



# ILO and Cooperatives

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## Editorial

ILO's cooperation with cooperative enterprises and their organizations goes back ninety-three years. That engagement has survived through adaptive efforts understanding and responding to their evolving realities and needs. The current forces transforming the world of work have created the opportunity for that engagement to thrive. The second quarter of this year was marked with illustrations of that thriving engagement at the ILO.

In May, ILO's Director General spoke to more than 300 researchers and practitioners at a conference on the *Potential and Limits of the Social and Solidarity Economy* that we hosted and co-organized with the United Nations Research Institute on Social Development (UNRISD). With the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) we launched an exciting new initiative on the role of cooperatives in delivering on sustainable development goals in the context of the UN post-2015 development framework. Bringing in the needs and concerns of cooperative enterprises from around the world into the UN processes will be a critical aspect of this work.

In recent years the cooperative movement has been growing and emerging as a global economic force to reckon with. Our engagement with some of the biggest cooperative businesses of the world has been flourishing. As value driven, principled businesses, world's largest cooperatives demonstrate how corporate social responsibility is inherent to their nature. In China we co-hosted an Asia-wide training for agricultural cooperatives with *All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives* (ACFSCMC). In Tunisia, we joined forces with two of France's biggest financial cooperatives, *Crédit Coopératif* and *MACIF*, for unlocking the potential of cooperatives and other social economy enterprises for youth employment in North Africa.

In-house, we worked with the Workers' Activities Department, putting together a meeting on the role of trade unions and worker cooperatives in addressing the conditions of workers

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in the informal economy, in bankrupt companies especially in crisis countries like Greece and in provision of critical services from social care to finance. Through a joint event with the ILO's Century Project we learned from the experiences of some of the great co-operators of the ILO who have since retired or moved onto other positions. A critical factor in their success was their strong connection to the field and close engagement with cooperatives and their organizations. In a remarkable new initiative the ILO office in Colombo facilitated the drafting of a national cooperative policy document with the participation of the government, social partners and the cooperative movement in Sri Lanka.

## ILO-ICA-ACFSMC Training Course on “Agricultural Products Marketing and Logistics for Cooperatives”

The ILO was invited by the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC) to co-host a training course on marketing and logistics in agricultural cooperatives in Beijing, China, 23-26 May 2013. In her opening speech, Ms. Ann Herbert, ILO Country Director for China and Mongolia, emphasised the role of value chain management, logistics, pricing policy and marketing strategy in times of rapid economic change.

Using the ILO's training package of My.COOP, Managing your agricultural cooperatives, the ILO team, consisting of Tendy Gunawan from ILO Jakarta Office, Mohamed Farzan from ILO Sri Lanka, and Huseyin Polat, an ILO Consultant on Cooperatives, delivered a training course on agricultural products marketing and logistics for cooperatives.

Thirty cooperative practitioners and managers from primary and secondary cooperatives and apex bodies from 15 different Asian and African countries participated in the training. Methodologies and content of training were delivered by the

In this expanded issue of Cooperative News, we also share with you how these critical partnerships are culminating in tools, products and strategies from online and print publications to capacity building initiatives and project documents. We hope as you read this issue you will have a sense of how the cooperative enterprise favours a long-term vision of serving the needs of members which contributes to their stability and resilience, critical to the future of the world of work.

**Simel Esim, Head, Cooperatives Unit**

ILO Team to strengthen the participants' knowledge and to equip them with useful tools on agricultural cooperatives management, value chain management, cooperative marketing and logistics, role of cooperative federations in agricultural products marketing, and logistics. During the exercises the participants discussed members' retention and commitment, reasons for joining cooperatives, and the importance of member diversity.

>> For more information on ACFSMC in English, see <http://www.chinacoop.coop/English/>



## ILO strengthening ties with the Korean cooperative movement and support institutions

The Manager of the ILO's Cooperatives Unit was invited to take part in the International Symposium of the Korean Federation of the Community Credit Cooperatives Union (KFCC) on the occasion of their 50th anniversary on May 22, 2013. In addition to making a presentation at the



KFCC event, Ms. Esim took the opportunity to hold a series of meetings with the leadership of KFCC, representatives of the Ministry of Security and Public Administration responsible for cooperatives, Social Enterprise team of the Foundation of SK Holding, National Federation of Domestic Worker Cooperatives as well as Joinus Korea, a Korean social enterprise. The mission resulted in a number of concrete follow up initiatives including the translation of the ILO's publication on '*Resilience in a downturn: The power of financial cooperatives in times of crisis*' by KFCC, agreement on the terms of the secondment of a staff member from the Ministry of Security and Public Administration to the ILO as well as follow up actions for capacity building with the Korean domestic worker cooperatives in collaboration with the ILO's Bangkok office.

>> For the Korean translation of the ILO publication '*Resilience in a downturn: The power of financial cooperatives in times of crisis*' see [http://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS\\_207768/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_207768/lang--en/index.htm)

