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United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2012

REPORT

January 2013

The Finnish Committee for IYC 2012

CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISES BUILD A BETTER WORLD



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Report on Activities in Finland during the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2012

Introduction

The United Nations decided to declare 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives at its assembly held at the end of 2009. This decision was anticipated in the ICA's annual meeting in November 16-20, 2009 in Geneva. At the meeting in Geneva, it was decided that initiatives for the International Year of Cooperatives would commence in the beginning of 2010.

The United Nations recommended the governments of various countries, in cooperation with cooperative actors, companies, organisations and research institutes, to promote cooperative activities and to pay special attention to the positive impact of cooperatives on social and economic development in both the industrialized and developing countries. The United Nations encourages the establishment and growth of cooperatives. Cooperative growth and development require active legislation which perceives cooperative as its own special business model with its strengths and weaknesses.

The United Nations prioritized the most important initiatives for the International Year of Cooperatives 2012 as follows:

- To increase worldwide awareness of cooperative business model
- The youth and cooperatives
- Cooperative education and research
- To promote cooperative business in developing countries

“Cooperative enterprises build a better world”

The slogan for the international year of cooperatives was “Cooperative enterprises build a better world”. This slogan was not consciously translated into Finnish strictly word to word; instead a Finnish version of the slogan was used (“Maaailma rakentuu yhdessä yrittämällä”).

In Finland, cooperative parties are represented by the Finnish Cooperative Council which decided on the nationwide activities and celebration of the Cooperative Year. In order to promote the previously mentioned initiatives, the Council appointed members of the Finnish committee. This committee had 19 representatives from cooperative enterprises and organisations, various ministries, universities and research institutes. On June 23, 2011 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs officially established a national committee for preparing, conducting and following up the International Year of Cooperatives in Finland. On June 23, 2011 Ms Anne Santamäki, Director of International Relations at SOK Corporation, ICA's board member and Organisation Counsellor, was appointed as chairman of the committee and Mr Shimelles Tenaw, Researcher at the Department of Economics and Management of the University of Helsinki as secretary of the committee.

The Finnish committee had its first unofficial meeting on January 21, 2010 and thereafter gathered six times during the year. The committee has worked in close cooperation with the Finnish Cooperative Council which consists of members from SOK Corporation, Pellervo - Confederation of

Finnish Cooperatives, OP-Pohjola Group and Co-operative Tradeka Group. Mr Otto Mikkonen, Industrial Counsellor and Chairman of the Finnish Cooperative Council delivered the opening speech at the launching ceremony of the International Year of Cooperatives held in the United Nations Headquarters in New York on October 31, 2011. In connection with the opening ceremonies, the ICA organized a networking event to cooperative business directors on November 1, 2011.

In Finland, the main spotlight during the year was focused on cooperative education, research, the youth and international activities. The themes of the year were also presented in responsibility communications. Emphasizing the importance of cooperatives as a business model and sharing awareness and recommendations of the model for developing entrepreneurship, teaching and research have been well brought up and presented in seminars organized during the year. Consequently, genuine and active interest in cooperatives among the youth has been further enhanced in educational institutions, resulting in e.g. establishments of cooperatives in several institutions.

The use of educational cooperatives as a means of entrepreneurship training has increased. For instance in the Pirkanmaa area 13 new cooperative enterprises operating in educational institutions have been established. It is very positive that the possibilities of team learning and team entrepreneurship have been recognized and cooperatives are now more and more spreading into upper secondary educational institutions. Consequently, it is vital to ensure that the operations of cooperatives within educational institutions are adequately guided in future in terms of both entrepreneurship and team learning.

It is quite remarkable that during the year, in addition to our own cooperative personnel, we were pleased to have some totally new cooperators and partners, such as organisations engaged in company counselling and many governmental authorities, to join us in promoting cooperative entrepreneurship.

International cooperation has also been fairly vivid. During the celebration year we received a great number of foreign visitors who wanted to learn more about cooperative business operations in e.g. SOK Corporation, Pellervo - Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives and OP-Pohjola Group. Members of the Finnish committee have participated in events organized abroad during the celebration year. The Finnish cooperative business model has been presented for instance in the 2012 International Summit of Cooperatives, the top conference held in Quebec, and in Cooperatives United, the main event of the celebration year in Manchester, as well as in Hamburg, Rome and Slovakia. Mr Shimelles Tenaw gave the opening speech in ICA's 10th meeting of the African regional organisation held in Kigali, Ruanda.

