

COOP Dialogue

Issue 4 Cooperatives' Contribution to SDGs: Achievements and Way Forward



Table of Contents

01

Editorial

03

The Role of Cooperatives in the Social and Solidarity Economy for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: Insights from Voluntary National Reviews

07

In Conversation with Mr. Andrew Allimadi on Cooperatives' Role & Contribution to SDGs

09

In Conversation with Ms. Eva Sundari on Gender Equality & Coop Landscape in Indonesia

11

Cooperatives as Champions for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

20

Guidelines on Sustainable Development Goals for Cooperative Movement in Nepal

26

Coop Kobe's Food Waste Reduction Initiatives

30

A Perspective on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Australian Cooperatives

34

From Lectures to Lunch: SDGs Initiatives at Yokohama City University Coop

37

Social and Financial Education Contribution to SDG 4: Case of NATCCO Philippines

41

Carbon Neutral Agriculture in Korea

Editorial

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to present the fourth edition of COOP Dialogue (CD4) on Cooperatives' Contribution to SDGs: Achievements and Way Forward!

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) sets a course to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. Cooperatives support and promote the vision of sustainable development based on a triple-bottom-line of people, planet, and profit. The 2030 Agenda explicitly recognizes cooperative enterprises as important players within the private sector to achieve the SDGs. Cooperatives in the Asia-Pacific region are present in diverse sectors like agriculture, banking and credit, consumer, health, work, education, etc., and their work cuts across all the SDGs. Their efforts are recognized and reflected in national SDG plans and in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of many countries.

2023 marks the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this issue, we bring the work carried out by cooperatives over the past 7 years towards the achievement of SDGs. We reinforce the fact that cooperatives contribute effectively towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and play a vital role in their countries' development. There is a need for the national apexes representing cooperatives and departments overseeing cooperatives to show how the work of cooperatives is aligned with the national development strategies and why it should be reflected in the VNRs.

We spoke with Mr. Andrew Allimadi, the Coordinator of Cooperative issues at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), to get his views on the role and contribution of cooperatives to SDGs. Ms. Eva Sundari, an advocate for women's rights and a supporter of cooperatives in Indonesia, in her interview, discusses gender equality, the contribution of Indonesian cooperatives to SDGs, Indonesia's G20 experience, and the scope for a potential Asia-Pacific parliamentarians network.

We report the progress made on the pledges by national and international cooperative federations in the region as part of the Coops for 2030 campaign, their perspective and the challenges faced during the implementation of their work. We feature case studies of various initiatives by cooperatives in Australia, Japan, Korea, Nepal, and the Philippines in achieving SDGs. These include response to climate catastrophes, renewable energy, low carbon footprint, food waste reduction, carbon neutral agriculture, sustainable food systems, social & financial education, and development of guidelines and strategies for sustainable development.

We take this opportunity to thank the Advisory Committee – Prof. Akira Kurimoto, Chairperson, ICA Committee on Cooperative Research and former Professor at the Institute for Solidarity-based Society, Hosei University, Japan; Dr. Sidsel Grimstad, Vice-Chairperson, ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research and Senior Lecturer, Griffith Centre for Systems Innovation, Griffith Business School, Australia; Mr. Dudz Samson, Brand Consultant, C&S Coop Supermart, Philippines

Editorial

Dr. Hema Yadav, Director, Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management, India; and Ms. Anahita Eslapazhir, CEO, Rah-e-roshd Cooperative Educational Complex, Iran – for their rich advice, inputs and guidance.

We would like to hear from you about your work on the SDGs and if you have any feedback regarding the contents of this issue. We encourage you to continue having a dialogue on the topics covered in this issue within your organisation and country. For feedback and queries, feel free to write to us at: coopdialogue@icaap.coop.

You can read the previous issues at www.icaap.coop.

Best wishes,
Coop Dialogue team

The Role of Cooperatives in the Social and Solidarity Economy for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: Insights from Voluntary National Reviews

Balasubramanian Iyer, Mohit Dave, and Simren Singh, ICA-AP

Introduction

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) has been committed to promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as cooperatives are one of the main institutional pillars constituting the SSE. The recently adopted United Nations (UN) resolution, "Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy for Sustainable Development," seeks to promote social and environmental objectives alongside economic ones and to support micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives throughout the value chain. The resolution aims to identify, formulate, implement, and assess coherent and enabling policy measures and frameworks to develop SSE as a tool for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Cooperatives, as SSE actors, have been recognized for their significant contributions towards achieving the SDGs and have been actively contributing towards poverty reduction, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are important mechanisms for monitoring progress towards the SDGs at the national level. Many countries have recognized cooperatives in their VNRs, highlighting the contributions that cooperatives make towards achieving the SDGs. Through their participation in VNRs, cooperatives and SSEs can raise awareness about their role in promoting sustainable development and encourage governments to support their growth and development.

ICA and SSEs

The ICA has been committed to promoting the SSE because it recognizes its contribution towards inclusive and sustainable development. Cooperatives have been one of the main institutional pillars constituting the SSE from its historical origin back in the 1830s. In July 2020, the ICA released its Position Paper "[Cooperatives as a key constituent of the SSE](#)," in which it supported the common SSE features that are broadly used by other SSE actors and enshrined in many legal frameworks and advocated for an enabling environment and support towards the promotion of SSE following an actor-based approach, including cooperatives. The paper emphasized that the formulation and adoption of SSE policies should not replace the existing legislation and policies for cooperatives at the national level. The position paper also put forth ICA's commitment to establishing strong partnerships with other global bodies in the SSE and promoting SSE at the international level.

In May 2022, the ICA, the Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF), the SSE International Forum (SSEIF), the Association Internationale de la Mutualité (AIM) and the International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF) signed the charter for the International Coalition for the Social and Solidarity Economy (ICSSE). The ICSSE was formed to deepen advocacy for the recognition of SSE, and to promote SSE as a field of economic activity that must be recognized and that is useful for the implementation of the SDGs.

UN Resolution on SSEs

In April 2023, the UN adopted the resolution "Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) for sustainable development" which proposes measures to support micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives throughout the value chain, in particular businesses and enterprises in the SSE, operating in both the formal and informal economies. The resolution encourages relevant entities of the UN development system to give due consideration to the SSE as part of their planning and programming instruments, particularly the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The resolution also aims to identify, formulate, implement, and assess coherent and enabling policy measures and frameworks for developing the SSE as a tool for achieving the SDGs.



Picture Credit: [UNSSSE.ORG](https://unsse.org)

Adoption of Resolution on Promoting SSE for Sustainable Development at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly

The ICA considers the resolution as a historic moment for the SSE as it recognizes how the social and solidarity economy can contribute “to the achievement and localization of the SDGs, particularly in terms of employment and decent work, the provision of social services, the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, access to affordable finance, and local economic development (...), as well as inclusive and sustainable growth”, among others. The resolution recognizes cooperatives as part of the SSE (together with associations, mutual societies, foundations, social enterprises, self-help groups and “other entities operating in accordance with the values and

principles of the social and solidarity economy”), and the resolution will coexist with existing UN resolutions on cooperatives in social development, adopted since the 1950s. According to Mr. Ariel Guarco, President of the ICA, “the resolution will be a key instrument in increasing the visibility of the SSE and providing the opportunity for a focused exchange of knowledge and learning by member states, guiding UN agencies on SSE priority areas of work and documenting our contributions to sustainable development”.

Cooperatives and VNRs

Cooperatives contribute effectively towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and play a vital role in the national development of countries. Even before the 2030 Agenda became a milestone in institutionalised development, cooperatives have been instruments of change and community development, and continue to be so. They are also recognised as a strategic pillar for development in many countries.

The ICA-AP paper, “Cooperatives: Present but Not Visible Evidence from Voluntary National Reviews” published in the International Journal of Cooperative Accounting And Management, 2020, showed that most countries have presented a qualitative account of their experience and progression in the realization of SDGs. While reporting on an SDG, countries have showcased a variety of work being pursued at local and national levels through examples and case studies of exemplary initiatives by the government, cooperatives, private sector and civil society organisations.

For the period 2016 to 2022, 28 countries from the Asia-Pacific region which have one or more members of the ICA presented their VNRs. Cooperatives in some form or the other are mentioned in the VNRs of 15 countries - China, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Palestine, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vanuatu.

Cooperatives are largely mentioned in relation to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). This is a reflection of the number of cooperatives working in agriculture and rural areas. The frequent reference to cooperatives in SDG 8 shows that Governments expect them to play their role in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work.



Students at school coop stores demonstrating the introduction of bamboo straws in Nishi-Chiba Campus

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In preparation for COOP Dialogue 4, the ICA-AP reviewed the latest VNRs (2020-2022), in addition to the previous ones. Between 2020 and 2022, 17 countries from the Asia-Pacific region where one or more ICA members are present published their VNRs. Cooperatives in some form or the other are mentioned in the VNRs of 11 of them - Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, PNG and Thailand. The noteworthy mention comes from Indonesia and Japan. In the 2021 VNR of Indonesia, it is mentioned that “strengthening entrepreneurship, micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and cooperatives is one of the four national priority programs of the government, closely related to SDG 8. For the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the government laid down “policies” to increase access to cooperatives and MSMEs. In the 2021 VNR of Japan, the Japanese Consumers’ Cooperative Union (JCCU) and its initiative in formulating and adopting the "Coop SDGs Action Declaration" and contribution towards SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) have been included as a good practice.

2023 and Beyond

For cooperatives and SSEs to be adequately recognised in national plans and the VNRs, it is imperative that apex and representative cooperative organisations, departments responsible for cooperatives, play a proactive role in increasing the visibility of cooperatives' contributions and their alignment with national development frameworks and SDGs. The paper by the ICA-AP office mentioned earlier included a number of suggestions for ICA members which could also be adopted by SSE actors:

1. Understand the VNR in terms of process, timelines, and requirements.
2. Engage with the Focal Point for VNR early in the preparation process.
3. Make a submission on the role of cooperatives and SDGs to the Focal Point.
4. Coordinate with the Line Ministry/department responsible for cooperatives in the country to ensure the work on SDGs is communicated.
5. Participate actively in the VNR consultation process and engage in civil society platforms.
6. Engage with UN bodies and international agencies to advocate for cooperatives and inclusion in key documents. ICA can play a role in communicating with focal points and international agencies, bringing in experiences from across the region, facilitating dialogue with key players and building the capacity of members.
7. Follow-up to know about the consultation process and communicate work being carried out by cooperatives.