## Turkey welcomes Egyptian agricultural cooperatives in Izmir

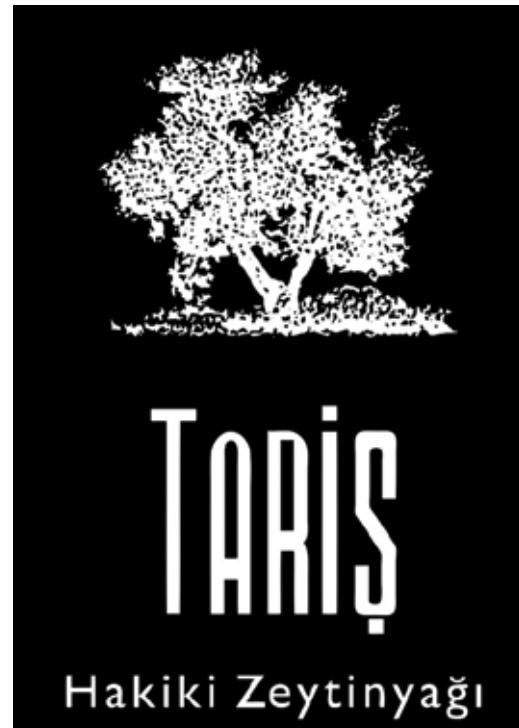
Turkey has substantial experience with agricultural production, credit and marketing cooperatives. In order to benefit from this experience a study tour was organized to Izmir in April by the UN/ILO as a joint activity between SALASEL, DJEP (CIDA) and DJEP (AusAid – Aswan). The purpose of the visit was to learn about the new Turkish Cooperative Development Strategy and the relation between the state and cooperatives in Turkey as well as export linkages with larger consumer cooperatives and wholesalers and retailers in the EU and the Middle East markets. A special focus was put on agricultural credit and marketing cooperatives (including fruit and vegetable growers) and governance practices within cooperatives. The participants on the tour came from the Ministry of Agriculture, legislative council, agricultural cooperatives and farmers associations, the Central Cooperatives Union and universities.

The participants visited some of the oldest agricultural cooperatives in the country including the Regional Union of Agricultural Credit Cooperatives (ACC) that was established in 1863 and is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year in June. Although it has been known as an agricultural credit cooperative, it has a well-functioning multi-purpose agricultural cooperative system specialized in provision of agricultural credit and farm inputs. ACC has 141,195 farmer-members affiliated to 231 primary cooperatives in the region and a turnover of around 430 million USD (in 2012). Another cooperative that was visited during the tour was the Bademler Village multi-purpose rural development cooperative society with 236 farmer members that grows different varieties of flowers on 36 donums of greenhouses and supports its members in olive production for the past 50 years.

The group also visited a pharmacists' cooperative society, EDAK, which was established in 1979 and today has 4,400 members spread over nine cities in Western and Southern Turkey. It is a member of the Union of Pharmacists' Cooperatives (TEKB), provides goods and services for its members and has created 776 sustainable and decent jobs. It has an annual turnover of 537 million USD (2012).

Turkey is the largest fig producer in the world, and Taris Fig Producers' Cooperative Union is one of the oldest cooperatives in Turkey. The first fig producers' cooperative was established in 1914, together with their bank, Milli Aydin Bank (later renamed as Tarisbank). It has 5,000 member-producers organized in 15 primary cooperatives mainly in Izmir and Aydin provinces in western Turkey.

The group also visited the Taris Union of Olive and Olive Oil Producers' Cooperatives that was established in 1915. It has 33 primary cooperatives with 28,000 olive producer-members and has been the market leader in olive oil in Turkey and has been exporting olive and olive oil to 43 countries, including Egypt. In explaining the working principles of Taris, its General Manager emphasised that "with its belief in solidarity, which is the main philosophy of the cooperative system, Taris olive and olive oil union strengthens its producers and presents the most reliable olive oil



to its consumers". Taris celebrated the International Year of Cooperatives in 2012 with the motto of *cooperatives put people first*.

The study tour was finalised with a visit to a dairy cooperative in Tire that distributes milk to 220,000 primary school students every day and a flower growers' cooperative in Bayindir.

At the end of the study tour, all the group members indicated that they had a very fruitful experience in Izmir. They had the opportunity to discuss all aspects of cooperative enterprise management, operational issues, challenges and innovative solutions with the board members and managers of the cooperatives and cooperative unions that they visited.

>> To learn more about the cooperatives visited, see <http://www.tarisincir.com/> for the Taris Fig Producers' Cooperative Union, and <http://www.tariszeytinyagi.com/> for the Taris Union of Olive and Olive Oil Producers' Cooperative.

>> To learn about ILO's SALASEL project on horticulture value chains in Egypt, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afro/cairo/projects/salasel.htm>

>> Information on EDAK at <http://www.edak.org.tr/v1/eng/>, and TEKB at <http://www.tekb.org.tr/english/?p=home>

>> The new Turkish Cooperative Strategy and Action Plan can be downloaded at <http://ica.coop/en/media/library/member-publication/turkish-cooperative-strategy-and-action-plan-2012-2016>

## Academy on Sustainable Enterprise Development

The sixth edition of the Academy on Sustainable Enterprise Development took place over two weeks in the end of June at the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, Italy. Some of the main objectives of this yearly academy include acquisition of tools and practical methods, sharing of experiences and information with other participants, and having a deeper understanding of the principles and good practices in sustainable enterprise development. This year the Academy had a special focus on youth, and it brought together around 80 practitioners and policy makers from over 20 countries to share, discuss and learn on sustainable enterprise development.

ILO's Cooperatives Unit was well-represented in this year's Academy: On the second week of the Academy an elective, titled "*The cooperative enterprise as a practical option for the formalization of the informal economy*", was offered by the Unit both in the English and Arabic learning tracks, and Waltteri Katajamäki, an associate expert at the Unit, joined the Academy as a participant. The English track elective, including participation of colleagues from India and Ethiopia via Skype, was a success. Some of the terms that the participants to the elective, from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, associated with cooperatives during the course included: people-centred, community-oriented, collective, common purpose, shared purpose, joint action, and grounded in the local economy.



Cooperatives were of great interest to a number of participants from countries like Trinidad & Tobago, Kenya, Tanzania and Madagascar. Beyond the elective, this interest was raised in several more informal exchanges, including during spontaneous open space sessions and in follow up e-mail communications. The My.COOP training package on managing agricultural cooperatives was welcomed as a tool that could be of benefit to agricultural cooperatives as a tool that could benefit the situation of agricultural cooperatives in several countries in improving their quality. As an outcome of the Academy, plans to adapt the package to different country contexts will be elaborated, and a proposed "Start and Improve Your Cooperative" package will be further elaborated in the context of the English-speaking Caribbean.

