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Eleventh ICA Specialized Organization in Good Health (1997)

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(Source: ICA News, Issue No.1/1997, pp1)

Eleventh ICA Specialised Organisation in Good Health

In November 1996 a new ICA specialised organisation was formed by three of the world's largest health co-operatives: UNIMED of Brazil; The JCCU Medical Committee, JCCU (Japan); the Espriu Foundation (Spain). The founding meeting, which was held in conjunction with the ICA Regional Assembly for the Americas, immediately elected a Board and adopted an action plan and rules.

Over sixty representatives from the nine organisations interested in becoming members of the organisation attended the meeting and elected Dr. Kato from Japan as Chair and Dr. Castilho from Brazil and Dr. Carreno from Spain as Board members. Once the remaining seven organisations applying have been accepted into membership a further three Board Members will be elected, preferably one from each of the regions.

The additional seven organisations applying for membership are: Unimed (Brazil); Swedcoop (Sweden); Coomeva (Colombia) and FEMEC (Colombia); DRUZAP, (Slovakia), Centrosoyus (Russia) and OPHACO (Belgium).

While many of the new organisation's activities will be focused at the regional level, the Secretary of the new committee, Mats Ahnlund, the newly appointed Senior Membership Advisor at ICA, will co-ordinate activities at the global level, through the collection and dissemination of information about health co-ops and through workshops and seminars organised in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), with whom a partnership has already been developed.

The first such seminar was held immediately after the founding meeting at which 50 participants listened to key-note speeches by representatives from the ILO, ICA and health co-operatives from around the World.

(Source: International Health Co-operative Organisation Secretariat)

UNIMED - A Unique Co-operative Model (1997)

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(Source: ICA News, Issue No.1/1997, pp. 2)

UNIMED - A Unique Co-operative Model

by Zahid Qureshi of ICMIF

Santos, in Brazil's state of Sao Paulo, is Latin America's largest sea port. On 18 December 1967 it gained another distinction. To counteract the growing commercialisation of health services, the city's medical syndicate, led by Dr. Edmundo Castilho, set up the first Unimed co-operative. Before long, the "medical co-operation" of the 21 founding doctors was embraced by other associations and syndicates of doctors.

In 1972 Unimed do Brasil was set up to consolidate the system within a political and administrative structure providing nationwide guidelines. Today, Unimed is found in 3,700 or 70% of Brazilian municipalities, with 304 co-operatives bringing together some 73,000 doctors serving eight million users.

The Unimed Multico-operative Business Complex now includes Unimed co-operatives for users, Unimed savings and credit co-operatives inspired by Mondragon, Unimed Systems to co-ordinate information technology in the provision of services, Unimed Products and Health Services, the Unimed Study Centre Foundation, Unimed Air for emergency services, and Unimed Insurance covering some 2.5 million clients. Products offered by Unimed Aseguradora include medical insurance, group life, income guarantee, loan insurance, reinsurance for operational risks of co-operatives, and a private pension plan. Unimed is spreading its model through joint action in other countries - Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, to name a few. Unimed is a unique model whose success is proven by numbers, says Dr. Castilho. "It is the result of hard work and vigorous ethics. We present this victorious model to fellow-co-operators in all countries of the world."

In June 1995, Unimed organised an International Forum on Health Care Co-operation in conjunction with the ICA and put forward a proposal to include health among the affairs of the ICA. With Dr. Castilho as the driving force and assistance from co-operative organisations in Japan and Spain, a new specialised organisation of the ICA is now created. The International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) held its official founding meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica, 22 November 1996.

Among IHCO's plans are to explore areas of collaboration with ICMIF, including the possibility of the insurance programmes of health co-operatives applying for membership of ICMIF.

Ruben Villa from COCETA in Spain making an intervention at the Founding meeting of the ICA's International Health Co-operative Organisation. Sitting at the top table from left are: Dr. Mallmann from UNIMED, Mats Ahnlund, Secretary of IHCO from ICA Secretariat, and the newly-elected Chairman of IHCO, Dr. Kato from the JCCU Medical Committee.

Latest Co-operative Health Care News

MultiPlan, a New York-based health plan headed by a well-known co-operative builder has joined hands across the Caribbean with one of the world's largest co-operative health organizations, Cooperativa de Seguros de Vida de Puerto Rico (COSVI).