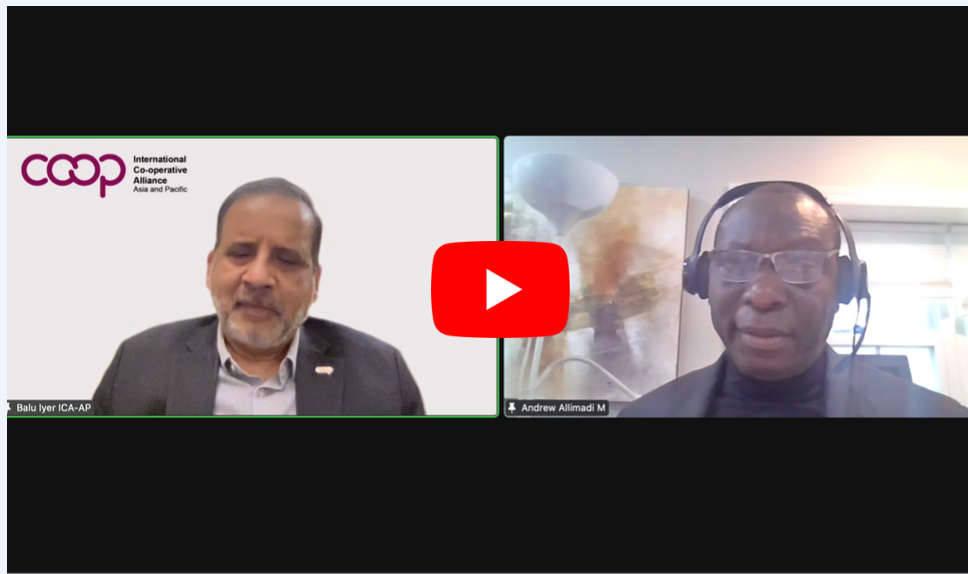
Conclusion

The SSE has gained recognition in recent years as an essential tool for inclusive and sustainable development that contributes to the achievement of the SDGs. In April 2023, the United Nations adopted the resolution which recognizes the SSE's contribution towards the localization of the SDGs, among others. The resolution identifies cooperatives as part of the SSE and aims to formulate and implement policy measures and frameworks for developing the SSE as a tool for achieving the SDGs. Cooperatives have been effective instruments of change and community development, contributing towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Cooperatives have a long and vast presence in the region, but they are not visible enough in the national plans, monitoring, and reporting. There is a correlation between cooperatives being mentioned in national development plans and their being reflected in the VNRs. This indicates the need for apexes and departments responsible for cooperatives to show how the work of cooperatives is aligned with the national development strategies and the need to reflect their work in the VNRs. The visibility of cooperatives, especially in VNRs can be enhanced by promoting the work of cooperatives on SDGs, involving cooperatives actively in national consultations, developing strong partnerships to advocate for cooperatives, and ensuring that cooperatives are included by agencies responsible for measuring and reporting. This learning can be adopted by other actors working in the SSE space.

To read the full paper on “Cooperatives: Present but Not Visible Evidence from Voluntary National Reviews”, click here: <https://bit.ly/3BdFnZ3>.

To read your country's VNR report, click here: <https://bit.ly/3VH1hxv>.

In Conversation with Mr. Andrew Allimadi on Cooperatives' Role & Contribution to SDGs



Watch the Interview with Mr. Andrew Allimadi here.

2023 marks the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is a significant milestone for the people and the planet. We spoke to Mr. Andrew Allimadi, Coordinator of Cooperative issues at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to get his views on the role and contribution of cooperatives to SDGs.

Mr. Allimadi shared that before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, progress on SDGs was being made in some areas and a Decade of Action was declared in 2020. The Decade of Action called for accelerating sustainable solutions to some of the world's biggest challenges like poverty, gender inequality, climate change, etc. However, around the time when the pandemic was spreading globally, other critical issues, violent conflicts, natural disasters, financial crises etc. were also making frequent news. The pandemic wiped out considerable progress made towards the reduction of poverty. For example, about 100 million people have been added to the list of extremely poor since the beginning of the pandemic. There is a need for urgent action to focus on the SDGs and the SDG Summit for member states this September is expected to call for bolder actions by the governments to expedite the process.

Mr. Allimadi noted that Cooperatives work in every sector to empower people through democracy. This helps people in making decisions about their own lives, the lives of others and their businesses. Cooperatives emphasize social cohesion and inclusion and that has a cascading effect on the goals of society.

He added that cooperatives do a lot for SDGs, but the problem is that their contribution is not well known because they are not measured properly. The Coop Monitor by the ICA is an important publication that helps measure the contribution of cooperatives, he added.

Mr. Allimadi noted that the government and national apex organizations for cooperatives can play a very important role to amplify the good work that cooperatives at the grassroots are already doing.

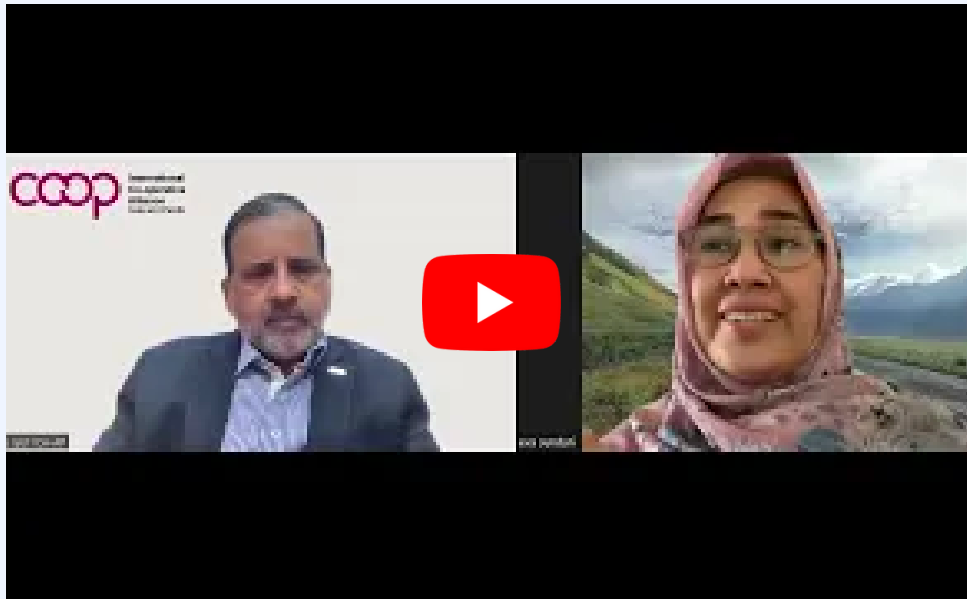
The Asia and Pacific region is well endowed with rich young demography who are ambitious, entrepreneurial and risk-takers. They are also more sensitive and receptive towards working for the people and planet. There are many big cooperatives in the finance sector. They can develop mechanisms to support youth-led cooperative start-ups. This kind of support will be very helpful for young people who have bright ideas that are people and planet driven. They can educate young people on the benefits of organizing as a cooperative instead of working individually.

2022 marked 20 years since the adoption of ILO Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives. One of the countries in the Asia-Pacific that has a favourable legal and policy environment for cooperatives to contribute to sustainable development is Fiji, he noted.

Cooperatives have the best capacity to engage in partnerships with each other. They can network, share information, and exchange knowledge. They can realize the full potential of this network with more communication, coordination, and frequent exchanges via a suitable platform.

Measuring an organization's impact in quantifiable terms and communicating its contribution to SDGs is important. Mr. Allimadi mentioned that in one of the conferences hosted by the ILO, the statisticians who participated suggested having a separate section in the national accounts of countries to report on the contribution of cooperatives to GDP. This system if established, would be very helpful to mainstream the measurement processes and report the cooperative impact effectively.

In Conversation with Ms. Eva Sundari on Gender Equality & Coop Landscape in Indonesia



Watch the Interview with Ms. Eva Sundari here.

Ms. Eva Sundari is an advocate for women's rights and a supporter of cooperatives in Indonesia. We spoke with Ms. Sundari on a range of topics such as gender equality, the contribution of Indonesian cooperatives to SDGs, Indonesia's experience hosting the G20 in 2022 and the scope for a potential Asia-Pacific parliamentarians' network to take up the cause of cooperatives at the national and regional level.

Ms. Sundari provided a broad overview of the cooperative sector in Indonesia. She noted that the negative perception of people towards cooperatives is growing because some cooperatives engage in malpractices where they cheat people and take away their money. There are some fake cooperatives as well. On the other hand, there are some cooperatives run by women households which are doing well, and they are actively ensuring that Cooperative Identity is practised as well as protected. So, the cooperative sector in Indonesia is mixed and both types of cooperatives exist – the ones which are doing well and working for the people and the ones which are not.

The experience of Indonesian cooperatives in the context of G20 was mixed. Cooperatives were late in joining the G20 discussions and could not make necessary interventions in mainstream events or meetings. However, parallel events on SDGs were organized by cooperatives. Ms. Sundari said, cooperatives need to play a proactive role in the G20 process from the beginning otherwise they will miss an important opportunity to showcase their contribution and impact on economic development and society.

The Voluntary National Review (VNR) is an important mechanism to report on the implementation of the SDGs. Indonesia has made mention of cooperatives in its VNRs for 2017 and 2021. During the pandemic, cooperatives continued to serve the needs and concerns of its members. The role played by cooperatives during the pandemic has brought recognition from the government. In the 2021 VNR, for example, it is mentioned that “strengthening entrepreneurship, micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and cooperatives is one of the four national priority programs closely related to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)”. For the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has laid down “policies” to increase access to cooperatives and MSMEs. This kind of recognition is important and promising for the future.

Ms. Sundari shared stories about some women-run cooperatives whose members were initially part of donor-based projects on maternal health, child trafficking, etc. But even after the project ended, the women who were brought together as a group did not dissolve, and instead formed a cooperative to work on their common needs and agendas. This, she highlighted is interesting and has potential for further research. She further emphasized the role of educating women on cooperative principles to make businesses sustainable.

Similar to the group of parliamentarians in Australia who are “friends of cooperatives”, Ms. Sundari noted that there is potential for developing an informal advocacy group of parliamentarians in Indonesia as well as at the Asia-Pacific level to promote economic democracy and cooperatives.

Cooperatives as Champions for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Shivali Sarna, ICA-AP

In this article, we present the work carried out by cooperatives in the Asia-Pacific region over the past 7 years to contribute to the achievement of SDGs. The Cooperative Bulk Handling Ltd. (CBH Group; Australia), the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), the Japanese Consumer Cooperatives Union (JCCU), the Economic and Social Development Center of Palestine (ESDC) and the Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU; Pan Asia) report progress on their pledges made as part of Coops for 2030 campaign. They also share their perspective and challenges faced during the implementation of their work.