The Arabic learning track had a study visit to "Frutto Permesso" an agricultural cooperative in the Piedmonte region, not too far from the city of Turin. This was among



the highlights of the Academy, to visit a well-functioning and established cooperative providing over 125 organic products largely directed to local consumers – truly a local food experience! Frutto Permesso has five member-owners, the same number than when it was established over 25 years ago, and it employs 25 permanent workers and up to 15 seasonal workers.

Apart from agricultural production, this cooperative enterprise has diversified its activities to in-farm agro-processing, including branding, packaging, and selling, and, importantly, agrotourism. Tourism has become one of the key functions of the cooperative, concentrating especially in teaching local schoolchildren about food production process from land to the table in their educational farm. In addition, the cooperative has two restaurants that offer largely locally produced fare – the lunch provided to the visitors was prepared with up to 90% ingredients coming from the farm!

>> To learn more about the Academy and the work of ITC-ILO, see their website at <http://www.itcilo.org/en>

>> Frutto Permesso cooperative has a website in English, at <http://www.fruttopermesso.com/?lang=en>



## Sri Lanka: Ministerial consultation on national cooperatives policy

The process of developing a cooperative policy in Sri Lanka is advancing, and the ILO is playing a leading role in it. The Ministry of Cooperatives and Internal Trade (MOCIT) organized a Provincial Cooperative Ministers' Conference on 11 June 2013 under the auspices of the Minister Johnston Fernando. The draft of the National Cooperatives Policy for Sri Lanka, developed with technical and financial assistance from the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives and the ILO's Cooperative Unit, was discussed at the Conference. The meeting was attended by provincial cooperatives ministers, ministry secretaries, cooperative commissioners and other government and cooperative movement representatives.

This meeting was one of the several consultations undertaken by the MOCIT, in view of the preparation of the national policy, which aims to deliver results in the medium to longer term to contribute to the development of a viable cooperative sector in Sri Lanka. Initiatives include revising legislation, strengthening governance and capacity of cooperatives as distinct business enterprises, among others. Also, the draft includes special provisions to improve work-

ing conditions of cooperative employees through revision of labour legislation formulated for cooperatives in conformity with the ILO's labour standards.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Donglin Li, the ILO Country Director for Sri Lanka and the Maldives affirmed that "the values and principles of the cooperative movement – including self-help, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility and the principle of caring for their members and their communities – are fully in line with the values and principles of the ILO".

The policy development has taken into account the ILO Recommendation 193 on the promotion of cooperatives, along with other international instruments as a basis to prepare this policy paper. Minister Fernando explained that the draft policy would be discussed and finalized by the Cabinet soon. Following this approval, the policy will be announced and implemented at national and local levels by government and cooperative movement. It is expected that the present Cooperative Law and by-laws will be revised in light of this new policy.



## Cooperation with Greek Trade Unions

In efforts to develop responses to the crisis, the General Confederation of Greek Workers has approached ACTRAV and COOP to explore ways to use the cooperative model to help preserve and create jobs.

With over 1.5 million unemployed for a population of 11 million people, Greece is facing an unprecedented challenge. This is particularly the case of Greek youth who are experiencing an unemployment rate over 60%.

Preliminary meetings have been held last spring that have notably included CICOPA and its affiliates in Brazil and

Argentina, as well as experts from Quebec. Discussions are underway to develop an approach that would involve financial support from the Greek government, as well as the provision of technical support by the ILO.

Further capacity building and support activities are being planned for the autumn with the objective of helping the confederation develop a capacity to provide support to workers wanting to keep their workplace in operation, as well as provide support to start-ups in depressed communities.

## Trade unions and worker cooperatives: where are we at?

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Cooperatives Unit organised the International Journal of Labour Research Seminar to discuss the state-of-the-art and future challenges on the relationships between trade unions and worker cooperatives. During one day, academics, policy makers and practitioners from all over the world exchanged experiences and reflections on how both trade unions and cooperativists may act together to further their goals.

It is a good moment to discuss the issue. In times of multiple crisis worldwide: the confrontation with today's challenges, such as historic unemployment rates, increasing exclusion and inequality, unacceptable conditions of people living in poverty and continuing global warming - oblige us to rethink economic and societal development practices. Workers worldwide take action to shape their own economic reality by doing business and creating employment. And often this takes place in close collaboration with trade unions. In the current challenging economic times, worker co-ops demonstrate every day the potential of this alternative form of collective entrepreneurship.

Participants to the Seminar highlighted the mutual (two-directional) and complementary inspiration between trade unions and cooperatives. Whereas trade unions often possess a strong legal expertise that may contribute to the professionalization of newly established worker co-ops; cooperatives on their turn offer opportunities for trade unions to open up their membership towards alternative sectors, such as the unemployed or informal sector. Furthermore, co-ops have an interesting experience on workers' participation in industrial relations and may therefore deliver input to the on-going debate among the traditional social partners in adapting social dialogue to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Trade unions and co-ops often have a joint historical and ideological foundation, which may facilitate mutual exchange and collaboration. In addition, trade unions and co-ops are both essentially collective undertakings, where people get together to realize their ideas, values and interests. However, the research seminar also pointed towards the diverse experiences on the relation between both groups of actors. Whereas an experience may be successful in one case, this cannot easily be translated to another organisation, continent or political moment.

The axes that emerged from the various experiences worldwide and that may serve as a linchpin of the seminar, is the mutual relationship between trade unions and cooperatives at four levels: the micro, meso, macro and meta level.

Collaboration at the micro level is understood as the improved capacity at the level of the individual enterprise, trade union or worker co-op. Improved exchange may enhance technical capacity, in terms of management skills, communication with stakeholders, social dialogue or interest representation towards policy makers. The meso level is situated at the level of umbrella organisations, associations, platforms or networks. By getting together, trade unions and co-ops aim to take advantage of an economic or political

scaling up. The macro level is understood as the legal and policy framework that shapes the enabling environment for worker co-ops. The fourth level is the level of ideas or development paradigms. Worker co-ops are economic actors: they are practitioners, they set up businesses and create employment.