One of the most important activities during the year was without doubt the decision of the Finnish Cooperative Council to donate the funds for a cooperative professorship at Lappeenranta University of Technology. Mr Iiro Jussila, Doctor of Economics, has been appointed as Professor of Cooperative Activities.

This report describes the events and activities arranged during the International Year of Cooperatives 2012.

Main Events

Main IYC 2012 event in Finland on March 21, 2012 in Finlandia Hall, Helsinki

The theme for the main event was based on the Finnish version of the international slogan for the celebration year. The goals and speeches in the event highlighted the versatile status of cooperatives in global economy and society, the suitability of the value basis for future challenges, research and development as well as the fact that cooperative operations are based on member democracy. The number of participants amounted to some 850. As the event was free of charge, many young people and students also attended the event. The Finnish Cooperative Council and the Finnish Committee for IYC 2012 acted as organisers for the event. Speeches in the event were given by e.g. Dame Pauline Green, ICA's President, Mr Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mr Reijo Karhinen, CEO of OP-Pohjola Group.

A new joint video of Finnish cooperatives was presented for the first time at this main event.

"Welfare by means of cooperatives", a celebration seminar of the S Group on August 28, 2012 at Sokos Hotel Presidentti, Helsinki

The aim of the seminar was to increase awareness of cooperative business and its values as well as to arouse interest in cooperative operation among future decision-makers and stakeholders. The seminar summoned over 270 people, with representatives from professionals acting with the youth and people occupied in environmental and development cooperation organisations. Also student organisations and educational institutions were well represented in the seminar. Mr Martti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland, delivered the keynote address in the seminar.

"The future of cooperatives as welfare service producers", a seminar on October 4, 2012 at the University of Tampere in Tampere

The seminar focused on possibilities of cooperatives and other business models based on national work and mutual cooperation in producing future welfare services. Various views on the subject were presented by experts, researchers and cooperative performers. The seminar was arranged together with the School of Management of the University of Tampere.

The IYC 2012 seminar of Northern Finland on November 5, 2012 at Kemijärvi Cultural Centre, Kemijärvi

The Northern Finland seminar organized by the Finnish Cooperative Council is probably the most faraway cooperative event ever held so north in our hemisphere. Kemijärvi is the birthplace of Hannes Gebhard who is regarded as the father of Finnish cooperatives, i.e. Finnish cooperative movement returned to its roots in this seminar. The seminar focused on cooperative operations especially in view of Northern Finland. 80 people attended the seminar, including Mr Olli-Pekka Salminen, Mayor of Kemijärvi, as one of the speakers.

Other events

110th Anniversary of Pirkanmaa Cooperatives on January 10, 2012, Tampere

Speeches in this event were addressed e.g. by Mr Jukka Gustafsson, Minister of Education and Science, Mr Kuisma Niemelä, CEO of SOK Corporation and Mr Pertti Haapala, Professor. About 50 people attended the event.

North-Karelian seminar of Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives on February 3, 2012 at Valio plant, Joensuu

The theme of the seminar was based on the Finnish version of the international slogan for IYC 2012. The seminar assembled about 40 people.

Theme seminar of Keskimaa Cooperatives administration on February 18, 2012, Jyväskylä

Speakers in this jubilee seminar were e.g. Mr Simo Kutinlahti, Chairman of the Board and Ms Anne Santamäki, Organisational Counsellor.

Series of lectures by North Karelian Cooperatives and University of Eastern Finland

The series of lectures was based on the theme “Cooperatives as a business model” and it included 16 lectures given in March 2012. The goal of the course was to increase awareness of cooperatives as a business model among young academic students.

95th jubilee seminar of cooperative enterprise Osuuskauppa Arina on May 15, 2012, Oulu

Mr Rodrigo Gouveia, Secretary-General of Euro Coop and Mr Kuisma Niemelä, CEO of SOK Corporation were among the speakers in the seminar.

Two seminars by Tampere Region Cooperative Centre

Super Day of cooperative entrepreneurship was held on March 27, 2012 in Tampere. The program included lectures to business counsellors, a talk-show presented by cooperative enterprises and a mini seminar discussing the amendment of cooperative law. The number of participants was about 90 people.

