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Issue 7 - August 2000



A Historic Week for ICA ROAP - "Refugees Status" for Staff?

History was in the making at ICA ROAP during the 32nd week of the year 2000 (i.e. from August 7 to August 12). After the long drawn-out hiatus in the sale of the Bonow House, the sale deed was finally signed on 11th August 2000. August 12, therefore, marked the beginning for ICA ROAP's new phase in New Delhi.

The historical week was not just about the SALE of the Bonow House. While the sale was a happy occasion, the MOVE to the new site was a sore one, to say the least. ICA ROAP Staff worked 24 hours a day to pack their office stuff since the beginning of the month, and doing so with the sanguinity that the new office at Pancheel Park is a good new place to move into. But one can always expect the mystifying saga in New Delhi. Just as we finished packing tons of materials involving no less than 800,000 books and spare publications of the library plus the additional old and new furniture collected over a 34 year period, ready to be moved on 8th August to the new building, a breakdown of the deal with the seller of the new office building occurred. Mr. B.D. Sharma, Chair of the Task Force and chief negotiator, was never before as furious as he was on 7th August when he told us that the seller played games and wanted to raise the sale price at the last moment, knowing full well that we were under pressure to move to the new site. Such unethical behavior was of course unacceptable and the deal was cancelled.

Fortunately, NCUI came to our rescue. Being an ardent member-cum-supporter of ICA, NCUI represented by its Chairman Dr. S.S. Sidodia, did not hesitate to offer us a space to store our goods in one of their vital premises on the ground floor. Without such support, ICA would have to put mountains of their goods and furniture somewhere in the open air. And due to the fact that ICA ROAP has accumulated so much stuff over its 34 years in existence, even that space at the NCUI "piazza" was insufficient. 17 trucks with two loads each were mobilized. Hence HCL, the buyer of Bonow House, was kind enough to allow us to use the servants' quarters at Bonow House to store the remaining stuff. And, to our surprise, even that was not enough, so some furniture and boxes had to be put in the open air outside the quarters. As if the suffering was not enough and must continue, the first heavy downpour came to Delhi with the start of the monsoon the next day, destroying a number of boxes (containing copies of old publications). So it was a hellish week as far as the move is concerned.

But everyone was happy nonetheless because we can look forward to having a new office site that will be more modern and efficient in the near future.

The unfortunate part of it was that staff had to become "transitory refugees" with no place to work in during that time. And, again, NCUI and IFFCO as keen

members/supporters of ICA came to our rescue and provided office space at their respective guest houses (albeit without phones) for a week until we found a temporary rental place at the Defence Colony in New Delhi. The latter happened just as this article was being written. A colorful episode indeed.

[Robby Tulus](#)

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Food Quality Working Group - Model for ICA Sectorial Work

Some of the specialised organisations of the ICA are trying to be more business-oriented in establishing different working groups of experts from their membership. One of the most active is the Food quality experts from consumer co-operatives that met in Dublin from 28 Jun to 1 July 2000. It was the first meeting of Working Group, one of the four formed after Consumer Coop International (CCI) was founded, merging ICCO and InterCoop, in Quebec City last year.

Sixteen food quality specialists and experts from CWS (UK), Co-op Denmark, Co-op Hungary, FenaCoop (Portugal), INEX (Finland), Centrosoyus (Russia), Co-op Italia, NKL (Norway), KF (Sweden), JCCU (Japan), and Euro-Coop presented and exchanged their experiences in the four different sessions on 30 June: Quality Assurances - current issues; National Food Quality Arrangements; Food Policy/Labelling Issues; and Environmental/Fair Trade Questions. Excerpts from their presentations are available at www.coop.org/cci/activities/food_quality_dublin.htm.

