Another purpose of the conference was to provide the candidate countries with the necessary inspiration and support to initiate and develop more activities in the social economy.

The conference focussed on Empowerment, Entrepreneurship, Enlargement and Employment, the four "E's" forming also the priorities of the Swedish Presidency. It was able to define the tasks for the coming years and identify actions to be undertaken by the social economy, which represents 7 % of the paid labour force in Europe.

Gunn-Britt Martensson, president of HSB Sweden, was Vice-President of the National Committee for the Conference and moderator of the opening session. Speakers from the co-operative and mutual movement included Etienne Pflimlin, president of Crédit Mutuel France and ICA board member, Felice Scalvini, vice president of Confcooperative Italy, Pauline Green, CEO of Co-operative Union UK, Caroline Trapp, recently elected president of LRF Sweden, Tore Andersson, president and CEO of Folksam Sweden.

To the question whether the social economy would survive in the era of globalisation the answer was a unanimous yes. It will not only survive but flourish – was the opinion of several speakers. However, it depends on us, players of the social economy how we do it.

The conference adopted a resolution, which defined three major areas for the future development of social economy:

- Empowerment: reinforcing European democracy by favouring citizens' participation and right of initiative
- Towards a European model of a pluralistic economy
- Meeting the challenge of enlargement

In the resolution, social economy actors also demanded full and total recognition by the European institutions and the national governments of EU and CEE countries as well as by territorial authorities. The Swedish presidency has been requested to support the specific demands drafted in the resolution and convey them to the Commission, the Council of Ministers and to the governments of the candidate countries.

A first follow-up report will be presented at the social economy conference planned by the Belgian Presidency on 13-14 November 2001 in Ghent, Belgium.

For more information please visit: www.socialeconomy2001.se

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Student Union becomes co-operative

The University of Lincolnshire and Humberside Students' Union (ULHSU), recently turned their association into a student-owned co-operative, the first ever in the United Kingdom.

This is the result of 10 years hard work and determination between the University's senior management, the students, Lincoln Co-operative Society and the Co-op Union. The latter mainly assisted in drafting the rules of the proposed co-operative ensuring they comply with the new legislation. Co-op Union also sensitised the student officers and members on the importance of democracy and the application of the co-operative principles which are the soul of co-operative organisations.

A proposition for the Board of Directors, which will include representatives of the University's senior management, Board of Governors, Lincoln Co-op Society and key student representatives, was made. Rules specify that students must hold the majority on the Board and all non-students be subject to the approval of the Annual General Meeting.

Planned projects include a student housing co-operative, telephone and power supplies, the creation of a Job Shop and support for the other students wishing to start their own co-operatives.

ICA congratulates the Co-op Union for supporting the conversion of a student union into a student co-operative and looks forward to the active participation of these young co-operators in the ICA youth network

(Source: The Co-operative News, 16 June)

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