

ICYC Regional Youth Workshop Report

First Pacific Leadership Academy
Antipolo, Rizal, Philippines
3-5 November 2023



As part of the side-events of the ICA-AP Regional Assembly, the ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC), with support from 1CISP Life and General Insurance (1CISP), MASS-SPECC, Youth Connect Cooperative, and ICA Member Coops in the Philippines, organized a Regional Youth Workshop for youth in Asia Pacific. The workshop took place from November 3-5, 2023 at the First Pacific Leadership Academy in Antipolo, Rizal, Philippines.

Approximately 25 young people from four countries participated, representing ICA members such as the Iran Chamber of Co-operatives, 1CISP, MASS-SPECC, FPSDC, NCUI, ULSCC, and PCU among others. The event brought young people together for the exchange of ideas, networking, sharing of best practices, and building enterprise sustainability through the Fifth Cooperative Principle on Education, Information & Training. The workshop aimed to explore ideas for the sustainability of youth-centric cooperatives and highlight the importance of education, training, and information for members, as well as inclusivity of the youth sector in cooperative management.



The workshop started with a Welcome Message by Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, then Chairperson of ICYC, emphasizing the purpose of the workshop. Mr. Banaeifar provided the background and history of the workshop, which originated in 2018 during the Regional Assembly in Iran, as supported by the Iran Chamber of Co-operatives.

During this event, ICYC conducted a workshop on creating business canvas for a cooperative business model, where young participants, mostly women, learned to design and develop cooperative business ideas.

Afterwards, to sustain the program even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICA Global Youth Committee initiated the Replication Project, offering financial support for youth cooperatives. The two winning teams from the Asia-Pacific region (Philippines and Indonesia) successfully established cooperative businesses, achieving a 50% success rate.

Today, ICYC aims to elevate this success rate to 100%, exploring the issues that young co-operators face after setting-up their cooperatives. Through this workshop, ICYC aims to bring out concrete and feasible solutions not only to protect the coops, but to also improve the benefits for members of the coops.



The workshop was also supported by the presence of ICA-AP Regional Director, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, who welcomed all the guests and delegates and gave words of appreciation to the sponsor cooperatives. Mr. Iyer emphasized that the significance of the movement does not lie in the quantity of participants, but on the quality and commitment of the young cooperators who are committed, willing, and empowered to contribute to the change and development in the cooperative movement. Adding more, Mr. Iyer emphasized that dedication and initiative within the youth are the most essential factors for success, and that the youth should be the leading sector in promoting and advancing modern technology and digitalization within coops.



The Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. Yashavantha Dongre, Co-Secretary of the ICAAP ICEI, and Professor of Commerce and the Director of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Board at the University of Mysore in India. He discussed "Building Sustainability through the fifth cooperative principle on Education, Information and Training", and highlighted that it was only through involvement can one fully understand & practice cooperation, support, and sustainability among members and their coops.

The workshop focused on three (3) main sessions: (1) Status of Youth Cooperatives in the Asia Pacific Region, (2) Cooperative Education, Governance, and Literacy, and (3) Cooperative Case Studies (including Introduction to CoopSpring Toolkit. Through these sessions, the delegates of the workshop crafted a Strategic Action Plan for the Youth, which will serve as the starting point of the ICYC in crafting a final action plan for target implementation on 2024-2026.

Session 1 was facilitated by experts from Malaysia and Philippines, who shared their insights, statistics, and data about the topic. Mr. Leo Panares from LAMAC Multi-purpose Cooperative from the Philippines discussed about their Youth Planet Laboratory Cooperative. LAMAC was born as a business idea during the Coop Pitch, a side event aligned with Asia-Pacific Youth Summit in 2016 and currently, LAMAC has grown as a diversified cooperative which aims to continue in supporting the youth in their involvement in the Agri-Enterprise Marketing Strategies, Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Trainings, and Leadership Development Trainings.

Mr. Mohd. Afnan Bin Hasim, ICYC Member, from Cooperative Institute of Management in Malaysia gave his insights on the importance of empowering youth to educate and engage in cooperatives from an early age. Mr. Rico Renze Regala, representing Young Entrepreneurs Services Cooperative (YES COOP) from the Philippines, discussed their coop and how to establish and sustain a youth coop. YES COOP is a youth coop in the Philippines whose members and management are all youth ages 18-35, mostly young workers and young entrepreneurs having passion and commitment in cooperativism.

Mr. Regala discussed the journey and challenges faced by YES COOP, and how to achieve sustainability and growth. His presentation served as motivation for the participants, showcasing the potential and impact of youth-led cooperatives in creating positive change.

After identifying the status of youth cooperatives from the region, participants were also provided with discussions about Cooperative Education, Governance, and Literacy for Session 2.

Mr. Jaap van Waalwijk van Doorn, Manager of International Relations and Funding at Cresol, Credit Cooperative System (Established in 1995 at Brazil, CRESOL is a coop which aims to provide financial solutions with excellence through relationships in order to generate development of the cooperative members, their enterprises and the community), discussed essential leadership skills of youth in coops and explained various forms of member benefits that will protect members and their family. You can find out about Cresol by viewing Jaap's [video](#) presentation.

Insights about the Fundamental Principles of Financial Literacy was discussed by Atty. Marx Nicholai Delmo, ICYC Member from Philippines. Atty. Delmo explained the importance of understanding budgeting and savings and that such concepts are fundamental for members to navigate financial resources effectively.

Mr Harold Kim Maggay from 1CISP Life and General Insurance discussed the Young Leaders Program of 1CISP, and encouraged the delegates to participate and engage as well in the program. Their advocacy for youth inclusivity was also well-appreciated by the delegates.

The workshop also provided ample networking opportunities for the participants. Through group activities, ice-breakers, and informal interactions, participants had the chance to connect with like-minded individuals from different countries and exchange ideas.

In addition to the educational sessions, Session 3 focused about Cooperative Case Studies. It was started off by an inspirational lecture from Ms. Heira Hardiyanti, Co-Founder of MYCOOLCLASS in Indonesia, and

followed by a group activity on Identifying Problems, Issues, or Challenges faced by Youth Cooperatives in the Asia-Pacific Region by Mr. Anurag Dang, Secretary, NCUI Youth Committee and a certified Coop Spring trainer.

Mr. Dang provided five different case studies of youth-led cooperatives which were based from the ICA Global Youth Committee's CoopSpring Toolkit authored by Ms. Emily AM Lippold Cheney, Member of ICA Global Youth Committee.

Ms. Emily, through her video message, provided a briefer on the Toolkit and explained its two main sections: the CoopYouth Philosophy and the Practice of Cooperation, addressing challenges in cooperative practice, and expressing her hope that it will contribute to strengthening and establishing new cooperatives worldwide, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.



As a result of the sessions, the delegates were able to craft a Strategic Action Plan for the Youth in Asia Pacific, using the learnings, problems, and discussions from the workshop. There were proposed solutions and programs to the identified problems of youth coops in Asia Pacific. The strategic plan may be accessed [here](#).

To conclude, Ms. Gelizabeth Cabuhat, ICYC Member from Philippines, delivered the Workshop Report, followed by the presentation of Workshop Strategic Plan by Atty. Dulce Bustamante, then Vice-Chairperson of ICYC and a vote of thanks by Mr. Shree Padmanabhan, Secretary of ICYC. Mr. Padmanabhan expressed the committee's gratitude to the sponsors for hosting the workshop in a physical format and to the participants for their active engagement throughout workshop.