Coopsfor2030

In September 2015, the Heads of State and Government, and High Representatives in their meeting at the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which comprises of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aims to take forward the work of the Millennium Development Goals started in 2000. This ambitious agenda sets a course to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all by 2030.



Coopsfor2030 campaign by International Cooperative Alliance

The 2030 Agenda explicitly recognizes cooperative enterprises as important players within the private sector to achieve the SDGs, creating an opportunity for cooperatives to position themselves as partners with global, national, regional, and local institutions to achieve sustainable development.

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), as the global voice of the cooperative movement, is committed to educating cooperatives about the SDGs, helping them respond to the UN's call to action and collecting information about their contributions to the 2030 Agenda, to better position cooperatives as partners throughout the implementation process. ICA started the Coops for 2030 campaign for cooperatives to learn more about the SDGs, commit to pledges to contribute to achieving the SDGs, and report their progress.

Pledges

Cooperatives from across the globe including the member countries from the Asia-Pacific region submitted their pledges under four key action areas, these were:

Protecting the Environment

Cooperative Principle 7 – ‘Concern for Community’ is an important one. It means that cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities and run businesses that make the well-being of the natural world a priority. Cooperatives were exploring ways to reduce their carbon footprints and make their communities sustainable even before Corporate Social Responsibility was a standard corporate practice.



Women cooperator from Palestine making pickle from the produce of agricultural cooperatives

Improving Access to Basic Goods and Services

Cooperatives are a way for people to be able to meet their social, economic, and cultural needs. These needs are often related to access to shelter, energy, water, markets, decent work, financial services fresh and quality food, primary education, or skill-based training to name a few. By creating access to basic goods and services, cooperatives fill a void in the communities in which they operate. This is even more evident in rural areas and is vital to the 2030 vision of leaving no one behind.

Eradicating Poverty

Poverty alleviation was the core of the cooperative idea and remains the driving force for cooperative initiatives in many parts of the world. Cooperatives mobilize self-help and empowerment to create opportunities and economic protection. They provide access to short-term credits and opportunities for the communities to live and work with dignity.

Progress Against the Pledges

The following table presents a snapshot of the progress made against each pledge in three action areas – protecting the environment, improving access to basic goods and services, and eradicating poverty.

Action Areas	Cooperative Organization	Pledge	Progress
Protecting the environment	CBH Group	Protect and enhance local biodiversity by minimising or offsetting any biodiversity loss caused by our activities. Indicator: Biodiversity net gain	CBH run towards a biodiversity net gain target. They plant more biodiversity plantings than they remove as part of their operations.
		Include sustainability aspects into our annual performance reports to all members. Indicator: Publication and dissemination of annual sustainability reporting	In 2022, CBH refreshed their annual report style and also included an expanded sustainability section, refreshed pillars, metrics, and disclosures. CBH has been seeking to align to GRI, TCFD and UNSDG's. CBH Group's 2022 Annual Report was awarded the Bronze Award in the Australasian Reporting Awards (ARA) in General Award category.
		Reduce our waste to landfill burden to zero by 2030. Indicator: Waste to landfill	Currently, CBH focuses on reducing problematic waste streams such as plastics (in grain tarps), chemicals and oils. As per them, net zero isn't relevant here.
		Increase the share of renewables in our energy mix to 1 megawatt by 2019. Indicator: Kw of energy generated	CBH has installed a 1MW of renewable bio-energy (anaerobic digestion) generation at a wholly owned subsidiary Blue Lake Milling. In 2022 the generator produced 2,777,000 kWh of renewable energy. (commissioning year)
	JCCU	Reduce total CO2 emissions by 40% compared to the level in 2013 by 2030, to ensure thorough energy conservation measures, and to tackle the development of renewable energy supply. Indicator: Metric tons of CO2, kwh of renewable power supply	Japanese consumer coops have already reached a 35% reduction in total CO2 emissions by 2023 from 2013 levels. So far, they have developed 200 million kWh (116 MW) of renewable energy, against a target of developing 400 million kWh of annual power generation by 2030.

<p>Improving access to basic goods and services</p>	<p>NCUI</p>	<p>Promote, develop, encourage and support cooperatives as an alternate business model through cooperative sectoral federations. We emphasize the empowerment of women and youth through cooperatives and also strive to professionalize human resources in the cooperative sector.</p> <p>Indicator: Number of training & development programmes conducted and number persons trained.</p>	<p>NCUI, through its National Centre for Cooperative Education (NCCE), organizes various cooperative education and training programmes for capacity building of the cooperative leadership & personnel. NCCE has trained over 40,000 personnel through 1,100 distinct programmes from 2015 to 2023.</p> <p>NCUI has constituted a special cell "Coop Connect" to orient school and college students, and youth with the cooperative philosophy and how they can benefit by collectivising into cooperatives. Through this, over 16,000 youth have been trained from 2021 to 2023.</p> <p>NCUI is implementing the Government of India's Central Sector Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperation (CSISAC scheme) through 34 Cooperative Education Field Projects including Women and North Eastern Projects located in cooperatively under-developed States/ under-developed areas of developed States and Union Territories. Under this project, activities are divided into educational & developmental programmes, farm & technical guidance, socio-developmental activities, women empowerment activities and skill development programmes. Over 6.2 lakh women and over 3.5 lakh youth have been benefitted from 2015 to 2023.</p>
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	ESDC	<p>Strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of small scale farmers by improving service delivery capacity of cooperatives and building cooperatives' production, business, institutional capacity and technical aspects of their livelihood or business.</p> <p>Indicator: No. of cooperatives providing services.</p>	<p>ESDC built the capacity of cooperatives in institutional aspects besides business and services. It enhanced the quality of the cooperative products while increasing their production capacities by providing technical training, preparing operational manuals, and contributing to production inputs.</p> <p>A total of 32 business plans were developed for the cooperatives, 14 loans were issued to enable cooperatives to develop their business and to provide cash for agricultural seasons, and 45 trademarks had been registered officially in the Ministry of Economy for the cooperatives which had products.</p> <p>ESDC supported with loans to 64 Palestinian cooperatives during the last 5 years to initiate or enhance their services and 70 cooperatives had been supported in 2022.</p>
Eradicating poverty	ACCU	<p>Credit Unions in Asia provides education and access to affordable financial services to at least 20 million poor and disadvantaged people by 2030.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of poor people that have been mainstreamed in the society and improved living standards measured through Human Development Indicators.</p>	<p>ACCU has implemented the Credit Union Microfinance Program to reach out to economically disadvantaged people in the credit union. In the seven years since its inception, ACCU has reached 50% of their target with member organizations.</p> <p>ACCU has reached over 10 million individual members through 2,750 credit unions in countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Timor Leste.</p>

Challenges & Key Learnings

One of the major roadblocks during the last 7 years was the Covid-19 pandemic that started in 2020 and the world is still bearing the brunt of it.

For the CBH Group, the implementation of their bio-energy plant got delayed due to supply chain difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic, which in turn, delayed the targets of this project. Inconsistencies in government policy across federal and state jurisdictions make biodiversity targets challenging to meet in highly cleared landscapes. Support from the Board and senior management is crucial in identifying and implementing programs to address key material themes. 'Transparent reporting is good, meaningful action is better' says CBH Group.

In Palestine, limited resources and conflicted borders were already big factors causing the high cost of production and the pandemic made it only worse. ESDC continued guiding and networking for cooperatives to get production inputs at lower prices with substitute vendors as much as possible. It also supported the communities with food baskets made from agricultural cooperative products and this way they were able to generate both food and income for the communities. They also helped communities to sell their products outside the country. For example, Al Ibdaa Women Cooperative could sell products to Arab and European countries and in the process create four permanent jobs for women members, and 1,848 working days for other women members as well. Jenin Women Cooperative conducted 7 shipments to outside countries and created eight permanent job opportunities for women members with around 2,688 working days.

Credit unions faced several challenges in reaching out to the poorest communities. Convincing people to prioritize saving for their future instead of relying on credit can take time and effort. The pandemic created further challenges, particularly regarding liquidity. Many marginalised people had to withdraw their savings to make ends meet. As a result, those who started their businesses were severely affected, and it may take another three to four years for them to recover the losses incurred due to the pandemic. ACCU notes that providing services to the poorest communities in Asia is labour-intensive work, with one staff serving at least 350 members. The provision of only saving and credit services is insufficient. There is a need for credit unions to take a holistic approach to serving the poorest communities, focusing on providing financial services and supporting their development and growth as entrepreneurs.

In Japan, the overall energy-saving situation remained almost at the same level despite an increase in vehicle fuel due to increased supply, and progress was also made in the introduction of renewable energy. The main business of consumer coops is home delivery and they consider it important to reduce emissions associated with transport. Therefore, they have been experimenting with the introduction of biodiesel-fuelled vehicles and electric trucks. Japanese consumer coops are also preparing to calculate the emissions of the entire supply chain, as emission reductions throughout the supply chain are becoming more and more important in society.

Furthering Contribution to the Achievement of SDGs

While CBH Group still continues their work on their pledges, it has refreshed its sustainability plan. In 2016 its UN SDG commitments were SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Practice), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). In 2022, its UN SDG commitments were SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and continuing with their work in SDG 7 and SDG 15.

JCCU continues to work on the same goals with additional targets like a) Reducing food waste by 50% by 2030 compared to 2018, b) Reducing paper consumption for product catalogues by 25% by 2030 compared to 2021, and c) Reducing the use of disposable plastic containers and packaging by 25% by 2030 compared to 2018.

The reduction target in the use of disposable plastic and paper used for catalogues and the food waste reduction targets have been met with increases. In terms of intensity (e.g. usage per unit of sales), JCCU has achieved reductions except food waste. Further efforts will be made to reduce the total volume. JCCU believes that a different approach is needed in this regard for which they plan to work with new partners and put new ideas into practice.

NCUI is continuing its efforts towards the training and education of cooperative stakeholders. The programmes are reviewed and updated regularly and additional programmes are conducted to cater to the requirements of various cooperative sectors.

ESDC is continuing its work for SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 7, SDG 8, and SDG 13 as part of its strategic plan.

ACCU further pledges to reach out to the poorest communities and create job opportunities and economic activities to contribute to reducing poverty (SDG 1). It encourages and motivates its network members to report their progress toward achieving the nine SDGs to the General Assembly and the country's SDG office. These are SDGs 1, 2, 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 4 (Quality Education), 5, 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation), 7, 8, and 13.