COSVI and MultiPlan announced jointly that they are expanding to Puerto Rico adding to their network 74 hospitals, 120 other facilities and 4,000 physicians participating in COSVI's island-wide health plans.

Some 20 million people have access to the MultiPlan.

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News from the Regions (1997)

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News from the Regions

Asia and the Pacific

Fourth Co-operative Ministers' Conference

Ministers, government officials and co-op leaders from 21 countries participated in the ICA's fourth Co-operative Ministers' and Leaders' Conference in Chiangmai, Thailand, from 19-22 March. The meeting reviewed progress on amending co-op legislation and policy in the region, and set objectives for further improvement. During the meeting of the regional Executive Committee, Yang Deshou of China was nominated as the region's candidate for election as ICA Vice-President at the General Assembly. B.S. Vishwanathan of India was elected chairman of the region's Executive Committee.

The Americas

Argentina Hosts International Seminar

In November 1996, the ICA Buenos Aires Project Office and the Instituto Provincial de Accion Cooperativa, Argentina, jointly organised an International Seminar on the "Argentine and Canadian Co-operative and Public Banking Sector: its Articulation with Production".

The seminar, which was sponsored by the Confederacion de la Republica de Argentina and the Canadian Co-operative Association, attracted delegates from Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay as well as the ICA Banking Committee for Latin America, CCA International Business Network, and the Credit Union Central of Canada.

One of the results was the signing of an agreement between CCA and the Argentine co-operative banks, Banco Mayo and Banco Credit Coop, to develop reciprocal commercial and technical missions aimed at creating binational import/export enterprises.

Africa

ICA Housing To Meet In Uganda

After the successful presentation of the achievements of co-operative housing by the Chairman of ICA Housing, Rolf Trodin, during the HABITAT II conference in Istanbul, ICA Housing has decided to continue with regional HABITAT-conferences. These are excellent occasions to show how co-operative housing can contribute to solutions of housing misery and shortage.

On the occasion of the ICA Board meeting, there will be a housing seminar

on 17 - 18 April 1997 in Kampala, to discuss political preconditions, the legal framework, economic and social aspects as well as the financing of housing co-operatives.

The Ugandan Government should be motivated to introduce co-operative housing in the country through the promotion of the housing co-operative foundations, and the introduction of favourable conditions for land and infrastructure, as well as access to credit.

Successful examples from other African countries can help to illustrate why co-operative housing is a good solution to the problems of sub-standard and slum housing or homelessness. Fulfilling the preconditions for the establishment of co-operative housing is an important task. The Kampala seminar will be a contribution to a more transparent policy.

(Source: C. Hachmann, GDW, 20 March, 1997)

Europe

CICOPA Meeting In Budapest

A meeting of CICOPA was held in Budapest in October 1996. The proceedings were opened by the ICA President, Graham Melmoth, with a moment of silence in tribute to Yves Regis, who had led the organisation so dynamically until his death in September 1996.

Marian Rybar of Slovakia was unanimously elected as Interim-President until the 1997 General Assembly and the ICA Director-General, Bruce Thordarson agreed that Arsenio Invernizzi from the ICA Secretariat would be designated as Interim Secretary. Jean-Marie Courtois from France was co-opted as member of the Executive and Pierre Guiard-Schmid, also from France, was mandated to coordinate the CICOPA Development Programme.

ICA Structure and Functions

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April, 1997

(Source: ICA News, Issue No.1/1997, pp. 5)

DIRECTOR - GENERAL

B. Thordarson

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Senior Advisor: M. Ahnlund
Agriculture Advisor: Won-Sik Noh
Special Project Advisor: A.Invernizzi

ADMINISTRATION

Deputy Director General: C. Thorselius
Finance/Personnel Officer: V. Dubini
Administrative Assistant: M.C. Bann
* HO/Development Administration
* RO/PO Supervision/Coordination
 Planning/Budgets
* Liaison A & CC
* Meetings Coordination
* Mailing Lists

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

Director: M. Treacy
Communications Officer: L. Wilcox
Documentation Officer: A. Pawlowska
* Public/Press Relations
* Publications
* Liaison ICACC/CCR
* Documentation/Library
* Data Banks
* Internet Development