The host of the meeting, CWS, arranged a study visit provided the participants opportunity to visit "Cuisine de France", bread factory near Dublin on 29 June, in which CWS has a stake. All were impressed to see the fully automated process of high quality bread production. In the afternoon, half-day seminar was organised at the Food and Veterinary Office of the European Union (Dublin) where participants heard about the Office's activities on pesticide residues, antibiotic residues, animal hygiene, and animal welfare.

A one-day study visit to CWS stores in Belfast concluded the seminar. Co-op Italia will probably host the next meeting in 2001.

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Kenyan Co-operatives To Restructure and Reconstruct

A Co-operative Leaders' Conference held on 7-9 June, 2000 resolved to restructure and reconstruct the co-operative movement in Kenya to match major recent and ongoing changes in the country and globally.

The conference brought together close to three hundred leaders and staff of the co-operative movement in the country. Leading academicians and consultants, from both within and outside the country, as well as top ranking government officials and representatives of the donor community took part in what turned out to be a very well prepared and attended event. V.M. Lubasi, the Regional Director, and B. A. Kadasia participated from the ICA.

The Co-operative Reform and Reconstruction Process was one of the topics tackled. Others were Co-operative Financial Systems and Institutions, Human Resource Development, and Problems of Liberalisation and Co-operative Structures.

Daniel T. Arap Moi, the President of the Republic of Kenya, when officially opening the Conference, reiterated the Government's recognition of the importance of the co-operative movement and the belief that it had great potential to raise the standard of living of a large majority of the ordinary Kenyans. He urged the movement to apply co-operative principles and values rigorously and warned against allowing politics to interfere with co-operative affairs.

The Conference concluded that major political, economic, social and legal changes had taken place in Kenya and globally, and that these changes had far-reaching implications for the future of the co-operative movement. It was not therefore sufficient or realistic to hope that these changes would reverse, or that co-operatives could survive and prosper without themselves changing.

At the end of the Conference, recommendations on the way forward for the co-operative movement in Kenya were made. It was recognised in particular that the movement would need a common vision and overall strategy. An Action Plan was agreed and key responsibilities in the restructuring and reconstruction process allocated. It is foreseen that the national co-operative organisations - Kenya National Federation of Co-operatives, Co-operative Bank, Co-operative Insurance Company, Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Co-operatives, Kenya Rural Savings and Credit Co-operatives Union, National Co-operative Housing Union, and Co-operative College - will play a leading role in realising the new vision.

[Vincent Lubasi](#)

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Korean Agricultural Co-operatives Merged

Three apex organisations of agricultural co-operatives in Korea merged into one co-operative organisation on 1 July 2000, one of them: National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF), known as Nong Hyup in Korea (www.nonghyup.com). The new NACF effectively extended its business into livestock and ginseng production, processing and marketing which the former National Livestock Co-operative Federation (NLCF) and the Korea Ginseng Co-operative Federation (KGCF) had formerly covered.

Mr. Chung Dae-Kun, Chairman of the merged NACF, said the new agricultural co-operative would provide better and extended service to five million member farmers who had multiple memberships in three different co-operatives, and who would now benefit from its synergy.

The new NACF will host the ICA General Assembly in the middle of October next year, that will be ICA's first superlative meeting in the New Millennium, another successful ICA event held in Asia.

[Lee Shil-Kwan](#)

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Positioning Credit Union in 2010

Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU) and the Koperasi Kredit Pekerja Pekerja Berhad will host the 11th Asian Credit Union Forum (ACUF) 2000 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from September 22 to 23, 2000. The theme will be "Positioning Credit Unions in 2010". Distinguished speakers from credit unions and co-operatives will present concepts and issues through the following topics:

- Melding Marketing and Technology Tactics
- Capital Adequacy in CUs in the Year 2010
- Prudential Standards for Credit Unions in the Eyes of Regulators
- New Technology Changes Business
- Professional Leadership or Visionary Leaders in 2010

The Honourable Minister of Co-operatives of Malaysia is the chief guest and the Royal Professor Ungku Aziz, the Chairperson of ANGKASA will open the session.