Leadership Development Program (LDP) for women cooperators from Looms of Ladakh was conducted at NCCE, Delhi



Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative Union at the rice paddies to increase feed self-sufficiency in the Shonai region of Yamagata Prefecture

Recognition from the National Governments

In Japan, the government has acknowledged and recognised the efforts of cooperatives. In July 2021, F-Co-op concluded an agreement with the town of Oki in Fukuoka Prefecture (Japan) on resource recovery. By October 2022 it had collected 3,692 kg of milk cartons from four elementary and junior high schools in the town. The milk cartons collected are recycled into toilet paper and delivered to each primary and junior high school. The coop received the Minister of the Environment's Award in 2022 Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Promotion Merit Award in recognition of the face-to-face relationship it built in the process from collection of resources to production, sale, distribution and consumption of products.

Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative Union, in the Shonai region of Yamagata Prefecture, is not limited to the primary relationship between consumers and producers but is working together to maintain the local rice paddies and increase feed self-sufficiency, build solar power plants, create local cooperatives with producers, and ensure the sustainability of the region by promoting migration and settlement.

In recognition of these efforts, the project received the Minister of the Environment's Award for Excellence at the 10th Good Life Awards of the Ministry of the Environment.

In India, NCUI works in close coordination with the government since the very beginning. In 1976, the Government of India approved NCUI's scheme of Cooperative Education for strengthening the cooperative movement in cooperatively underdeveloped states/ areas and reducing regional imbalance in the level of development. This is a central sector scheme funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (now Ministry of Cooperation). Its main objective is to develop and promote cooperative societies in project areas and through them increase the productivity of farmer members and improve their socio-economic conditions.

The Palestinian Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), the government body for cooperatives in Palestine, has always been in the loop with ESDC's interventions for cooperatives. They are usually part of the planning, implementation and evaluation with ESDC. Also, the Ministry of Agriculture is a partner in implementing agricultural activities in cooperatives and other general activities.

ACCU and its members are yet to receive adequate recognition from national governments for their cooperative contributions toward achieving the SDGs. The cooperative sector, especially in banking, has been granted a few privileges such as digitalization or tax exemption, supervision, and monitoring. This lack of recognition and support has resulted in a lack of motivation for cooperative leaders and management to engage with the SDG goals actively. As a result, credit unions need support to achieve their economic activities independently. Similarly, the CBH Group also carries out its sustainability work independently.

Reflections on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The CBH Group opines that there are many more standards, frameworks and government legislations to align to or comply with, which is great as it shows society is moving towards embedding sustainable development within the existing institutions. However, from a corporate perspective, it's important to ensure our commitments and targets continue to meet the requirements of our broader stakeholder group.

For ESDC, the 2030 Agenda seems comprehensively suitable and they plan to continue their work in alignment with it.

ACCU states that according to recent reports from the ADB and World Bank, it is not possible to achieve the SDG targets by 2030 due to the impact of COVID-19. The poverty situation has increased by at least 20-25% in almost all developing countries, and their economic growth has been negative or significantly slowed down. As a result, it is challenging to reach the targets set by the SDGs in 2030.

Conclusion

The special edition of the report of the UN Secretary-General entitled "[Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet](#)," states that, "at the mid-way point on our way to 2030, the SDGs are in deep trouble. A preliminary assessment of the roughly 140 targets with data shows only about 12% are on track; more than half, though showing progress, are moderately or severely off track and some 30% have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline. Under current trends, 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030 - and only about one-third of countries will meet the target to halve national poverty levels."

This is an alarming state. The lack of SDG progress is universal and it is evidently clear that developing countries and the world's poorest and most vulnerable people are bearing the brunt of it. The serious climate situation, the Covid-19 pandemic, and economic crises are leaving many developing countries with fewer options and even fewer resources to make the SDGs a reality.

Cooperatives do bring some hope. Being one of the world's oldest and largest business networks, cooperatives were the first to endorse the SDGs and get recognition as a partner in achieving these goals. Cooperatives are showing their contribution to accelerating the achievement of SDGs and building a more inclusive and resilient world by 2030.

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Guidelines on Sustainable Development Goals for Cooperative Movement in Nepal

National Cooperative Federation of Nepal

Background

Cooperatives play a vital role in the economic and social development of Nepal. They contribute significantly to the GDP, in job creation, poverty reduction, and the promotion of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since its establishment, the National Cooperative Federation of Nepal (NCF) has consistently been working to develop and promote the cooperative movement in Nepal. NCF has taken the lead to promote the SDGs by mobilizing cooperatives and leading efforts to end poverty, hunger, and inequality; act on climate change and the environment; improve access to health and education; and build strong institutions and partnerships. Realizing the need for practical implementation, NCF has taken a lead role in developing concrete guidelines designed to encourage cooperatives at different levels to implement activities that could be measured from the SDG framework perspective.

Development in Nepal

Nepal has been implementing planned development since 1956. Its development challenge is not limited to mitigating poverty from an income perspective only but also on social aspects. Large disparities are seen in a number of social indicators across various geographic regions and socio-economic groups. While Nepal has been achieving an impressive growth rate; it still lags when compared to other countries in South Asia. This calls for radical efforts on poverty alleviation and the creation of employment opportunities. There is a need to drive economic forces towards improving the opportunities not only for town citizens who already have reasonable access to resources but also for people from rural, semi-urban and small towns; women; low-skilled and other socially disadvantaged groups.

Nepal was listed in the status of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in 1973. In the early 90s, the UN established the foundation for developing the human development index (HDI), followed by Gross Domestic Income (GDI), Gender Equality Index, etc. As a concrete development agenda, the UN launched MDGs (2000-2015) in 1999. With the MDGs implementation, Nepal was successful in achieving notable gains in health, education, infant mortality, women empowerment, and poverty alleviation. Nepal was honored for its remarkable gain in the health sector.

The success of MDGs prompted the UN to develop a more comprehensive strategy, SDGs, which are guided by the principle of 'leave no one behind.' The SDGs (2015-2030) with 17 goals are aimed at the transformation of the global community and urge member states along with the private sector, cooperatives, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to collaborate with each other to build a stronger partnership and align the plans and Programs in realizing the goals.

Nepal has made significant steps in internalizing the SDGs and mainstreamed them into planning and budgeting. The National Planning Commission (NPC) prepared “Sustainable Development Goals: Status and Roadmap 2016-2030” in 2017. The document has not only localized the SDG indicators but also brought the baseline values and set milestones for the years 2019, 2022, 2025 and 2030. It serves as a guiding document to all the stakeholders while aligning their programs and strategies with SDGs. A lot of work is needed, and all concerned agencies need to play an active role in contributing to achieving the targets of the SDGs. This has called for the cooperatives sector as well to assume its responsibility.

Cooperatives in Nepal

Cooperatives in Nepal are considered the third pillar of the economy and are present at all levels - local, provincial, and federal. Article 50.3 of Directive Principles states that:

The economic objective of the State shall be to achieve sustainable economic development, while achieving rapid economic growth, by way of maximum mobilization of the available means and resources through participation and development of public, private and cooperatives.

The National Cooperative Development Board (NCDB) was established in August 1991 for the development of policy and research in cooperatives. The Cooperative Act enacted for the first time in 1992 tried to value the norms and principles of cooperatives. New cooperative development policies were introduced in the Eighth Five-Year-Plan (1992-97) which included the objectives of developing cooperatives as producers and distributors and enhancing the participation in cooperatives to create prosperity. The successive plans further reinforced the importance accorded to cooperatives. The Eleventh Plan for the first time provided a separate chapter on the cooperative sector which underlined the role of the public, private and cooperative sectors as the three pillars of the economy. Similarly, the government introduced the National Cooperative Policy in 2012, which is a milestone guideline for further actions to improve the cooperative sector. To comply with the spirit of the federal structure, the new act and regulation at the central level were enacted in 2017 and 2019 respectively. The main features of the new Cooperative Act 2017 are to support the sound management of cooperatives and to ensure more contribution of the sector in sustainable development.



Currently, 30,879 cooperatives, 311 District Level Cooperative Unions, 11 Province Level Cooperative Unions, 18 Sectoral Central Level Cooperative Federations, one National Cooperative Bank and one apex-level organization, the National Cooperative Federation of Nepal, represent 7.3 million individual members who are present in agriculture, credit and banking, consumer, and a range of sectors.

Guidelines On Sustainable Development Goals For Cooperative Movement In Nepal

Cooperatives and SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes cooperative enterprises as important players within the private sector to achieve the SDGs and create an opportunity for cooperatives to place themselves as partners with similar institutions at global, national, regional, and local levels to achieve sustainable development.

Cooperatives in Nepal have been actively working on a number of SDGs and gaining recognition for their work. The National Cooperative Bank Ltd. (NCBL) has pledged to raise awareness of SDGs by incorporating them into their training activities and supporting SDG activities of cooperatives in their network. The Nepal Agricultural Cooperative Central Federation Ltd. (NACCFL) is actively implementing SDG 10 and SDG 5: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the grassroots by ensuring social and economic inclusion of small and marginalized farmers. Specifically, NACCFL strives to ensure that both male and female small-scale farmers have access to credit and finance; people from indigenous backgrounds and marginalized castes are integrated into the cooperative movement for their social and economic transformation; and the capacity of women entrepreneurs to start and manage their own agricultural enterprises is built.

NCF was invited to be part of the consultative process for the Voluntary National Report (VNR) where they highlighted the role of cooperatives as effective partners to localize implementation and fill the gaps in access, especially financial. NCF used the recognition given to cooperatives to work with the government and UN agencies to ensure they are recognized in the national plan and included in the monitoring. The table below from the Status and Roadmap 2016-2030 prepared by the National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal provides an example of the target where cooperatives are mentioned.

Targets and Indicators		2015	2019	2022	2025	2030
Target 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services						
8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	70 ^b	54	42	30	10
1	Contribution of Micro-, Small-, and Medium-scale enterprises in GDP (%)					
2	Access to Financial Services					
3	Access to Cooperatives (% of households within 30 min walk)	54 ^a	60.9	66.1	71.3	80

The 2017 VNR of Nepal identifies the cooperative sector as one of the three pillars of economic development in the country, making the sector a key stakeholder in creating an enabling environment, with strong contributions towards SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Gender Equality), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8, 10 and 17.

Guidelines for Cooperatives on SDGs

Cooperatives in Nepal have been contributing to achieving development objectives which could have been measured in SDGs. However, there was a felt need to work within a structured framework to create a synergic effect throughout the cooperative sector.

