

## The goals and potential replication of the map simulation project

The purpose of these efforts is to help participants recognize the necessity of taking specific advance measures to protect themselves, such as strengthening the seismic resistance of their homes and installing furniture restraints.

It also encourages neighbors and friends to talk with one another about community disaster management and what actions should be taken in an emergency.

This program is easy for any group or organization to replicate.

JCCU is a member-based organization and therefore it is much easier to organize participants for these programs. School PTAs, community centers and Churches can easily introduce the program as they have their own local network.

The program can also be extended to schoolchildren. Co-op aims at expanding this activity nationwide so that people's lives and property can be protected even when large-scale disaster occurs.



School children challenging Map Simulation Exercise.



Map Simulation

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## JCCU promotes disaster reduction activity

*~Early warning systems can save many lives~*

Japan is a country highly susceptible to earthquakes. The earthquake in Kobe on January, 17, 1995 left 6,434 dead, injured 25,000, displaced 300,000 people, damaged or destroyed 100,000 buildings and caused at least \$132 billion worth of damage, making it one of the most expensive natural disasters in history. More than 35,000 people were pulled from collapsed buildings by neighbors or rescue workers. Japanese refer to the disaster as the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

There were several reasons why the earthquake was so devastating. Among them was that many Japanese thought Kobe was unlikely to be hit by a major earthquake and thus the residents there were not prepared for a major quake.

As part of JCCU's social agenda, it promotes disaster reduction activities with member co-ops and their individual members under the theme "Our Community Disaster Reduction: Map Simulation".

This program has been developed by JCCU in collaboration with the Cabinet Office of Japan and with the support of several local governments.

The Map Simulation exercise is a workshop that uses large neighborhood maps to help educate the residents of a particular neighborhood. Local community residents work with one another to identify locations of evacuation shelters, fire stations, hospitals, and other facilities that would be important in a disaster. By this way they learn about disaster management facilities

and systems in place in their local neighborhoods. Participants not only mark facilities on the map, but also the locations of households that might be more vulnerable to disasters, such as homes of senior citizens living alone, handicapped individuals, pregnant women, infants and foreign residents.

As a next step, they use the completed maps to conduct simulations of what might happen in the neighboring in the event of a disaster. A facilitator reads a scenario that assumes a certain degree of earthquake damage, including fires, collapsed roads and toppled buildings. The participants then mark the map to indicate the damage likely to occur, and identify evacuation routes to designated evacuation shelters that will allow them to help the neighborhood's more vulnerable residents along the way.

When the workshop was actually conducted, the participants came to realize just how little they had been prepared to reduce the effects of a disaster in their lives.

They came to better appreciate the importance of discussing disaster prevention with family members, taking effort to seismically strengthen their homes.

Co-op members who have already participated in the program have in turn become facilitators and have tried to gather neighbors living in their area to implement activities with them.

JCCU and member co-ops have created a manual for the training of new facilitators. JCCU and member co-op have reached a supply agreement with the local government during times of natural disaster. Co-op pledges to supply emergency daily commodities as well as providing voluntary activities in case of evacuation.

## Enhancement of local consumer affairs

Depending on each prefecture, there is a certain disparity in handling the issue of consumer affairs including counseling for consumer damages, enlightenment and education, and administrative penalty. Some local governments even do not have any inquiry counter for consumers for the issue.

Together with the specialists such as legal consultants, judicial scriveners and regional consumer organizations, regional co-ops make proposals to and exchange opinions with the local governments for further enhancement of the consumer administration.

In Shiga prefecture, 'Consumer Net Shiga' was established purposing to reinforce the consumer administration and to support independent consumers. Its bureau is in Shiga Co-op Union.



*Consumer organizations, Lawyers, Government organizations, 22 organizations and 58 people attended the commemoration ceremony of the consumer network.*

JCCU had disclosed its opinions submitted to the administrative agencies on its website, including consumer policy, food safety policy, enhancement of food administration.

It also has participated in the councils hosted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan.

## Co-op's challenge to build a consumer-friendly society

There always have been problems in the consumer affairs, for example: lack of information at the inquiry counter and poor coordination between concerned government ministries regarding sharing information concerning consumer problems and finding immediate solutions to them.

In September 2009, the Japanese Government established the Consumer Affairs Agency as the united control tower for consumer affairs and the Consumer Commission as the supervising agency responsible for consumer issues.