Chief executive officers, managers, chairpersons, members of the board of directors, supervisory committees and education committees, credit union members, regulators and co-operative development personnel are expected to attend the forum.

Other meetings will be held in conjunction with this forum.

For further information, please contact:

ACCU
Association of Asian Confederation of
Credit Unions
www.aaccu.net
accuran@ksc.th.com

KKP
Koperasi Kredit Pekerja Pekerja
Berhad
kkpbhd@tm.net.my

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New Dialogue Between French Co-operatives and the Government

The French Supreme Co-operative Council held its first General Assembly on 27 June 2000 under the presidency of Guy Hascoët, State Secretary of the recently established "Solidarity Economy".

The results of the co-operative movement are very positive. All the quantitative indicators confirm these results which are all the more significant as they are not due to any special privileges.

Jean-Claude Detilleux, president of GNC (National Co-operative Association), expressed the readiness of co-operatives to be actively involved in the new reform processes launched by the Government.

He also requested Guy Hascoët, who is in charge of promoting the co-operative sector in the government, to help to spread a better understanding of the co-operative principles within the various ministries.

Now, when France provides the Presidency of the European Union, the co-operatives insist on having a spokesperson within the Commission who recognizes the particular nature of the enterprises belonging to the social economy. They also expect to have the White Paper on co-operatives to be published soon. This would allow co-operatives to participate in the multiannual programme of European enterprises (2001-2005) which will definitely be adopted under the French Presidency. Co-operatives expressed their concern about the lack of the Statute of a European Co-operative Society, although this has been on the agenda of the Commission for a number of years.

In his reply, State Secretary Guy Hascoët committed himself to making sure that co-operatives are not left out of the new reform measures such as the salary savings. Referring to steps taken at the European level he informed participants of his negotiations with the Minister of European Affairs in order to re-launch discussions about the Statute of European Co-operative Society as well as the European recognition of the identity of social and solidarity economy.

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Co-op Schools to Save Educational System in France

Education has consistently been a top priority in France since the 3rd Republic. Today, the budget allocated to education is still the largest. However, education's mission which is "to be the consciousness of the republic" failed. Educational projects were given to managers who completely lost the vision of future.

To put forward an ambitious project, trust should be given to the collective brainpower of direct actors. Experience of four colleges, self-managed by professors and students who participated in the decision-making and took part in their implementation should be used as a guide to put schools back on track. This idea came from the active pedagogy and co-operatives resulting in an ambitious educational project. Syndicates will play a new role, professors will find again their motivation and students will discover a meaning in their studies.

(Participer 575 - April 2000)

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The Co-operative Party (UK) Launches Pamphlet on Development Co-operation

On 11 July, the ICA was present at a function in the Houses of Parliament. The occasion was the launch of a pamphlet in the New Mutualism series entitled:

New mutualism
Helping Self-Help
Co-operative Action for International Development - towards a new strategy framework

The Labour Government has given international development a huge boost with the creation of a separate Department and the publication of a White Paper on development. The pamphlet, which was written by Edgar Parnell (former Chief Executive of Plunkett Foundation) in association with Mervyn Wilson (Chief Executive and Principal of the Co-operative College), presents the case for adopting a new strategy whereby the British aid programme would place significantly increased emphasis on encouraging co-operation through the development of sustainable self-help organisations. The ICA was represented on a steering group together with representatives of the British co-operative movement; the CWS, the Co-operative Union, the Co-operative College, and the Plunkett Foundation.

The Chair of the Parliamentary Co-operative Group, Andrew Love MP, hosted the function, and the Rt Hon George Foulkes MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, was a keynote speaker.

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Co-op Succeeds in the Competitive World of Telecommunications

Phone Co-op in the U.K announces a successful first year's trading while other telecommunication companies don't make a profit for several years. Phone Co-op's achievement is a success for the whole co-operative movement as it shows how co-operatives can make a difference when working in new areas.