The objective of the guidelines is to incorporate the agenda/idea of the SDGs in the functions, tasks, and roles of the cooperatives and their associations to contribute towards their achievement. The guidelines seek to:

- explore the areas of cooperation, partnership, and intervention at various levels of cooperative organizations to undertake tasks contributing towards the SDGs
- review the roles of various hierarchies of cooperatives in attaining SDGs, and
- prepare a guideline and the action plan to guide the cooperative sector: national and central level federations, district level unions and primary cooperatives

The guidelines will serve as the framework for action by Nepal’s cooperatives—from primary to central/federal levels—in mainstreaming SDGs in their work. The guidelines related to SDG1: No Poverty and SDG5: Gender Equality are given as examples. More can be found in the report: Guidelines for the Sustainable Development Goals for Cooperative Movement in Nepal.

Activities	Responsibility	Targets and time	Means of verification
SDG 1 No Poverty			
Preparation of Cooperative Guidelines to include identified poor people	NCF	2020	Guideline document
Orientation and Dissemination of Guideline	Central Federations, NCB Land DCUs and other district level unions	2022-25	Number of guideline distribution, number of guideline related events
Implementation of guideline	Primary cooperatives	2022-30	90 percent of the identified poor will be enrolled in cooperatives , Total loan recipients reach 20% from such group by 2025 and 50% by 2030
Reporting the implementation of Poverty-related guideline	Primary Cooperatives to DCUs/central federations/ NCBL, and from DCUs/central federations/ NCBL to NCF	2021-30	Number of annual reports of primary cooperatives/ DCUs/central feds. /NCBL,

Activities	Responsibility	Targets and time	Means of verification
Campaigns for promoting social protection through insurance of livestock, crop, health&life of the members and members' family.	Primary Cooperatives	2030	50% members have some form of insurance by 2025.
Capacity building on Micro enterprise start up and development at grassroots level	Primary cooperatives	2020 onward.	Number of Entrepreneurship / Skill base trainings for youth members
Institutional Capacity building of Cooperatives	NCF/District Federations/ Central/ federations/ NCB L	By 2025.	Institutional Development training for 50% of Board of Directors and managers
		by 2030	100 percent BoD and managers
SDG 5 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment			
Ensure 50 percent women board of directors, and at least 33 percent women employees at management level	NCF/Central and provincial federations/ District federations/ primary cooperatives	2025	Percentage of women board of directors
		2030	Percentage of women employees at management level
Preparation of Cooperatives' Gender Policy	NCF	2022	"Cooperative Gender Policy" in place
Dissemination of Cooperatives Gender Policy	Central Unions/ NCBL/DCUs	2022 onwards	Number of cooperatives having Gender Policy

Activities	Responsibility	Targets and time	Means of verification
Organize entrepreneurship Development (Skill) Training and Financial Literacy for Women and girls	Primary cooperatives	2020 onwards	Number of coops. providing entrepreneurship training to women members
Awareness/ sensitization against gender violence	Primary cooperatives	2020 onwards (regularly)	No of cooperatives shaving GE sub-committee and gender related focal person
Support for justice in the case of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	Primary cooperatives	2022	Number of cooperatives providing mediation services on gender violence

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Coop Kobe's Food Waste Reduction Initiatives

Onizawa Yasuhiro, SDGs Promotion Department, Coop Kobe

Coop Kobe is a Japanese consumer cooperative with a history of over 100 years. Its businesses and services area is centred in Hyogo Prefecture, Hokusetsu area in Osaka Prefecture, and Kyotango City in Kyoto Prefecture, with approximately 1.74 million members and a household subscription rate of approximately 49.3%. Its main businesses are store operations and home delivery service, with 143 stores and 22 home delivery centres. Other businesses include food production, electric power, insurance, and welfare. About 9,622 employees are engaged in these businesses (as of the end of January 2023).

Coop Kobe traces its roots to two cooperatives, Kobe Consumer Cooperative, and Nada Purchase Association, both founded in 1921, with Kagawa Toyohiko, a social activist playing a central role. Kagawa Toyohiko, also known as the "Father of Coops," aimed to realize a "mutual aid society." His ideas have been inherited in Coop Kobe's organizational philosophy, "One for all, all for one," which is in line with the worldview of the SDGs, which aim for a society in which "no one is left behind."

Coop Kobe and Environmental Preservation Initiatives

Hyogo Prefecture, where Coop Kobe's activities are centred, is bordered by the Seto Inland Sea and the Sea of Japan, both of which are rich in marine life and provide many benefits. The diverse geographical conditions have resulted in a varied climate, and the seasonal agricultural and livestock products nurtured in this region give the local food culture a unique depth.



Coop Kobe Environmental Charter

Based on this geographical background, the members have a great desire for environmental preservation, which has led Coop Kobe to take proactive measures for environmental preservation for a long time. Coop Kobe led this through various initiatives, including a campaign to popularize soap since the late 1970s, a "shopping bag reuse campaign" to reduce plastic shopping bags, and a milk carton recycling campaign launched in 1990. In 1995, in response to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that hit Kobe, the cooperative adopted the "Coop Kobe Environmental Charter" and pledged to do their utmost to solve environmental problems with the protection of people's lives in mind.

Coop Kobe Environmental Challenge Goal "Eco-Challenge 2030"

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations in 2015, the cooperative formulated the Coop Kobe Environmental Challenge Goals "Eco-Challenge 2030" in 2018 to further advance their environmental efforts. The "Eco-Challenge 2030" sets five challenge goals, the second of which is to "halve food waste in business activities."



Eco Challenge 2030

Consumer cooperatives have both a business and a consumer-driven movement body, and SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) is one of the first goals that consumer cooperatives should address. Coop Kobe is working to halve the amount of food waste from their business activities by 2030 compared to the FY2015 level. As a result, food waste in FY2021 was 86.9% compared to FY2015, confirming progress toward achieving the goal.

Store Initiatives

The first concrete initiative aimed at halving food waste was the "Mottainai Project" in stores. The project, which began in 2018, first raised awareness among store staff. Coop Kobe "visualized" the status of waste disposal at their stores and shared it with all staff members and watched a video to learn about the importance of food. They started holding SDGs study sessions to think about how the social issues advocated by the SDGs relate to daily business activities.

They practised reducing food waste through system reforms, including "reviewing the automated ordering logic for daily delivery products," "reviewing ordering units, lead time, and planned delivery volume," and "reviewing sales deadlines." For example, for "reviewing sales deadlines," they relaxed their own sales deadline rules for food products (disposal before the date of expiration), and displayed bread, fresh foods, and daily-delivery foods until the day of expiration to curb waste generation. As a result of these efforts, food waste was reduced by approximately 60 million Yen equivalent in FY2021 compared to the previous year.

TEMAEDORI Campaign

The "TEMAEDORI (take one in the front)" campaign encourages prioritization of the purchase of "discounted products" at the front of store shelves and products that are nearing their consumption or expiration dates, under the condition that they are to be consumed immediately after purchase. This campaign is designed to curb unsold and discarded products and reduce food waste. The initiative was first implemented in 2018 in collaboration with Kobe City and has since been expanded to all Coop Kobe stores.

Currently, the "TEMAEDORI" campaign is attracting attention as a food waste reduction action that can be easily implemented by any consumer. It has been featured by national and local government agencies as well as major convenience stores and supermarket chains, and similar efforts are spreading to retail stores nationwide. Furthermore, "TEMAEDORI" was selected as one of the top 10 words in the "U-can New Words and Buzzwords Awards 2022," which honour words that were popular throughout the year. The term has been widely reported in mass media such as TV and online news and has contributed to spreading awareness of the food waste issue and building momentum for food waste reduction.

The term has been widely reported in mass media such as TV and online news and has contributed to spreading awareness of the food waste issue and building momentum for food waste reduction



TEMAEDORI Campaign, indicates to take one in the front

The origin of this movement was initiated by cooperative members who learned about the problem of food waste and had been engaged in practical activities to solve the problem, and who thought about what they could do. This initiative, in which businesses and consumers work together to resolve issues and act, truly embodies SDG 12. The fact that many stakeholders have disseminated and shared this approach and expanded it nationwide is a model case of SDG Goal 17 (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development).

Efforts of "Eco Farm," An Environmentally Symbiotic Farm

In Miki City, located about an hour's drive north of Kobe City, there is an environmentally symbiotic farm called "Eco Farm" operated by Coop Kobe. The Eco Farm consists of two facilities: the Coop Soil Production Centre, which produces compost, and the Mizuho Cooperative Farm, which produces vegetables.

The Coop Soil Production Centre produces compost from vegetables and meat scraps from Coop Kobe stores. Mizuho Cooperative Farm uses compost to produce vegetables, which are then sold at the stores. This "food recycling loop" system is a unique feature of Eco Farm.

Since the full-scale launch of these initiatives in 2001, today the farm produces approximately 100 tons of compost per year from approximately 2 tons of food processing scraps per day and produces approximately 230 tons of vegetables per year.

In this way, the "Eco Farm" is a place to practice resource recycling through the effective use of food waste, and has welcomed more than 1,000 visitors each year (before COVID-19) to learn about environmentally symbiotic farms and the use of renewable energy through solar sharing (farm-based solar power generation). The Farm also serves as a learning place for SDG 12, SDG 7, and SDG 13.

Food Drive Initiatives

In 2017, Coop Kobe launched a food drive as an initiative to receive surplus food that is unavoidably generated at home in stores and home deliveries and give it to those in need in the community. In 2019, it strengthened its efforts by changing the style of the food drive to one in which surplus food can be picked up anytime from all standard-type stores.

This initiative contributes to the reduction and effective utilization of food waste generated at home and creates new "connections" in the local community through food support. It was started from an environmental perspective, but recently an increasing number of cooperative members are donating not only surplus food generated at home but also products purchased at stores directly to the food drive. The initiative has developed into broader efforts that contribute to many of the SDG goals, including community welfare.

Future Outlook



Food Drive Initiatives by Coop Kobe

These efforts have been highly evaluated by the society, and in 2020, Coop Kobe received the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Award for the "Mottainai Grand Prize," and its efforts to reduce food waste have also led to an increase in its corporate value.

While the issues surrounding food waste are being widely discussed worldwide, Coop Kobe aims to continue the active dissemination of information using SNS and other PR media, as well as strengthen existing initiatives.

Together with cooperative members and local communities, it will continue to implement practices in line with "Eco-Challenge 2030" by strengthening existing initiatives and taking on new challenges, while making progress toward achieving the SDGs.

A Perspective on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Australian Cooperatives

Peter Watts, Watts Sustainability

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. Cooperatives work towards achieving the SDGs through their principles of democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. This article explores examples from the Australian context to demonstrate how cooperatives are a natural fit for implementing sustainable development.