A set of future challenges for trade unions and cooperatives were identified to improve their collaboration. During the crisis, worker cooperatives are mentioned as a possible alternative to conventional business models. Worker co-ops, however, have a long history and should not be reduced to a "hype" in times of crisis. A major strength of the collaboration between trade unions and cooperatives is the peer-to-peer relation. Organisations learn in a complementary way from each other. International and South-South cooperation can be part of this horizontal learning. Being innovative in finding access to alternative financing is key to scale up existing worker co-ops. Also governance is a main challenge that needs further attention. Furthermore, the privatization of public services presents a threat and opportunity, where civil society is obliged to rethink its role vis-à-vis governments and the private sector.

As the workshop was taking place in the framework of a research seminar, the need for more, and more accurate, research was emphasized. Despite the long history of relations between trade unions and worker cooperatives, research is still limited. A special issue of the International Journal of Labour Research will be dedicated to the topic.

[>> To read more about the participants' opinions about the current challenges and opportunities in their countries and regions, see \[http://www.ilo.org/actrav/info/pr/WCMS\\\_213266/lang--en/index.htm\]\(http://www.ilo.org/actrav/info/pr/WCMS\_213266/lang--en/index.htm\)](http://www.ilo.org/actrav/info/pr/WCMS_213266/lang--en/index.htm)



## Second Co-operative Banks' Day with Academics and Stakeholders

On 14th of May 2013 the European Association of Co-operative Banks (EACB) organized the "Second Co-operative Banks' Day with Academics and Stakeholders" at the European Parliament in Brussels. The event was hosted by European Parliament's First Vice-President Gianni Pittella who emphasized the importance of co-operative banks in his keynote speech: "Co-operative banks have proven to be sound and reliable during the crisis and they have greatly contributed to the systemic stability of the Eurozone."

Researchers from international institutions and universities presented their latest research on co-operative banking. Studies from the ILO, entitled "Resilience in a downturn: The power of financial co-operatives" and from the New Economics Foundation (NEF), entitled "Co-operative banks: international evidence" highlighted the power of financial co-operatives, their resilience during the crisis, the central role of their members, their stable credit offering to SMEs and households, and their growing client base.

During the two panels researchers, stakeholders and EU institution officials exchanged views on "state of the art in academic research: the unique governance of co-operative banks" and "stakeholders views on the role of co-operative banks to a more sustainable banking".

In her speech, Member of the European Parliament and Vice-chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Ms. Patrizia Toia highlighted: "During the financial crisis, the business model of co-operative banks has proved to be both sustainable and resilient to financial shocks. Co-operative banks have shown steady growth, low losses, lower credit risk, limited write downs, and a strong capitalization compared to commercial banks".

The importance of policy research on the co-operative banking sector, and specifically of the ILO study "Resilience in a downturn: The power of financial co-operatives" was acknowledged by all the High-Level participants of the event. Hervé Guider, the EACB General Manager, underlined that the EACB has set up a think tank in order to create a new impulse for the research on co-operative banks. He explained that "the Think Tank is a center of knowledge on co-operative banks with the immediate aim of gathering existing research and making it available to the public, in the medium term, the ambition is to bridge the research gap on co-operative banks and to provide input for the European institutions and international organizations".

>> Learn more about EACB, including the criteria for the "Second EACB Award for young researchers on co-operative banks", at <http://www.eacb.coop>

## ILO participation at MedESS 2013

The ILO contributed to MedESS 2013: The Spring of Involvement in Solidarity as a partner, a member of its Advisory Board and speaking on two days of the programme. The event, which took place between 2-4 May 2013 in Tunis was the first edition of what is intended as a continuing engagement on social and solidarity economy, namely cooperatives, credit unions and mutual associations in the Mediterranean basin. With 600 participants from around the region, MedESS 2013 dedicated one day to exchanges and good practices and another day to commitments and future projects for the Social and Solidarity-based Economy in the Mediterranean region.



>> For more information on MedESS 2013 see <http://medess.org/2013/en/>

>> On commitments made by the participants during MedESS 2013 see <http://medess.org/2013/en/discover-soon-the-commitments-taken-during-medess-2013>



## Waste pickers' social and solidarity economy organizations visit the International Labour Conference

Prior to participating in the International Labour Conference, representatives of the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers from Brazil, Colombia and India visited the ILO, together with Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) coordinators, to share their views on informal economy especially related to waste pickers. The Global Alliance of Waste Pickers is a networking process that brings together over half a million waste pickers from all continents, defending their rights and organizing nationally, regionally and locally, while (Women in Informal Employment) WIEGO supports the Alliance. The leaders of these SSE organizations indicated that waste picking and recycling are key sectors for green jobs and sustainable development. Cooperatives and other membership-based associations offer a good way to formalise waste picker organizations.

In many cities in developing countries formal public waste collection services are non-existent and waste pickers provide the main form of waste collection. Waste pickers can range from people working on dumps or cleaning garbage off the streets, to informal collectors of recyclables who sell the sorted products to middlemen or businesses. Worldwide, an estimated 24 million people are engaged in recycling, and large majority of these jobs are in the informal economy. Waste pickers are often amongst the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the societies, and even though they play a key role in waste management, their role is not often recognised.

In addressing the Conference, Nohra Padilla, an award-winning waste picker leader from Bogota, Colombia, emphasised the important role waste pickers play in sustainable development through waste recovery and management, while still having to withstand poor working conditions and poverty. The Global Alliance of Waste Pickers is looking to improve current miserable working conditions into decent

and self-organized jobs in worker cooperatives. The main benefits of forming cooperatives include increased incomes for the waste pickers; increased collective power in influencing decisions affecting waste pickers, especially through negotiating with municipalities; and improved occupational safety and health for the waste pickers.