A seminar on “Cooperative entrepreneurship – new business models” was held on November 13, 2012 in Helsinki. The seminar was organized by Tampere Cooperative Centre and the number of participants amounted to 130 people.

Other Activities

To honour the celebration year, SOK Corporation decided to donate funds to a cooperative development project in Myanzi region, Uganda. SOK committed itself to supporting this project through a new Bank4Hope donation channel and the project was implemented in cooperation with International Solidarity Foundation (IFS), a Finnish non-governmental organisation for development cooperation. SOK Corporation took into use a durable IYC 2012 bag in the whole S Group and prepared a Responsible Customer handbook which was distributed in S Group’s truck tour in summer 2012. Roll-up advertisements were available to all cooperative companies and co-partners.

Co-operative Tradeka Group founded a trust for consumer cooperative operations. The 100th anniversary celebrities of Association for Finnish Work were started with a story of the work of a cooperative shopkeeper, presented on the Finnish TV channel MTV3 on January 7, 2012.

OP-Pohjola Group celebrated the cooperative year in daily work throughout the whole year. The United Nations IYC 2012 theme was on display in several events, such as in Group's 110th Anniversary celebration on May 22, 2012 at Helsinki Music Centre.

In the spirit of the International Year of Cooperatives Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives contributed a total of 32 Cooperative and Gebhard medals to distinguished cooperative lecturers, researchers, state officials and operators of water cooperatives.

Participations

RIO+20 – “What do we have to contribute to the environment”, a national seminar was held on February 1-2, 2012 at the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki. In this event the importance of cooperatives in environmental protection was highlighted.

Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives and Finnish Cooperative Council have participated in the nationwide YVI project which aims at developing entrepreneurship training in both vocational and general education of teachers. The YVI project organized a seminar on entrepreneurship training on September 20-21, 2012 and a starting event for Christmas time on November 15, 2012. These two events brought together nearly 200 professionals from the field of entrepreneurship training.

Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives also participated in “Brain Storm”, a national entrepreneurship training event for young people, and in a project called “LIMINARI – Work and leadership in a liminal phase” by Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation. One part of this project is for instance a sub-project named “Fellow Leadership in Cooperatives”.

Campaigns

The International Year of Cooperatives 2012 with its themes has been widely displayed in several events of cooperative enterprises, magazines and other media. Articles about the IYC 2012 events and themes have been published during the whole year in the Finnish Osuustoiminta magazine. In connection with the first issue of the year a special IYC 2012 supplement was distributed.

Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives handed out cooperative material to libraries, business centres, Yes entrepreneurship education service centres and business counsellors of ELY centres. This material included a manual for establishing a co-operative, a handbook to cooperative administration and management personnel, cooperative law as well as the values and principles of cooperatives.

Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives prepared an IYC 2012 brochure and in cooperation with other co-partners the Finnish web pages for the celebration year (www.osuustoiminta.coop/2012/).

Research events

“New Opportunities for Co-operatives”, the ICA’s Global Research Conference, was the first worldwide event of International Year of Cooperatives 2012. The conference was arranged on August 24-27, 2012 in Mikkeli, with participants from more than 30 countries. The keynote speeches were given by Mr Charles Gould, CEO of ICA and Dame Pauline Green, Chairman.

A law seminar dealing with e.g. the amendment of the Finnish Co-operatives Act was held on January 12, 2012 at the University of Helsinki. The seminar was organized by the Finnish Cooperative Council, Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives, Ruralia Institute of University of Helsinki and Institute of International Economic Law (KATTI) of University of Helsinki. Mr Jyrki Jauhainen, Legal Adviser at Ministry of Justice, was one of the speakers in the seminar.

A discussion on how cooperative research and researchers can contribute to the United Nations IYC 2012 goals for the developing countries was held on January 19, 2012 in the main building of University of Helsinki.

A science day was arranged on April 19, 2012 in Mikkeli. In the event the theme of cooperatives as local and global actors was taken up for discussion.

Professor Tapani Köppä and Doctor Hagen Henry gave two lectures about cooperatives on May 3, 2012 at the WIDER Institute in Helsinki. A research seminar organized by Ruralia Institute of University of Helsinki was held on May 24-25, 2012 at Hotel Heimari.