Australia is one of the world's most developed economies. Yet, it is still highly reliant on the extraction of minerals and fossil fuels (compared to other advanced economies, which are more heavily reliant on service-based industries, such as finance). The low-carbon transition comes with the risk of unemployment and other economic harm to communities in sectors that are reliant on fossil fuels.

Australia is at the sharp end of environmental risks such as forest fires, floods and drought, water scarcity, degradation of soil and loss of biodiversity, influenced by climate change, diseases spread by pests, and adverse impact of human activities. This negatively impacts people, crop yields and the liveability of rural communities. The SDGs provide a pathway to building resilience and delivering prosperity.

In Australia, cooperatives are active in a variety of sectors, including agriculture, finance, housing and energy. For example, in the agriculture sector, cooperatives help small farmers access markets and resources, which can contribute to ending poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 and 2). In the finance sector, cooperatives provide access to credit for small businesses and low-income communities, helping to promote inclusive economic growth (SDG 8). In the housing sector, cooperatives provide affordable housing for low-income households, contributing to the goal of ensuring access to adequate, safe and affordable housing for all (SDG 11).

Some cooperatives, such as motor vehicle membership organisations, networks of motor vehicle repair garages and agricultural producers, are particularly exposed to fossil fuels. There is an immediate need to carefully plan their transition towards a future which is economically, as well as environmentally, sustainable for their employees, members and surrounding communities.

Case study: Summerland Credit Union and the response to the 2022 flood disaster, Lismore, New South Wales

There is evidence^[1] that due to strong links to their communities, cooperatives are resilient, well-equipped and set up to cope with shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing a rapid response to natural disasters.



Target 11.5

By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations



Target 13.1

Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

The flood disaster that hit Lismore in New South Wales and the surrounding region is an example of how the cooperative model provides advantages for climate-related disaster responses.

The Northern Rivers region of Eastern Australia is home to expansive surfing beaches, tropical forests and a network of rivers and wetlands. Lismore is a regional city with a population of just under 30,000 people supported by a relatively diverse economy including agriculture (in particular, dairy production) and light manufacturing, and is situated on flat and low-lying terrain adjacent to the Wilsons River.



Lismore is renowned for its frequent floods. However, in 2022, Lismore and other parts of northern New South Wales and South East Queensland were subject to a flood disaster with unprecedented impact. The Wilsons River in Lismore reached 14.37 metres at its peak, the largest flood since modern records began (the previous record was 12.1 metres from 1974). 22 people tragically died and families, communities and businesses suffered profound losses and ongoing disruptions.

Image courtesy: Image - [Creative Commons](#) - "IMG_2792" by scout nurse is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Summerland Credit Union is a familiar presence in the region with 30,000 members and a disaster response capability helping members recover financially from climate disasters such as the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires. The 2022 flooding, however, was unprecedented in its impact on the bank’s branches and general operations. For example, in Lismore every bank branch and ATM was destroyed, leaving the Lismore community with no access to cash withdrawal facilities.

Through their strong community connections, Summerland Credit Union worked with Southern Cross University and other cooperative banks to get banking facilities up and running. Within four days a community banking hub was established at the university campus, supporting local people to access cash for food and other essentials in the aftermath of the disaster. They invited five other cooperative banks to share the hub, demonstrating the cooperative spirit, as well as putting support in place for the large local dairy cooperative Norco to pay wages in cash to their staff.

The Summerland Credit Union CEO John Williams referred to the pivotal role of cooperatives and mutuals in harnessing local knowledge: “If we did not have a local presence and a deep understanding of the community and who to talk to, that community-banking hub would not have eventuated. It's about knowing who to contact and the people at the local level.”

Case study – Cooperative Bulk Handling Group (CBH) and agricultural community partnerships



Target 8.3

Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

The CBH Group is Australia’s largest cooperative, owned and controlled by approximately 3,700 family farm businesses. CBH is responsible for the majority of Western Australia’s grain harvest of wheat, barley, oats, canola and lupins as well as businesses in fertiliser and grain logistics. As well as being a vital part of Australia’s food system, CBH has a global export network.

In line with its cooperative principles, CBH recognises its intrinsic links with the agricultural communities of Western Australia where its employees and members live and access services. In many communities, CBH member businesses are the main source of employment.

Working in partnership to create access to decent work and supporting long-term prosperity is in the best interest of both CBH and Western Australian regional communities (as reflected in SDG 8). This is further supported by investment in community-based initiatives and community projects, with CBH creating two new internal community-focused roles to better understand and respond to community needs.

A recent contribution was \$248,000 towards Growers – Harvest Mass Management. In this program, grain transporters whose trucks are unintentionally overloaded contribute the surplus grain to a charitable fund. Growers appreciate that the money raised is supporting their communities.

CBH also develop and support training and capacity-building programs. For example, CBH has a partnership with the Grower Group Alliance (GGA) which is a not-for-profit, farmer-driven organisation connecting grower groups, research organisations and agribusiness in a network across Western Australia. GGA partnership activities include the CBH Growing Leaders Scholarship – a 10-month program to equip people with skills, knowledge and confidence to take on leadership positions in the grain industry and further contribute to the prosperity of their communities. CBH has also partnered with AIM WA and the University of WA Business School to develop a grassroots leadership program[2] as part of the cooperative’s commitment to supporting leadership capacity within their regional communities.

Case study – CoPower and building capacity for renewable energy and a resilient energy system

In Australia, power has been historically distributed through private distributors. The majority of electricity has been produced through the burning of coal despite Australia being blessed with vast regions of desert and some of the longest sunshine hours in the world. Australia recently unveiled new decarbonisation targets including a move to net zero before 2050, providing significant opportunities for a clean energy future.

**Target 7.1**

By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

Energy cooperatives are helping with the shift towards renewables and are providing increased value to their members as a more secure long-term asset. The collective purchasing power created by individuals coming together through an energy cooperative returns control back to people and helps to drive down costs.

Cooperative Power, or CoPower for short, is a community-based initiative operating in large parts of Australia, bringing with it a unique not-for-profit and democratic model that redistributes profit back to the people. CoPower invests in community renewable energy (like solar plants, wind energy, battery storage and home energy efficiency).

In 2021, 100% of electricity revenue went towards mitigating the impact of COVID-19. In 2022 members actively participated in decisions around excess revenue distribution.

BCCM supports cooperatives with their sustainability programs

The cooperative and mutual sector can significantly impact the pursuit of SDGs in Australia and beyond. However, this requires an intentional, long-term and sustained strategy within each organisation. To this end, the Business Council of Cooperatives and Mutuals (BCCM) has been undertaking work to help cooperatives implement the SDGs – including providing forums for cooperatives and mutuals to collaborate and share knowledge.

The BCCM has developed a policy on climate action for the cooperative sector. It has also developed a new online, internationally accredited training course^[3] to help cooperatives develop a sustainability strategy. Considered to be the first approach to accredited sustainability training that focuses on the needs of cooperatives specifically, the “Sustainability Strategy for Co-operatives and Mutuals” course challenges cooperatives to demonstrate best practices in sustainability.

Through its commitment to Cooperative Principle 5 (education, training and information), the BCCM is ensuring that cooperatives are equipped to generate tangible results and provide leadership in their respective industries, allowing them to be part of the worldwide movement towards achieving the SDGs.

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From Lectures to Lunch: SDGs Initiatives at Yokohama City University Coop

Student Committee, National Federation of University Cooperative Associations (NFUCA), Japan

NFUCA is the National Federation of University Cooperatives in Japan, implementing joint activities locally and at national universities. University cooperatives are registered and operated under the Consumers' Livelihood Cooperative Society Law and membership consists of current students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and coop staff of respective universities.

The Seagull Cafeteria, which is managed by the university cooperative at Yokohama City University (YCU), has introduced a menu that includes Sustainable Seafood. It is the first university in Japan to do so. The seafood offered at the cafeteria adheres to the Marine Stewardship Council/ Aquaculture Stewardship Council (MSC/ASC) Chain of Custody Certification. This initiative is expected to contribute to the achievement of SDG 14 (Life Below Water) which aims to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, sea, and marine resources.

The implementation of the Sustainable Seafood menu was conceived and executed by TEHs, a student organization at YCU that is actively promoting initiatives on SDGs within the university. THEs students wanted to apply what they learned in class and inspire other students to take an interest in the SDGs by eating sustainable seafood. The YCU Coop, recognizing the potential of the project, collaborated with TEHs to make it a reality. By offering a Sustainable Seafood menu, the cafeteria not only provides students with healthy and environmentally conscious food options but also educates them on the importance of sustainable seafood consumption.



TEHs students, faculty member and the Executive Director of YNU Coop

According to Mr. Hiroki Takenouchi, the Executive Director of YCU Coop, the collaboration with TEHs was crucial in executing the project. The students' eagerness to put their knowledge into practice and promote the SDGs was a driving factor in YCU Coop's decision to work with them. Mr. Takenouchi stated that YCU Coop was confident that they could sustain their collaboration with TEHs and hence agreed to cooperate with them. The success of this initiative demonstrates the effectiveness of student-led initiatives in promoting sustainability on campus and beyond.

After the students conceived and implemented the project, they were primarily responsible for developing the menu that included Sustainable Seafood at the Seagull Cafeteria at YCU, which is managed by the university coop. To ensure that the seafood dishes were both appetizing and cost-effective, a tasting session was organized by the students in conjunction with YCU Coop to review and refine the taste and cost of the menu. During this session, Mr. Takenouchi emphasized the significance of maintaining a consistent price-to-cost ratio for the new menu items in comparison to the regular menu items. He pointed out that several students will only appreciate the significance of Sustainable Seafood when it is both delicious and reasonably priced, and it was necessary for the YCU Coop to attentively consider the students' feedback during the tasting sessions. As a result, YCU Coop made adjustments to the selling price based on the cost and feedback received during the tasting sessions, which allowed for the Sustainable Seafood menu to be both accessible and affordable to students.



Sustainable Seafood Menu 1: Chikuwa Fish Paste Salad



Sustainable Seafood Menu 2: Deep Fried Seafood Rice Bowl

Mr. Takenouchi notes, "In May of 2022, we achieved a remarkable feat by launching a Sustainable Seafood menu, which has earned us a place in history as the first university in Japan to do so. Our commitment to sustainable practices has been instrumental in enabling us to serve a total of 2,972 meals over the past year. Notably, our monthly cafeteria service and the University Festival Hamadaisai have received significant appreciation and generated widespread discussions throughout the campus."