>> Global Alliance of Waste Pickers: <http://globalrec.org/>

>> Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing WIEGO: <http://wiego.org/>

>> Watch a video on the waste pickers in Pune, India: <http://wiego.org/resources/swach>



*Nohra Padilla delivering the waste pickers' delegation speech at the ILC Plenary. Photo by WIEGO*

## ILO work on e-waste and cooperatives

ILO's Cooperative Unit is collaborating with Sectoral Activities Department on a research project that will look in the role of electronic waste cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy organizations in e-waste in several countries. This work is a follow up of the 2012 ILO study "The Global Impact of E-Waste: Addressing the Challenge", which recommended cooperatives as an effective way to formalize informal sector e-waste workers.

E-waste is currently the largest growing waste stream worldwide, and simultaneously a valuable source for secondary raw material, but often toxic and hazardous if handled and discarded improperly. Of the e-waste in developed countries that is sent for recycling, 80 per cent ends up being shipped (often illegally) to developing countries to be recycled by hundreds of thousands of informal workers. In the informal economy, e-waste recycling is often labour

intensive, involves low earnings and unrecorded and unregulated work, and is in general undertaken by self-employed people or family groups using rudimentary technology. Such globalization of e-waste has adverse social, safety, health and environmental implications. The ILO study will provide fact-based evidence on the engagement of cooperatives, social enterprises and other types of organizations in all parts of e-waste value-chains in different countries.

>> The publication "The Global Impact of E-Waste: Addressing the Challenge" can be accessed at [http://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS\\_196105/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_196105/lang--en/index.htm)

>> A case study on the Mexican "tough women" who have turned e-waste into a successful enterprise is available at [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS\\_202122/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_202122/lang--en/index.htm)

## COOP Champions: Cebisile Nyambe

In our last newsletter we launched a section highlighting the work of colleagues on cooperatives around the world. In this issue we present a colleague from South Africa, Ms. Cebisile Nyambe, a cooperative and social enterprise practitioner with over fifteen years of experience in working on cooperatives.

After working for several agencies in South Africa promoting cooperative development, Cebisile joined the ILO in 2012 as the national project coordinator for the Public Procurement and Social Economy Project, based in the Pietermaritzburg Field Office in KwaZulu Natal Province in Eastern South Africa.

The project is funded by the Government of Flanders and explores the potential to use public procurement to stimulate the social economy in South Africa. It responds to the New Growth Path, which identifies the social economy as a sector with the potential to create 260,000 new jobs and specifically refers to the need to "encourage state procurement from and service delivery through organizations in the social economy".



The project works both on the demand side (clarifying and influencing the interpretation of procurement regulations, and creating greater procurement opportunities) and the supply side (building the capacity of social economy enterprises to respond to these opportunities). It seeks to develop and test new social economy enterprise models that reduce barriers to market entry for social economy suppliers and that create additional jobs. The project works in selected sectors in which there are significant decent work deficits. These include agriculture (particularly food production for supply to schools, hospitals and other state institutions); waste recycling; and various other municipal services.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are emerging social economy enterprises and their members, employees and clients. In line with the Decent work Country Programme, the project has a particular, but not exclusive, focus on women, youth and persons with disabilities.



Cebisile thinks that social and solidarity economy has the potential to create jobs in South Africa. At the national level, Cebisile says, the social economy needs to be supported through the establishment of an enabling legal, institutional and policy environment and institutional strengthening of it. At micro and meso levels there is a need to enhance the efficiency of social economy enterprises and organizations so that they become more effective and contribute to meeting people's needs in terms of income creation, social protection, employment promotion, rights at work, food security, environmental protection, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the elimination of child labour.

The ILO has supported social entrepreneurship in South Africa since 2008. Prior to the current project, the *Social Entrepreneurship Targeting Youth in South Africa* (SETYSA) project targeted young unemployed women and men and sought to create new employment opportunities for them through the promotion of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. SETYSA succeeded in achieving increase in jobs for young people as well as in access to social protection. In addition, it improved policy making processes and service delivery, and demonstrated that social enterprise development can become an important part in South Africa's policy context, as it led to the inclusion of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in the government's strategic economic plans.

Several tools were created in the context of SETYSA, including: research reports at different levels; a set of case studies of social enterprises in South Africa; a guide to finance for social enterprise in South Africa; a guide to legal forms for social enterprise in South Africa and training materials for social enterprise development.

>> For more information on ILO's work in South Africa, visit <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afro/preatoria/about/index.htm>

## ILO Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy: an opportunity to enhance youth creativity

The third edition of the ILO Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy was held in Agadir, Morocco, 8 – 12 April 2013. After SSE Academies in Turin in 2010 and Montreal in 2011, this year's Academy in Agadir had a larger number of participants (86) from a total of 26 countries, and received an overall positive evaluation results. The largest number of participants came from Northern African countries, including Egypt (21), Tunisia (17), and Morocco (12). This year's Academy also involved new partner institutions beyond our traditional partners (CIRIEC and EESC), including LEGACOOP, OECD, EURICSE, REMESS, RENCONTRE DE MONT BLANC, and CEPES/ESMED.

The evaluation of the Agadir Academy by the participants indicated an overall satisfaction in the quality and relevance of the academy for the work and organizations of the participants, and also the study visits were well appreciated. The evaluations also revealed some persistent challenges throughout the three Academies that need to be overcome. In particular, participants seemed not to have had the necessary preliminary information before coming to the Academy. ILO Geneva and ITC Turin are working on improving participants' access to previous information through a distance learning platform. The participants also continued to consider that gender equality issues are not being dealt with sufficiently. On this item, the Academy organizers are committed to involve relevant colleagues from the ILO

and ITC Turin in the next design and implementation of the SSE Academy. Concerns were also raised regarding the participation of workers' and employers' organizations representatives at the Academy. The commitment is there to engage earlier and better with the ILO constituents in the upcoming editions of the Academy.