Phone Co-op attracted customers due both to its ethics and to its low cost compared to the other providers in the U.K. Success also stems from a differential strategy which is to encourage its customers to take up membership, and to set up schemes tailored to its customers' needs. For example, national charities can offer its members or supporters the benefit to raise money for the cause they are supporting by making phone calls.

Established co-operatives in the U.K such as Poptel, Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Co-operative Society and Leeds Co-operative Society did not fail in applying "co-operation among co-operatives". They moved to the Phone Co-op because they were attracted to the prospect of call savings and of supporting this new form of co-operative.

For further information, please visit www.phoncoop.org.uk

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Opportunity to Invest in Argentina

In the wake of a new law aimed at privatizing the provincial energy company EPE, the Federation of Electric Co-operatives of Santa Fe Province, Argentina, is looking for investors from the ICA ranks to participate in a joint bid on behalf of the co-operative movement.

The privatization is part of the conversion of the province's electric system proposed in Law 11.727. Its Article 114, concerning bid specifications for Class A and B shares, says that in the evaluation of offers priority will be given to local entrepreneurial groups or co-operatives from the electric sector.

Federacion Santafesina de Cooperativas de Electricidad, Obras y Servicios Publicos Ltda intends to make use of this comparative advantage and form an investor group with international partners from among ICA members.

Organizations that would like to invest should make their interest known as soon as possible to Ms Cristina Simone at the ICA Project Office Buenos Aires, by e-mail csimone@acibue.cci.org.ar.

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NCBA Honours US Secretary of State

The National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA) and seven other co-operative groups in the USA presented NCBA's Honored Cooperator Award to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman last month.

Secretary Glickman was honoured for his work promoting and securing resources for co-operative development. Under his leadership, the US Department of Agriculture has increased funding for the Rural Co-operative Development Grants programme, providing critical help to groups forming all types of co-operatives in rural America.

The Honored Cooperator Award was created by NCBA to pay tribute to public policy officials and other leaders who have demonstrated support for co-operatives and an understanding of the key role the co-operative sector plays in the American economy. Funds raised through the award support the Future Co-op Leaders programme which trains young and emerging leaders in co-operative business community.

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Credit Unions Educates Youth to Be the Partners of Today

NGOs, international organisations and co-operatives have invested in promotion of their ideals and activities to young people. In the co-operative movement, credit unions are among the most active in sensitizing and involving youth in their activities.

The Americas. A programme called "Co-operative Young Leaders (CYL)" designed by CCA, offers live-in co-operative leadership training experience for young people aged 14 to 20. CYL is increasing awareness among young people about credit union and co-operative values and way of doing business.

Asia. With the theme of "Youth of Today, Leaders of Today" exposed young people to the credit union history, current operation and challenges in a forum from June 29 to July10, 2000. Mr Chuang Ching-Sheng, President of ACCU said "Credit unions should focus on youth for their sustainability." Youth also expressed their interest to join credit unions. Mr Marechiel Santos, the new ACDE from CUES-Philippines shared experiences on how credit unions have made a difference on the lives of the youth in Mindanao.

Europe. Crédit Coopératif (France) launched ADIE, a bank book for young people between 12 to 15 years old. They can invest part of their interest rates and support this association aimed at promoting micro-business created by the unemployed.

Also, l'Union Fédérale des Coopératives de Commerçants (UFCC - France) presented the experience of 5 entrepreneurs they are thirty years old. They joined UFCC which is known for its dynamism, their know-how and their values based on co-operative principles.

Co-operatives are active in every economic sectors where young people have their interest represented. For example, "youth is one of the groups which is mostly affected by the negative consequences of unsustainable urbanization", according to the pre-meeting of youth forum of urban 21. Furthermore, "young people will be the ones dwelling in the cities of the future". We would like to see involvement of other sectors of co-operatives in tackling youth issues and in promoting to them the value of cooperation.

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