UN RELATIONS

Director: ME Chavez
* Liaison/Collaboration/Support to UN/NGOs/
 Specialised Bodies
* COPAC Coordination

DEVELOPMENT

Director : B. Genberg
Dy. Director : J.E. Imbsen
* Coordination/ Monitoring of Policy and
* Partner Liaison
* Resource Mobilisation
* Liaison HRD Committee

Programme Implementation

REGIONAL OFFICES

EUROPE

Secretary : G. Sozanski

AMERICAS

Director : J.D. Pacheco

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

Director : R. Tulus

EAST, CENTRAL & SOUTHERN AFRICA

Director : V. Lubasi

WEST AFRICA

Director : A.S. Kibora

- * ICACC = ICA Communications Committee
- * CCR = Committee on Co-operative Research
- * A&CC = Audit and Control Committee

Zimbabwe - Domestic Workers Learn to Build (1997)

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by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)

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(Source: ICA News, Issue No.1/1997, pp. 4-5)

Zimbabwe - Domestic Workers Learn to Build

by Astrid Kirchner, DESWOS

The traditional ways of earning a bit of money in Africa, Asia and Latin America are all too well known. Anyone who has ever visited Brasilia, Delhi or Nairobi has seen them, the street vendors, shoe shiners and clerks in the little sidewalk offices who for a charge take down letters for people who have never learned to read or write. To this group also belong the domestic workers, the live-in household help for the better-off who do the cooking, cleaning, gardening and more for their wealthy bosses.

As in Germany, the wages earned by domestic workers do not exceed the limit at which their employers would be required to make social security contributions. But the domestic workers in the south suffer a much worse lot than those here at home. They are among the lowest paid of all workers. Most can neither read nor write and have never learned a trade. They have no social insurance and the wages they earn are not enough to support a family.

Domestic workers have only a shadow of a family life. Their shacks in the slums are so far away from their work that they live in small rooms in their employers' homes. They have only Saturday afternoons and Sundays off. This is when they finally find time for their families, for church and, so that they can somehow make ends meet, for side jobs.

DESWOS has been working to help the members of the Tashinga co-operative building society. The word "Tashinga" means something like "to take control of your own life" and to improve your situation. For eight years now, all 224 families have been saving a small sum each month so that they, with help from the government, could purchase a suitable lot close to the city where they can build. Now they have finally found a site. With financial assistance from the European Union and DESWOS, they plan to put up 100 solidly-built houses so that the domestic workers and their families can come together under one roof during the week as well. The proximity to the city and to their employers means the workers can leave early and walk or take the bus to get to their jobs on time.

At the same time the DESWOS project wants to, so to speak, kill two birds with one stone, and offer these people new job prospects along with new lodgings. The co-operative society has made an arrangement with a local construction company whereby the company can take over management of the construction project if it agrees to take on more trainees. Domestic workers would be more than happy to trade in their current jobs for more meaningful and practical employment. In their view, household work is very unsatisfying and benefits only the rich. They would prefer to learn a productive trade, so that in the evenings they could look back with pride at what they accomplished that day and, most importantly, so that their hard work would earn them a higher wage.

Both men and women are taken on as trainees in construction. They can learn to become masons, carpenters or simple labourers. Similar projects have shown that unskilled workers are ideal for producing building blocks and roofing tiles by hand. The tools and machines required are already available

and the building materials are supplied. Bricks are pressed using hand-operated machines. This is hard, physical labour but is quite easy to learn. As such work is too strenuous for women, they may be employed making roofing tiles, where a fine touch and sure instinct are required to properly work and shape the moist mixture of clay, cement and sisal hemp used in producing the tiles. Other DESWOS projects have demonstrated that women are particularly suited to such work. This project also provides compensation for wages which participants would have earned as domestic workers during the period of training.

If all goes according to plan, trainees will be able to earn their livings producing building materials or working as masons once the project has ended. They will be able to help in the construction of additional houses for the co-operative society. The various mixtures of sand, cement, clay and water allows for the production of building materials for rich and poor alike. So it will be possible to satisfy the growing demand for homes. As the Tashinga project reaches fruition, the chances for domestic workers in Zimbabwe to improve their lives grow by the day.