>> >> The multilingual knowledge sharing platform <http://www.sseacb.net/> and the ITC-ILO website on SSE [www.itcilo.org/socialeconomy](http://www.itcilo.org/socialeconomy), provide relevant information regarding the past editions of the Academy, including the Readers, now available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, as well as other useful tools and updates on SSE.

A participant from Tanzania, Mrs Alama Jumbe noted that "the course relates itself in the current policies of our Government to encourage communal efforts towards poverty eradication especially among youth. We had the opportunity to visit an exemplary economic group whose activities resemble those of similar groups here at home. The training will help me to strengthen the setup of the cooperative groups we already have in various places in the Islands and to mobilize youth to form new ones so that they can create income generating activities under "KAZI NJE NJE Programme".



*Graduates of the 2013 Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy*

## Conference on the potential and limits of social and solidarity economy

The conference on potential and limits of social and solidarity economy was held at the ILO headquarters on 6-8 May 2013. Jointly organized by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the ILO in collaboration with UN-NGLS, Hivos, the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation and the Ville de Genève, the conference brought together over 300 academics, UN policy makers, practitioners, civil society organizations and others interested in SSE. The aim of the conference was to explore the potential and limits of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as a distinctive approach to development and for promoting gender equality, rural development, decent work and food and livelihood security.



In his opening remarks, ILO's Director-General Guy Ryder highlighted four areas where cooperatives have special potential to address key challenges facing countries around the world: namely crisis response, youth employment, informal economy, and rural employment. All of these areas are important for building a fair society with greater employment opportunities and more sustainable livelihoods, particularly in rural areas. For her part, UNRISD's Director Sarah Cook noted how other, sustainable forms of economic organizing, including cooperatives, are established from the ground up to respond to the changing economic realities.

Over the three days, the 300 conference participants discussed a variety of topics related to SSE, including conceptualization of SSE, SSE links with social services, public policy and law, gender dynamics, and the role of different actors in SSE.

As an outcome of the conference, an interagency meeting on SSE was agreed upon, with UNRISD and the ILO taking the lead in bringing relevant UN agencies together for regular exchanges on their programming in the field of SSE and explore synergies between them. The meeting will focus on efforts related to SSE, including joint initiatives, and aim to raise the profile of SSE within the UN system.

In addition, ILO will continue its work on social and solidarity economy, not only through the Task Force, but also through an online/distance learning course on SSE under development by ILO's Training Center in Turin in partnership with ILO COOP. Also, the next edition of SSE Academy is planned for 2014.

>> UNRISD has produced a video on the highlights of the Conference, which can be accessed, together with conference presentation and papers, at <http://www.unrisd.org/sseconf>. The event brief is available at <http://www.unrisd.org/eb1>

>> DG Guy Ryder's opening remarks to the Conference can be found at [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/who-we-are/ilo-director-general/statements-and-speeches/WCMS\\_212653/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/who-we-are/ilo-director-general/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_212653/lang--en/index.htm)

>> Think piece by Rafael Peels on legal frameworks on social and solidarity economy is available at <http://bit.ly/15qY4mG>



Photos by UNRISD

## MATCOM materials used for cooperative training in Afghanistan

A Dutch funded ATVET project focuses on the improvement of agricultural vocational training in Afghanistan, and makes use of ILO's MATCOM training manuals in the module on farmers' organizations. The ATVET project particularly addresses the needs of the approximately one hundred agricultural high schools that have been (re-)established since 2001. Important components of the project are the development of the National Agriculture Education College, a teacher training college that started in 2012, and the development of a modern and relevant curriculum for agricultural high schools. One of the teaching modules that is part of the new curriculum is about 'farmer organizations'. ILO's MATCOM training materials explain the basic economics of cooperatives in a simple manner. In this case illustrations are adapted to the Afghan context and the module will be translated into Dari and Pashto.

Certain traditional community-based organizations in Afghanistan have existed for centuries and survived decades of war and foreign intervention, for example the Mirab



National Agriculture Education College (NAEC) students doing fieldwork near Kabul.

## Colombia rolls out My.COOP training package

Colombia became the third South American country to introduce My.COOP – Managing Your Agricultural Cooperative training package, after Peru and Bolivia. The focal point for the package in Colombia is the National Service of Learning (SENA), a public entity under the Colombia's Ministry of Labour, supported by the ILO. In April, the first national training of trainers was conducted by SENA, with an objective to increase cooperatives' capacity to offer high quality services for their members and for the society at large. Since then, SENA has sensitized 163 people in the field, mainly among their staff working for the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme.

SENA is in the process of finalizing the adaptation of the package to Colombian concept, and the aim is to integrate the My.COOP training further in its various activities related to agricultural cooperatives around the country. Other national partners in the initiative include solidarity organizations, the National Cooperative University and the Confederation of Cooperatives of Colombia (Confecoop).

system, which organizes and controls the distribution of irrigation water. Cooperatives are a relatively new phenomenon in Afghanistan. The first cooperatives were formed around 1955 for goat and sheep skin production and silk, but after five years it became clear that they did not function as genuine cooperatives, nor were they viable businesses. In the early 1960s the state decided to actively involve itself in establishing and supporting cooperatives. They were supported by ILO's Cooperative Department experts to design a number of rural development programs with a cooperative component in line with the ICA principles. Country's first Cooperative Law was promulgated in 1974.