The Department of Economics and Management of the University of Helsinki arranged “Co-operative Values in International Operations - The 2nd eRNAC Conference” on June 14-16, 2012 at Sokos Hotel Presidentti in Helsinki. A seminar on cooperatives as a future part of research at universities was held on October 19, 2012 in the main building of the University of Helsinki. A report on the Mikkeli cooperative conference was published in this seminar.

A Studia Generalia series of lectures was given on December 4, 2012 in Mikkeli. The theme of the series was cooperatives as promoters of social goals, with Professor Iiro Jussila, as the keynote speaker.

Kooperatiivi r.y., a Finnish cooperative research association, reactivated its operation during the celebration year.

Communications

Material about the events and occasions during the year was published on the Finnish cooperatives website (www.osuustoiminta.coop/2012/).

The Cooperative celebration was actively displayed on the Finnish web pages www.yhteistoiminta.fi and www.osuustoimintakeskus.net. The logo of the cooperative year was used on both pages. Information about IYC 2012 was published in three newsletters under the title of Yhdessä yrittämään (“Together we can make it”). Information about the year has also been spread in various lectures e.g. in nationwide development days for nursing and caring on September 19, 2012 and video infos to Employment and Economic Development Offices.

The events of the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2012 have been widely displayed in Finnish cooperative magazines, such as Osuustoiminta published by Pellervo, Yhteishyvä of SOK Corporation, Faba published by the Finnish cooperative breeding organization of cattle breeds, Solidaarisuus of the International Solidarity Foundation, Kehitys by Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Chydenius published by OP-Pohjola Group. Pellervo magazine also featured a cooperatives ad campaign which lasted the whole year.

IYC 2012 and Youth

Young people have established member-owned cooperatives e.g. in the fields of art, culture, IT, media, design and consulting. One example is Torstai Cooperative which was established in 2012 by students from several scientific fields of the University of Helsinki. The main aim of this cooperative is to employ its members.

Educational Cooperatives

Ruralia Institute of the University of Helsinki has organized cooperative training in educational institutions and published informative material about cooperatives in autumn 2012 (Finnish website: www.pellervo.fi/tietopankki/koulussa.html)

During last decades, a number of cooperatives have been established in educational institutions, such as vocational institutes, universities of applied sciences and high schools. Young people often become acquainted with cooperative business first through practical work.

Cooperatives in the Nationwide YVI Entrepreneurship Education Project

Cooperatives have been widely engaged in the nationwide YVI project focusing on entrepreneurship training. Pellervo - Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives, Ruralia Institute of the the University of Helsinki and cooperative researchers of Lappeenranta University of Technology in particular have devoted their resources to spreading cooperative information in the YVI project. During the year several cooperative training events have been organized in

educational institutes, articles and research papers have been written and information about cooperatives has been updated on the YVI website.

The timespan for the YVI project is 2009-2013. The aims of the project are as follows: to create a dynamic learning environment for entrepreneurship training, to intensify cooperation between entrepreneurship teachers through networking, to increase awareness of entrepreneurship training and to contribute to improving the pedagogical skills of the teachers. The project also aims at developing curricula and strategies of teacher education as well as reinforcing multi-scientific research. The project has a research group with representatives from cooperative research fields.

New Initiatives in Finnish Cooperatives

Cooperatives for Finnish Healthcare

The cooperative business model has been brought up as one solution worthy of consideration in the structural renewal of the Finnish healthcare system. During 2012 various alternatives based on healthcare cooperatives have been presented in newspapers, TV and seminars.

Mr Mauno Vanhala, Professor of General Practice at Central Hospital of Central Finland, gave a lecture on this subject under the theme "Cooperatives as a solution to problems of deteriorating healthcare – Does social entrepreneurship help to save the Finnish healthcare?" in a seminar held on October 11, 2012 at Diaconia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki.

Cooperatives as Service Producers for Sparsely Populated Regions

The suitability of cooperatives as service producers for sparsely populated regions has been researched in Finland by MTT Agrifood Research Finland and Ruralia Institute of the University of Helsinki during the years 2009-2012. The final report of the project will be published in March 2013.

Through cooperative solutions it is easier to take into account the special features of local region, to boost community spirit and create better prerequisites for other small enterprises in the region as well.