World Overview (1997)

TITLE: World Overview (1997)

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World Overview

Canada

Success Stories

The Canadian Co-operative Secretariat and the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and Conseil Canadien de la Cooperation have finalised a second edition of Co-operative Success Stories in Canada. This can be obtained free of charge from the Co-operative Secretariat. Fax: (+1-613) 759-7489.

Breaking Barriers to Build Co-operation

Co-operative educators, leaders and communicators from the USA, Canada and the Caribbean are invited to participate in the Association of Co-operative Educators (ACE) Annual Institute for 1997, which has as its theme "Breaking Barriers to Build Co-operation in the New Millennium".

The event will take place in Toronto from April 30 - May 2, and will include sessions on educating government; barriers faced by young people as they look to the co-operative model; education and training in the workplace; new generation co-ops; and a special session on "Thinking Outside the Box", which will challenge those whose minds are closed to new technology and new ideas.

The Institute will also provide an opportunity to visit co-operative and credit union Internet sites at a Cyber Bar and present a Best Ideas Showcase where participants can share innovative ideas with colleagues.

Further information from Betty Davey at CCA at Fax: (+1-613) 567 0658 or by E-mail betty@coopcca.com.

Finland

Environment Week in SOK

An environment week was arranged in the SOK Head Office from 13 to 21 February 1997 including an exhibition and panel discussion. During the week, experts gave up-to-date information and advice about environment issues. Main topics were environmental labelling, paper and cardboard recycling, energy saving techniques, biowaste collection and treatment and office cleaning equipment. The target group was SOK personnel in the first instance and the purpose was to raise environment awareness.

(Source: FCCA Finland, March 1997)

India

Co-ops in a Liberalised Economy

The National Co-operative Union of India discussed the role of co-operatives in the liberalised economy during its 13th Congress which has gathered more than 3,500 representatives of grassroots level societies. The Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda addressed the delegates insisting on the merits of co-operative efforts in all spheres of economic activity. The main topics reviewed by the Congresses concerned personnel management policies, structural reforms, gender integration, applicability of labour laws and the income tax for co-ops.

The first session of the Congress honoured foreign co-operators for outstanding achievements for the movement.

Among awardees were Graham Melmoth, ICA President and Yves Regis, who received a posthumus tribute for his action to develop workers coops in India.

(Source: A. Pawlowska, ICA Geneva)

Italy

Women Benefit from Affirmative Action

The 1992 affirmative action law on women's entrepreneurship (L.215/'92) will soon become operational.

A fund of 40 thousand million lire will provide funding for projects promoting enterprise development by and for women. Italian co-operatives have been identified as one of the beneficiaries of the fund and have been urged to submit funding requests for relevant projects.

(Source Lega Informazioni No2/97)

Japan

Migros Chairman Visits Japan

Jules Kyburz, Chairman of the Board of the Federation of Migros Co-operatives, the largest retailer in Switzerland, visited Japan at the end of 1996 to help launch the Japanese version of the book "The Adventure of Migros" with a moving speech on the Migros philosophy and history. Mr. Kyburz took the opportunity to deepen relationships with the Japanese co-ops, visiting the headquarters of JCCU and visiting a han group, Co-op Kobe, the largest co-op in Japan, a department store, a food plant and the Co-operative College. Since Migros originally grew from a mobile sales business using delivery trucks he was particularly interested in joint purchase activities and home delivery services.

(Source Co-op Japan Information, December 96)

UK

Banking on an Historic Year

The Co-operative Bank is celebrating its 125th birthday in 1997, having been formed in 1872 as the loan and deposit department of the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS). The Bank's Annual Report for 1996 should show profits of £ 36.7 million, the best indication that the bank's ethical policy based on Co-operative Principles continues to demonstrate that the co-operative approach to business can equal success in today's competitive environment. The bank has identified seven stakeholder groups in addition to its shareholders/

customers, staff, suppliers, community, society, past and future generations.