The term cooperative has somewhat negative connotation in Afghanistan. In the past cooperatives were used by political powers to coerce land reform or to enforce collectivization of farms. Then when political powers changed, from one day to the other cooperatives were forbidden. Since 2001 cooperatives are allowed again and within 10 years' time almost 3,000 cooperatives were (re-)registered. Unfortunately, many cooperatives are being formed by farmers and outsiders alike just to channel donor support like credit and agricultural inputs. In many cases cooperatives favour the larger landowners with irrigated land, they do not abide to the cooperative principles and they lack support to capacity building. Still there are some examples of cooperatives that are successful in improving the livelihoods, even of smallholders and women.

It is hoped that the agricultural high school students will one day benefit from these high school lessons that are being developed by the ATVET project, be it as a cooperative member or as employee of the government or an NGO.

>> To read more about ATVET project, visit their website at [www.agromisa.org](http://www.agromisa.org)

>> See a video on the roll out of My.COOP in Colombia at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsN-cIH\\_fFE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsN-cIH_fFE)

>> To find out more about SENA, visit their website [www.sena.edu.co](http://www.sena.edu.co)



## Japanese universities interested in cooperative development

Japanese universities have always demonstrated a great deal of interest in the cooperative model. At the end of last year, the management of the Kobe University invited ILO's Executive Director Mr José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs to give a seminar on cooperative enterprises. Mr Salazar-Xirinach's lecture provided information on the ILO's activities on cooperatives, including the promotion of the 2002 ILO Recommendation 193 and its impact, the ILO Decent Work Agenda in relation with cooperatives, the role of cooperatives for poverty reduction, youth employment through the cooperative business model, the resilience of cooperatives to crisis, and the 2012 United Nations International Year of Cooperatives.

In early 2013, the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Japan requested the ILO Office in Tokyo to provide a set of lectures on cooperative theory in Japanese at their sponsored lecture series at the Waseda University, one of the country's most prestigious private universities. The lecture series is aimed at undergraduate students from all of Waseda's faculties. The last time this officially accredited lecture series was held in 2011, about 130 students attended. The three lectures, prepared with the participation of the ILO Cooperatives Unit, are specifically focusing on the ILO and the cooperative promotion through technical cooperation projects in developing countries.

## Conference on cooperatives at Belgorod University in Russia

In connection with its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Belgorod University of Cooperation, Economics and Law held a number of scientific events dedicated to the jubilee. Amongst the most important ones was the International Research Conference of the Academic Staff and Practical Cooperators, held in April. The conference was attended by researchers, post-graduate students and students of the leading universities of Russia and the CIS states. The Belgorod University is one of the leading cooperative universities of Russia training cooperative personnel, and it was also the first cooperative educational institution to set up a student cooperative society, bringing together students and academic staff. In 2007 the university set up the International Academy of Cooperation which is an integral part of the larger operational frame for the cooperative partnership in CIS countries. Furthermore, the rector of the university was part of the Advisory Group with the UN Coordinating Committee on the International Year of Cooperatives.

The topic of this year's conference was *Education, Science and Modern Society: Urgent Problems of Economics and Cooperation*, chosen in the context of last year International Year of Cooperatives and the renewed attention on cooperatives that this has brought forward. The plenary session of the conference dealt with urgent problems of the

development of the economy and cooperatives including development of cooperative education, family farms in the region and trade in consumer goods. The ILO Cooperatives Unit has had a partnership and Agreement on Cooperation with the university since 2008 which has led to close cooperation and exchange of knowledge on cooperatives. There have been discussions of further cooperation on a project related to the creation of job opportunities through a cooperative model of business for graduating students of Belgorod Cooperative University that would lead to a decreased level of youth employment and poverty.



Registration for My.COOP Distance Learning ToT now open!



My.COOP Distance Learning Training of Trainers is now open for registration. The training will take place between 14 October 2013 and 10 January 2014, and will be offered in English, French and Spanish. For more information and registration, visit [www.agriculture-my.coop](http://www.agriculture-my.coop)!

## ILO trains Palestinian cooperative extension workers

Within the framework of ILO's project "Gender Equality and Women's Economic empowerment", ILO extended its support to the capacity building of Ministry of Labour's



(MoL) General Directorate of Cooperatives by organizing training and coaching activities with a view to assess newly established cooperatives and to improve the skills of MoL cooperatives extension workers in providing support services and counselling to newly registered cooperatives.

The training took place in April, and it targeted eleven extension workers at the MoL-General Directorate of Cooperatives from nine governorates in West Bank. The contents of the training included the success elements of cooperative enterprises, basic elements of assessing coop enterprise feasibility and business planning process, coop marketing, management performance of coop enterprises, identification of business development objectives and opportunities, and basic coop financial planning.

The workshop was followed by 20 days of field exercises during April and May, aiming at facilitating and supporting the conduction of business plans and feasibility studies for ten newly established cooperatives in several sectors (agriculture, food processing, handicrafts and consumer cooperatives). Following to the fieldwork, a one day workshop was organized by ILO and MoL in May to draw lessons learned and key recommendations of the exercise, and to assess the impact of the training and coaching activities.

## Cooperatives mentioned in the DG report on workers in the occupied Arab territories

The importance of cooperatives is acknowledged in the report of the ILO Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, submitted to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference in June. The report recognizes cooperatives as an important avenue for empowering women, especially as the membership in cooperatives has traditionally been male dominated and women's involvement in cooperatives is relatively recent. The report notes that the participation of Palestinian women in cooperatives is highest in the handicraft sector (representing 59 per cent of all women in cooperatives), but cooperatives need support in identifying new niche markets, particularly in services, to increase and diversify women's employment.

The report uses the example of the United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which focused on developing women's cooperatives through grants, training, technical assistance, and capacity building on business management and marketing skills for members of 43 women's cooperatives.

Another example is that of the Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit (UCASC), a cooperative with a majority of women members, that was given responsibility for managing capacity development and grants for its members in the context of this programme, with considerable investment being made in building the association's own capacity. The second phase of the project will enable UCASC to assist other cooperatives. A draft law

on cooperatives, which is aimed at developing and improving the cooperatives sector generally, has been submitted to the President for approval.