Their efforts have garnered media attention from prominent news outlets such as Nippon Television and Kanagawa Shimbun. Furthermore, they participated in several noteworthy events such as the Sea Expo in Yokohama and the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan). The culmination of the hard work was the selection of the project as a finalist in the U30 category of the 4th Japan Sustainable Seafood Award.

The YCU Coop views this project as an extremely valuable initiative since it allowed them to work closely with a student organization that is dedicated to promoting the SDGs. The cafeteria, which is conveniently located near its members, now offers sustainable seafood, which has been received positively by its patrons.

Moving forward, "we are committed to continuing our partnership with our members in the development of improved cafeterias and co-op stores. This will provide students with opportunities to put their knowledge into practice and take on new challenges, in line with our vision of fostering a sustainable future", says Mr. Takenouchi.

Notes

The MSC/ASC Chain of Custody (CoC) Certification aims to prevent the improper mixing of certified and non-certified marine products during processing and distribution, ensuring proper management of the supply chain.

Sustainable Seafood refers to seafood that is harvested and managed in an environmentally conscious and responsible manner that takes into account the preservation of marine resources.

TEHs is a student organization at Yokohama City University dedicated to promoting awareness of the SDGs both on and off campus by leveraging social media and participating in events outside the campus.

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Social and Financial Education Contribution to SDG 4: Case of NATCCO Philippines

Lucky Lumingkewas, Aflatoun International and Lasalette M. Gumban, NATCCO

Some parts of this article were taken from the Coop Youth as Change Makers: Manual for Financial Literacy for Youth.

Aflatoun International – Social Franchise Model

Aflatoun International's mission is to socially and economically empower children and young people to make a positive change for a more equitable world. Aflatoun is not a typical NGO, employing the social franchise model has allowed it to develop, roll out and replicate programmes through a partner network of 300+ organisations (including cooperatives, NGOs, CSOs, the private sector and governments) that implement these programmes in over 100 countries. The dynamic, bottom-up network of interlinked partner organisations is based on reciprocal empowerment. It is a flexible low-cost/ high-impact model with strong South-South cooperation, building resilience amongst children and youth. Aflatoun creates high-quality curricula for different age groups, which can be contextualised to local needs or specific circumstances and realities. Aflatoun also provides educators with training and conducts research to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its programmes.

Social and Financial Education Curriculum

Children aged 6-14 years old form a group that has not received much attention in the context of social and financial education. Aflatoun is an easy-to-use life skills curriculum which targets this age group in a very unique way. It focuses on children of primary school age since new attitudes and behaviour are formed during this time. Along with acquiring literacy, it is essential for children to acquire attitudes and skills. Aflatoun International believes that combining economic empowerment and social education can lead to holistic and sustainable development.

Aflatoun's social and financial education curriculum is built on the principle that everyone's personal, social and economic lives are interconnected. The programme should be taught in a holistic manner to enable children to pursue their goals. Social and financial education is also a tool which has the potential to help countries achieve the SDGs. Using active learning methods, Aflatoun International improves the attitude of children towards education.

Aflatoun Movement and the Cooperative Movement in the Philippines: Brief History

Aflatoun's first engagement with the cooperative movement was with NATCCO Philippines back in 2006. In 2005, NATCCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr. Cresente C. Paez, attended Aflatoun International conference in Amsterdam. Upon learning about Aflatoun in that meeting, Mr. Paez saw it as a perfect opportunity to strengthen the existing savings program of cooperatives.

“It was aimed at empowering poor children (both rural and urban settings) by giving them in-depth awareness of their rights (according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) and responsibilities, with financial education rooted in ethical values, and embedded in the curriculum,” Mr. Paez recalls. An active participant in that Aflatoun meeting, the charisma and brilliance of Mr. Paez earned the much-needed nod of the international funders in the meeting to support Aflatoun and which helped lay the foundation of the program across the world.

Aflatoun, Cooperatives, and the SDG

Quality and relevance of education – Over 250 million primary-school-age children around the world are not able to read, write or count well enough to meet minimum learning standards, including those to the post-2015 agenda with a special focus on early reading. Learning to read! But what are children going to learn once they can read? Schools are struggling to keep up with rapidly changing job markets, and children and youth are exposed to more financial decisions of greater complexity at an increasingly early age. Education needs to change so that future graduates are better equipped to face global challenges such as poverty, inequality, youth unemployment, migration and protection of the environment. Social and financial education can contribute greatly to children’s and youth’s abilities to empower themselves.



Aflatoun Day Celebrations (Image courtesy: Aflatoun.org)

For cooperatives and Aflatoun, sustainability is among the core components that are embedded in their vision, mission, goals, and objectives. Aflatoun teaches children and young people about the importance of local and global issues as they actively involve themselves in schools, cooperatives, and community activities. Cooperatives offer a myriad of learning and involvement opportunities for children and youth—from environmental campaigns to entrepreneurship projects—that harness the awareness and capacities of young people to become change-makers.

The Aflatoun Program directly contributes to the advancement of four of the 17 SDGs i.e. SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Contribution to SDG 4: Quality Education

When the Philippines’ Department of Education (DepEd) shifted to the K to 12 Program in 2016, NATCCO and Aflatoun International saw it as an opportune time to strengthen their partnership with DepEd and contribute more actively to ensuring the K to 12 Program’s success.

A tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among DepEd, NATCCO, and Aflatoun International was signed on June 16, 2016, and became the basis for NATCCO’s and Aflatoun’s inclusion as members of the Technical Working Group for the Financial Literacy Program of the DepEd. The MOA guides the DepEd, NATCCO, and Aflatoun partnership in promoting social education, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship lessons in relevant courses in the K to 12 education system, and is made available in four Philippine languages for grades 1 to 3. With these developments, the years of advocacy work and stakeholder engagement of NATCCO and Aflatoun finally led to these two organizations’ official presence in the DepEd system.

One of the key areas of reform in the K to 12 Program is being able to respond to different learning needs and the inclusion of relevant life skills to develop holistic learners. This is at the core of DepEd's global commitment to Goal 4, ensuring quality and inclusive education for all learners.

SDG 4 aims at providing equal access to affordable training and eliminating gender and wealth disparities with the aim of achieving universal access to quality education. The Goal reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development. Aflatoun's child-centred methodology improves the attitude of children toward education by providing practical platforms to actualize learning. Financial education taught in schools is not a theoretical concept because there is a practicum that gives the learners first-hand experience in the concepts of savings, planning, and entrepreneurship. Through the schools' partnership with the cooperatives, savings will mean not only knowing the difference between needs from wants but actually implementing it by owning an Aflatoun savings account. With its enormous potential to grow, the savings account becomes the springboard for future entrepreneurial projects.



Children International Philippines, partner of Aflatoun International implementing the Aflatot, Aflatoun & Aflateen programme in 2017. (Picture credits: [Twitter.com/Aflatoun](https://twitter.com/Aflatoun))

The teachers' training provided by Aflatoun equipped the teachers further as the Aflatoun training drives learners toward improved learning outcomes. The Aflatoun training emphasizes the importance of child-centred learning to ensure that learners' needs, capacities, and situations are at the centre of the learning process. Aflatoun's methodology of "Explore, Think, Investigate, and Act" promotes critical thinking, discovery, developing one's own opinions based on facts, and actualization of learning. This is very much in line with DepEd's learning cycle of 4As - Activity (explore), Analysis (think), Abstraction (investigate), and Application (act).

To support this goal, Aflatoun's Teacher's Guides are provided for free during the Teachers' Training. The Teacher's Guides are a rich source of methodologies, concepts, and knowledge to further enrich the learning experience inside and outside the classroom.

Benefit to NATCCO and its young future cooperative members

With its ardent belief in youth empowerment through cooperatives, NATCCO took on the challenge of being the pioneer partner of Aflatoun in the Philippines. With NATCCO's passionate heart and tenacity to make a difference in the lives of children and young people, one school at a time, one Peso at a time, the flickering light of Aflatoun burst into a strong flame. More than 1,743 schools with 1.4 million students are in the Aflatoun network, and 8,255 teachers across the country actively implement Aflatoun. The teachers' efforts translate to the inspiring financial behaviour of the children. Through the years, the small yet consistent savings of Aflatoun kids have reached Php278 million—a testament to the fact that children, especially the poor, if given the education and access, can save and can break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

The Social and Financial Education Program in Asia: The Way Forward

Currently, Aflatoun International works with partners in 16 different countries in the Asia Pacific covering South Asia i.e. Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and India; East Asia i.e. China, Mongolia; South East Asia i.e. Thailand, Lao, Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam; and Pacific i.e. Papua New Guinea.

One major initiative that is currently ongoing in this region is curriculum integration of social and financial education within the national/state/province level curriculum. It's been ongoing in Nepal, Pakistan (Sindh and Balochistan), India (Andhra Pradesh), Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Laos and Indonesia. We work with the Ministry of Education in those countries through our local partners.

Conclusion

Aflatoun International is hoping that the NATCCO case can be replicated also in different countries in Asia. Aflatoun International has been an official advocacy partner of ICA-AP since 2019 and is always open to exploring partnerships with national-level umbrella cooperative organizations in any country in Asia and the Pacific and pushing forward SDG 4 on Quality Education together.

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Carbon Neutral Agriculture in Korea

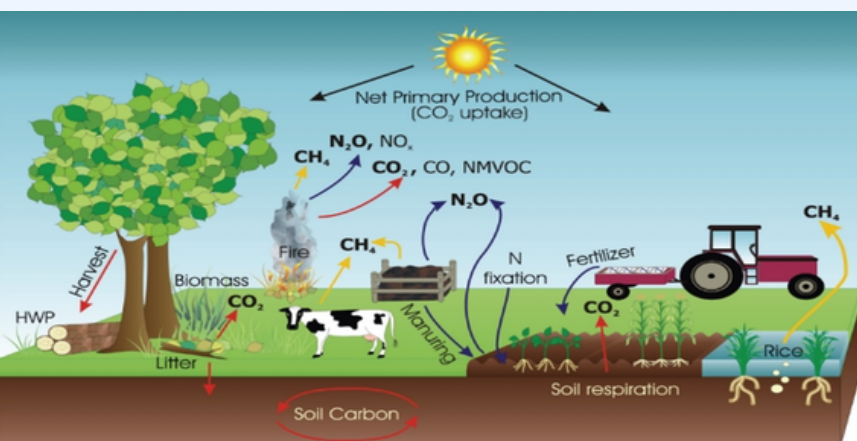
National Agriculture Cooperative Federation, Korea/ International Cooperative Agriculture Organization

Agricultural activities (crop and livestock production for food) are major contributors to global Green House Gas (GHG) through methane (CH₄) and Nitrogen Oxide (N₂O) emissions. Achieving carbon neutrality (net-zero) by 2050 has become a global priority following the Paris Agreement and the Climate Summits and National policy agendas are rapidly shifting to focus on carbon neutrality. In Korea, the agriculture food system with intricate linkages between production, consumption, disposal and more contributes an estimated 20% of national GHG emissions. Korea has adopted the First and Second Climate Action Masterplans and the 2030 Roadmap for National Greenhouse Gas Reduction. Korea's agricultural sector with the National Agriculture Cooperative Federation (NACF) at the lead is taking action on carbon-neutral agriculture by building a solid foundation of low-carbon agriculture, promoting digital transformation in agriculture, and seeking sustainable agriculture management.