(Source Co-operative News)

CWS Supports Co-operative College

CWS has placed a major vote of confidence in the Co-operative College by pledging to send 1,400 of its executives and senior managers on a special course on Co-operative Values. The course will explore ways in which the Co-operative Identity and Principles can be put into practice while improving the society's business. The course follows a senior executives conference which was held at the College in January at which the new Chief Executive of CWS, Graham Melmoth, who is also President of ICA, launched a handbook entitled "Managing Change Through People".

(Source Co-operative News)

Journalists Launch Media Agency Co-op

A media agency run on co-operative principles has been launched in the UK by four journalists, pooling a range of skills under one roof.

Set up with help from the local Co-operative Development Agency, the co-operative Media South West, aims to offer press, PR and research coverage for Devon and Cornwall while operating as a worker's co-op. Services available include writing, editing, design, photography, research and consultancy, plus producing publicity materials and in-house newspapers for local businesses.

(Source Co-operative News)

USA

The Value of Co-operation

The 1997 theme of the Co-operative Conference in the USA will be "The Value of Co-operation". The National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA), the National Co-operative Bank (NCB) and the Co-operative Development Foundation (CDF) are collaborating to present value-added opportunities for each organisation's membership during the two-day event to be held in Washington D.C. on April 23 and 24. For more information contact Dianna Vaughan at (+1-202) 638 6222 or E-mail dvaughnan@ncba.org

(Source: Cooperative Business Journal, February 1997)

Future Coop Leaders Programme

NCBA is looking for candidates for the 1997 class of its "Future Coop Leaders Program", an educational programme designed to develop co-operative leadership in order to build a stronger co-operative Community. The Programme provides scholarships for staff, directors and members of co-operatives to attend a training and educational event held annually in Washington, DC. Contact Leta Mach at NCBA for further information or send an E-mail to lmach@ncba.org.

(Source Co-operative Business Journal, February 1997)

Co-op People (1997)

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Co-op People *****

The Administrative Council of the Confederation des caisses populaires et d'Economie Desjardins of Quebec re-elected Claude Beland as President of the Mouvement des caisses Desjardins (Canada) for a third three-year term of office in January of this year. Mr. Beland was first elected to this position in January 1987. Mr Beland is also Chairman of the International Co-operative Banking Association, a Specialised Body of the ICA and a member of the ICA Board.

Jan Fenc1 has been re-elected as Chairman of the Association of Agricultural Co-operatives and Companies in the Czech Republic at the Annual General Meeting on 29 November 1996.

MEP Pauline Green, Leader of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, has been elected President of the next UK Co-operative Congress to be held in Cardiff from 25 to 27 May.

(Source: Cooperative News, Jan. 1997)

Nora Sobolow has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA). She was seconded by the Credit Union Central of Canada and the two organisations are exploring opportunities for working more closely, especially in the area of government affairs and policy. Ms. Sovolow remains as Vice-President, Government Affairs and Policy at CUCU. Her e-mail address is nora@coopcca.com

(Source: Inter Sector Volume 1 Winter 96/97)

Peter Vrisk has been elected President of the Zadruzna Zveza Slovenije, the Co-operative Union of Slovenia.

ICA Calendar & ICA E-mail Addresses (1997)

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ICA CALENDAR

7 - 8 April 1997

Chairs & Secs of SBs Geneva, Switzerland

9 April 1997

ICBA Board Meeting Geneva, Switzerland

17 - 18 April 1997

ICA Housing Seminar, Kampala, Uganda

18 - 21 April 1997

ICA Board Meeting, Kampala, Uganda

2 May 1997

ICACC Executive, Copenhagen, Denmark

5 - 7 June 1997

Global Women's Committee, St. Petersburg, Russia

13 - 14 June 1997

ICA Housing Board, Vienna, Austria

11-13 September 1997

Global Women's Committee, Geneva, Switzerland

13 September 1997

European Council, Geneva, Switzerland

13 - 14 September 1997

Health Committee Meetings, Geneva, Switzerland

14 September 1997

ICA Board, Geneva, Switzerland

15 - 16 September 1997

ICA General Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland

15 - 16 September 1997

Audit/Control Committee, Geneva, Switzerland

17 September 1997

CICOPA, Fisheries, Housing, HRD, ICBA, Intercoop & ICAO
Geneva, Switzerland

18 September 1997

CICOPA, HRD, Housing, ICBA & ICAO, Geneva, Switzerland

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