Co-operative Decade

The ICA's new strategy "Blueprint of Cooperatives" speaks about the Co-operative Decade. By the year 2020 the co-operative business form should become

- the fastest growing form of enterprise
- the model preferred by people
- the acknowledged leader in economic, social and environmental sustainability

The international ICA Global Fund has been established to provide funds to cooperative entrepreneurship in developing countries.

Members of the Finnish Committee for IYC 2012

Ms Anne Santamäki, Director of International Relations, Organisational Counsellor, SOK Corporation, Helsinki (Chairman)

Mr Shimelles Tenaw, Researcher, Department of Economics and Management, University of Helsinki, Helsinki (Secretary)

Mr Hagen Henrÿ, Research Director, Ruralia Institute of University of Helsinki, Mikkeli

Ms Outi Hohti, Communication Manager, SOK Corporation, Helsinki

Mr Juhani Ilmola, Director of Advocacy, SOK Corporation, Helsinki

Ms Niina Immonen, Managing Director, Tampere Region Co-operative Centre, Tampere

Mr Iiro Jussila, Professor, Lappeenranta University of Technology, Lappeenranta

Mr Sami Karhu, Managing Director, Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives, Helsinki

Mr Jussi Kulmala, Manager of Relations, OP-Pohjola Group, Helsinki

Mr Tapani Köppä, Adjunct Professor, Ruralia Institute of University of Helsinki, Mikkeli

Mr Per-Erik Lindström, Director, Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives, Helsinki

Mr Pertti Linkola, Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Helsinki

Ms Salme Näsi, Professor, University of Tampere, Tampere

Mr Perttu Puro, Managing Director, Cooperative Tradeka Group, Helsinki

Ms Helena Raininko, Legal Counsellor, SOK Corporation, Helsinki

Ms Stina Suominen, Senior Vice President, CSR and Brands, OP-Pohjola Group, Helsinki

Ms Eliisa Troberg, Senior Researcher, Ruralia Institute of University of Helsinki, Mikkeli

Mr Eero Uusitalo, Secretary General, Village Action Association of Finland (SYTY), Suomusjärvi

Mr Timo Voipio, Senior Adviser for Global Social Policy, Department for Development Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Helsinki

The basic values of the International Cooperative

Basic values:

- Self-help
- Self-responsibility
- Democracy
- Equality
- Equity
- Solidarity

Themes based on these values:

- Autonomy and independence
- Locality
- Transparency

Ethical values:

- Honesty
- Openness
- Social responsibility
- Caring for others

International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), 1995

Basic information about Cooperatives

The global number of memberships in cooperatives exceeds one billion.

The number of people employed in cooperatives is around 100 million.

The turnover of the globally biggest 300 cooperatives amounts to USD 1600 billions.

Cooperatives have an important role in agricultural development. Around one half of the global food production goes through cooperatives.

In Europe there are more than 160,000 cooperatives which employ more than 6 million people.

Finland is the most cooperative country in the whole world: 7 million memberships and employment for more than 100,000 people.

Finland's welfare = cooperatives

The turnover of Finnish cooperatives is more than 30 billion Euros.

Many Finnish cooperatives are on the top list of ICA Global 300.



International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)

- Independent, non-governmental organization, cooperative organ of The United Nations, ILO's global partner
- Unites, represents and serves its member cooperatives around the world
- Established in 1895
- Finnish members: Pellervo – Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives (since 1902) and SOK Corporation (since 1909)
- More than 250 member organisations from 94 countries
- Chairman Dame Pauline Green, CEO Charles Gould
- Operates in five regional organisations: Europe, Asia Pacific, Africa, South America and North America
- Member organisations from various sectors of the economy, e.g. banking, insurance, consumer cooperatives, agriculture and building
- **MORE THAN ONE BILLION MEMBERSHIPS!**

ICA's role today

- ICA is a global organisation which helps to improve the operational prerequisites of its member countries and various organisations by sharing general co-op knowledge and information on best practices.
- Through its member organisations ICA also provides help to emergency areas, such as Haiti and Japan. If any cooperative is threatened to be closed down for instance because of political changes, ICA will intervene by speaking up for the cooperative.
- ICA's special focus is on Africa.
- The main goal is to share knowledge on best practices so that people learn to cooperate and yet work independently and with self-motivation.
- ICA's members represent both globally the biggest (such as Desjardins, Crédit Mutuel) as well as small and middle-sized cooperatives around the world.

www.ica.coop

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