Agriculture Food System and GHG

Agricultural activities (crop and livestock production for food) account for 47% of all methane and 58% of all nitrous oxide emissions (IPC, 2007). The impact of methane and nitrous oxide emissions on global warming is 28 times and 265 times that of carbon dioxide emissions, respectively (IPCC, 2014). Agriculture and land use account for 18 to 29% of GHG emissions, which increases to 21 to 37% when the global food system is included. The contribution to GHG happens in a variety of ways:

- Management practices on agricultural soils (such as the application of synthetic and organic fertilizers)
- Livestock (ruminants such as cattle) produce CH₄ as part of their normal digestive processes
- Livestock manure treatment
- Rice cultivation, burning crop residues etc.



Agricultural Activities and CO₂ Emissions

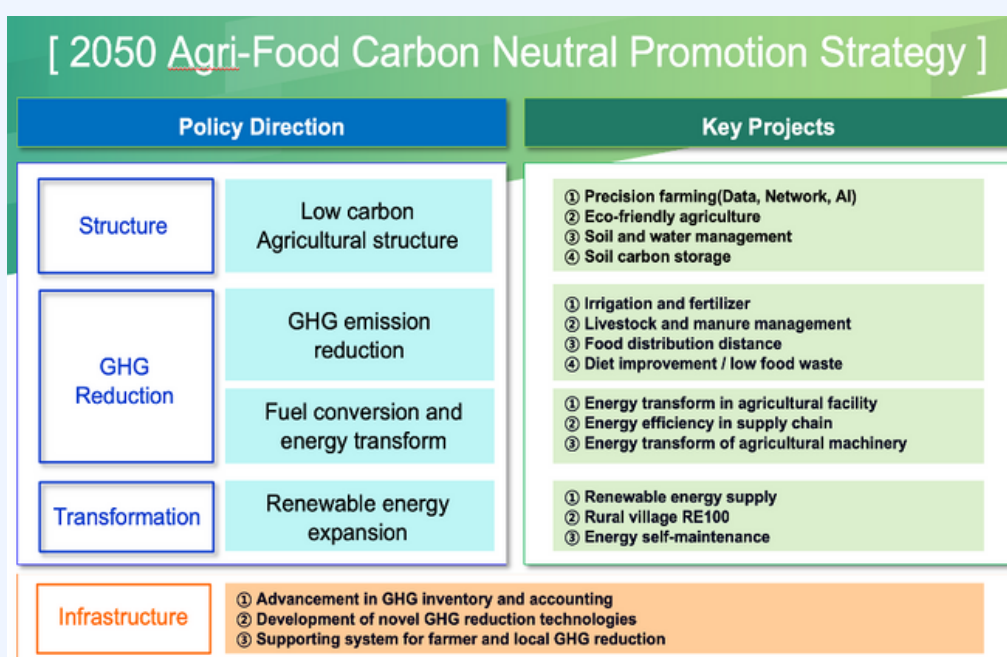
Korea GHG emissions

In Korea, the average temperature over the past 100 years (1911~2010) has risen by 1.8°C, more than double the world average of 0.75°C. In 2018, crops accounted for 55.6% and livestock 44.4% of ag GHG emissions. Rice farming is the biggest source of agricultural GHG emissions, accounting for 20.7% of the total, followed by farmland soils (25.8%), animal waste processing (23.3%) and gastrointestinal fermentation (21.1%).

However, when compared with 1990 figures, emissions from crop farming decreased by 22.3% while emissions from livestock farming increased by 62%. This is due to a continued decline in rice farming land and increases in livestock. When including energy used for necessities – machinery, buildings, greenhouses, barns, etc. – agricultural production contributes 4.5% of national emissions. The agriculture food system with intricate linkages between production, consumption, disposal and more contributes an estimated 20% of national GHG emissions. There is a need to address the entire agrifood system to ensure GHG can be reduced from both supply and demand sides.

Policies to Reduce Agricultural GHG

In response to the new international climate change regime, the Korean government has adopted the First and Second Climate Action Masterplans and the 2030 Roadmap for National Greenhouse Gas Reduction. The national target is to cut 2030 GHG by 37% BAU levels (down 24.4% from 2017 emissions). The agricultural, livestock and fishery sector is targeted to be reduced by 27.1% compared to 2018 by 2030 and 37.7% by 2050.



NACF's Role for a Soft-Landing of Net-zero Agriculture

NACF is focusing on three areas to ensure soft-landing for farmers towards the quest for net-zero agriculture: 1) Building solid foundation of low-carbon agriculture, 2) Promoting digital transformation in agriculture, and 3) through Sustainable management.

Building Solid Foundation of Low-Carbon Agriculture

Agriculture: Establishing Sustainable, Eco-friendly Infrastructure

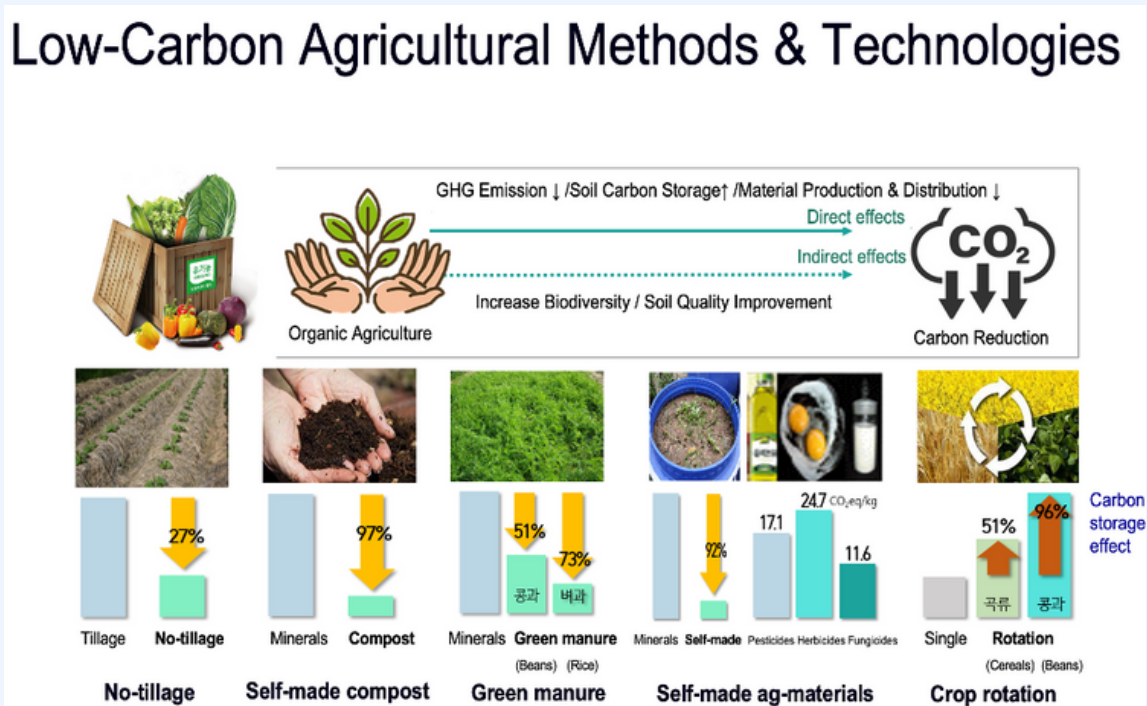
- Development and distribution of NH-style SMART farm models best fitted for small and medium-sized farms and young farmers
- Expansion of handling of low-carbon agricultural and livestock products, and local food
- Expansion of the supply of eco-friendly fertilizers, agricultural materials and machinery

Livestock: Improving the Livestock Management and Manure-to-Energy

- Reinforcement of resource and energy conversion of livestock manure
- Enhancement of support of SMART livestock system
- Development of low-methane(CH₄) feed to reduce the environmental burden
- Expansion of supply of high-quality roughage

Farmers: Inducing Farmers’ Voluntary Low-Carbon Activities

- Expansion of education and support for SMART farming
- Encouraging farmers to voluntarily participate in eco-friendly agricultural practices



Promoting Digital Transformation in Agriculture

Expansion of SMART Farming Infrastructure

- A smart farm education center, ‘Smart Agriculture Support Center’ led by agricultural/livestock cooperatives, provides various support measures for the early dissemination and diffusion of smart agriculture

Distribution of a Digital Comprehensive Farming Platform

- Application ‘Today Farming’ to provide the latest farming technique and education and attain important information for life in rural communities
- SMART farm comprehensive support platform,

Data Infrastructure Construction

- NACF’s big data platform, ‘N-Hub’ to provide internal and external data distribution, big data analysis infrastructure

Sustainable Management

Establishing Sustainable Management (ESG)

- Establishment of 'NH ESG Promotion Committee' in 2021 and support of a soft-landing of agriculture and farmers responding to climate change and contribute to achieving Net-zero agriculture and Net-zero society at large
- Operation of an ESG academy for heads of all agricultural/livestock cooperatives

Supporting for Net-zero, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Areas

- Expansion of renewable energy business using livestock manure
- Participation in low-carbon cattle breeding method improvement policy project
- Expansion of eco-friendly business (Electric vehicle charging infrastructure, low-carbon product development such as no-label, recycled PET product, multi-use disposables, etc.)
- Expansion of community-based welfare service for aged and vulnerable farmers
- Agricultural waste collection campaign
- Beautiful rural village development contest

Conclusion

Agriculture needs to contribute to achieving a carbon-neutral society through a low-input and low-carbon agricultural transition. Carbon neutrality is a transformative opportunity for agriculture to leap forward as an eco-friendly industry with great future potential by actively adopting low-carbon agricultural innovation and technologies. South Korea's agriculture cooperatives are committed to working with the government, farmers, and the private sector to voluntarily engage farmers in the transition to carbon-neutral (Net-zero) agriculture and support them to make better choices for the environment and society.

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