>> The full report can be accessed at [http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/102/reports/reports-submitted/WCMS\\_213298/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/102/reports/reports-submitted/WCMS_213298/lang--en/index.htm)



## COOP Staff news

The Cooperatives Unit welcomes its new associate expert, Mr Waltteri Katajamäki. Waltteri holds a Master's degree on development and rural studies from the University of Helsinki, and has previously worked at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Finnish Environment Institute and IFAD. He will be working as a focal point on rural employment issues, including follow up engagement on My.COOP partnership and dissemination of the training package.

Mr Emery Igitaneza started a three-month internship on June 17, working on cooperatives and their role in the post-2015 development agenda. Emery has worked in community development projects in the UK and over-

seas, and is currently finishing a Master's Degree in International Relations and Globalization at the University of Salford.

Ms Dipabali Chowdhury has finished her 3 months internship and is continuing her collaboration with the Cooperatives Unit through a consultancy for an in-depth study of domestic workers' cooperatives in the United States.

Mr. Rafael Peels has finished his 4-month internship with the Unit, having worked mainly with social economy. He will continue working at the ILO and joining the International Institute for Labour Studies.

## COOP Elders met to discuss the past and the future of cooperatives

In collaboration with the ILO Century Project, the Cooperatives Unit brought together a group of former staff from the Unit to discuss about the past and the future of cooperatives within the ILO. A total of nine ex-officios participated in the discussion, along with the current staff of the Unit and the Century Project. The objective of the event was to look at the ways ILO has engaged in cooperatives and how these experiences could be used to inform the future.

Cooperatives have always played an important role within the ILO. The Cooperatives Unit was established only a year after ILO's establishment, in 1920, making it one of the oldest still existing units. Some of the participants to the meeting had started working in the Cooperatives Unit in the golden age of cooperative development, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many ILO cooperative projects were funded by UNDP across countries and regions, including Myanmar and East and West Africa. Over the decades, projects such as ACOPAM, SYNDICOOP and COOPAfrica have all been critical to the development and promotion of cooperative principles.

The participants noted the inclusion of cooperatives in the ILC agenda and the subsequent adoption of the Recommendation 193 on cooperatives in 2002 as the key turning point in the history of cooperative movement.

For the future, the participants identified several points of importance that ILO could contribute through the Cooperatives Unit. First, it is important to ensure the inclusion of cooperative principles in the post-2015 development agenda, not just as goals but also as strategies contributing to achieving the objectives; Second, it was seen important to push cooperative agenda within the ILO, especially through select Areas of Critical Importance (ACIs), and mainstream cooperatives into other outcomes. It was also noted that Cooperatives Unit needs to include broader social and solidarity economy enterprises and organizations beyond cooperatives.

It was agreed that the Unit will continue to follow up with the "elders" and make these meetings an annual event.



## Noteworthy resources

### Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship

The European Commission has recently published the fourth volume of the Social Europe Guide, titled “Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship”. The guide highlights the role of both social economy organizations, including cooperatives, associations, mutual and foundations, and social enterprises, which demonstrate remarkable resilience and energy to overcome the current crises. The Guide also illustrates the recent trends towards greater social responsibility among consumers, traditional for-profit companies and financial institutions, and reviews a series of European public policies supporting social economy and social enterprise.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7523&type=2&furtherPubs=yes>

### The social economy: Unlocking value and productivity through social technologies

A McKinsey Global Institute report by Michael Chui, James Manyika, Jacques Bughin, Richard Dobbs, Charles Roxburgh, Hugo Sarrazin, Geoffrey Sands and Magdalena Westergren

The report traces the growth of social technologies such as media and file sharing, social networks, blogs, wikis, discussion forums and shared workspaces, examines the sources of their power, assesses their impact in several major sectors in the economy, and analyses the ways in which social technologies create value. The report also explores social technology risks and obstacles to adoption, as well as enabling capacities to create value using social technologies.

[http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/high\\_tech\\_telecoms\\_internet/the\\_social\\_economy](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/high_tech_telecoms_internet/the_social_economy)

## Upcoming events

### July

6 United Nations International Day of Cooperatives. The theme for 2013 is “Cooperative enterprises remain strong in time of crisis”.

8 UN DESA Panel discussion on “Cooperative enterprises remain strong in time of crisis”, New York.

### September

27 Deadline for registration for the My.COOP – Managing your agricultural cooperative Training of Trainers distance learning course. For more information, see <http://agriculture-my.coop/>.

### October

2-11 19th International Conference of Labour Statistics, Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, see <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/19/lang--en/index.htm>.

<http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/19/lang--en/index.htm>.

14 My.COOP Training of Trainers distance course begins

### November

1-5 International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Global Conference and General Assembly, Cape Town, South Africa. For more information, see <http://ica.coop/en/events/ica-global-conference-general-assembly-2013>.

9-11 The 6th Mont Blanc Meeting “Changing the course of globalization through social and solidarity economy: Towards post 2015 Millennium Development Goals”. Chamonix, France. For more information, see <https://www.rencontres-montblanc.coop/en/page/6th-meetings-9-11-november-2013>.

This issue was prepared with contributions from Rawand Al-Madmouj, Elissa Bevilacqua, Cris de Klein, Roberto Di Meglio, Simel Esim, Mohamed Farzan, Lucia Fernandez, Tendy Gunawan, Waltteri Katajamäki, Pierre Laliberte, Louise Nolle, Cebisile Nyambe, Rafael Peels, Huseyin Polat, Guy Tchami, and Igor Vocatch.

### Cooperatives Unit (ENT/COOP) International Labour Office (ILO)

Route des Morillons 4  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 799 7445 - Fax: +41 (0) 22 799 8572  
E-mail: [coop@ilo.org](mailto:coop@ilo.org) - Website: [www.ilo.org/coop](http://www.ilo.org/coop)