Wishing to fulfill and strengthen the consumer administration at the national and local governments level, Co-op has been engaging in various activities such as gathering members opinions and exchanging with the governments, policy recommendation and submission of public comments.

Co-op staff and commissioners participated in the councils of consumer affairs in 44 prefectures to express opinions from the viewpoint of consumers.

Also, to strengthen consumer administration in the local governments, Co-op has worked with consumer organizations, legal and consumer consultants to facilitate the establishment of consumer-affair network.

Currently eight prefectures have a qualified consumer organization and twenty-five prefectures have expanded a network to handle consumer affairs.

In addition, to improve 'consumer's power', information provision and workshops for consumers have also been promoted. In 2009, 32 Co-ops held 48 programs in total, with 7,961 participants.

## Uplifting consumer's power

Establishment of a consumer-friendly society requires an improvement of the 'consumer's power', abilities of consumer such as media literacy and self-judgment.

Regional Co-ops have developed various projects to enhance the 'consumer's power' including workshops and the 'consumer's power' certification system.

Co-op Ehime held three 'Consumer Power Enhancing Workshops' to inform current status of the prefectural consumer center, frequent troubles in the internet, illegal business practice, consumer protection laws and about the counseling counter, using easily understandable quizzes and skits.

## Brief Introduction of Consumers Japan (SHODANREN)

Consumers Japan (SHODANREN), which JCCU is a founding member, is the National Liaison Committee of Consumer Organizations, which was founded in 1956 by the major active consumer organizations in Japan.

The mission of SHODANREN is to promote the consumer movement through some unified actions in order to protect consumer rights and welfare. At present, 23 national consumer organizations and 22 local liaison committees of consumer organizations make up SHODANREN. JCCU supports the operation of SHODANREN and offers assistance in promoting consumerism.

The activity outline of SHODANREN includes: campaigning and/or lobbying, consumer legislation and networking.

Consumer Japan organizes study sessions in various subjects including food-related issues, biological diversity, HACCP, the use of wood etc, to raise consumers' awareness on current consumer issues. It also represents the voice of consumers all across the nation at the government level.

Consumer Japan is also a member of Consumers International (CI), which is the world federation of consumer groups working together with its members to serve the global voice for consumers.

URL of SHODANREN in Japanese: <http://www.shodanren.gr.jp/>

## Co-op promotes gender equality

Women account for 95% of Co-op users and 70% of the Co-op working force. A satisfactory working environment created based on the ideas and opinions of employees would increase staff satisfaction and promote business efficiency. For this reason, Co-op is creating a platform of gender equality. Gender programs have been designed and implemented.

### To realize ideal working condition

Co-op has been improving women's working conditions that allow them to keep working after marriage and delivery, under co-ops agenda to support life and work balance. Awards such as 'Family friendly company' award, 'gender equality promotion company award' and other prizes have been given to Co-ops who offer best practices.

Also, many Co-ops are certified with 'Kurumin' mark, which is given to organizations satisfying certain gender equality standards such as having male workers taking child-care leave.

Many other gender equality promotions have been started, too, including cross-sectional challenge to provide ideal working conditions and lectures about work-life balance.

### Many women participated in the management of Co-op

Since around the 1990s, Co-op has been committing in gender equality by establishing a committee dealing with the issue.

Presently the total board members of JCCU is 38 out of which 9 are women given it a percentage of 23.7%. The regional Co-ops have higher percentages of women chairpersons, deputy directors and board members. Women member participate in the Co-op's management with their viewpoint of daily living.

## Miyagi Co-op organizes "Dietary Education Experience Tour" for elementary school kids at co-op store

Miyagi Co-op organizes a "Dietary Education Experience Tour" at its stores in collaboration with 5 A Day Corporation.

The aim of this program was to give the school kids the chance to raise their awareness in food aspects. It was organized for the local elementary schoolchildren as part of the subject in the school curriculum. By using the sales floor of the store as classroom, students in same grade level were given the chance to learn and increase their knowledge about vegetables and fruits.

After receiving lectures on dietary education from a Co-op staff and a dietician, they participated in a shopping game and again practiced making salad using the members meeting room in the store.

In 2009, 33 tours were organized, and 1,075 students from 14 elementary schools participated in this program.



Students' team-group engaged in shopping games

## Co-op Shizuoka organized a session on food labeling

Co-op Shizuoka organized an introductory session on "Easy-to-understand food labeling" at 10 places in the prefecture.

The session was entrusted by Shizuoka prefecture government, and was designed on purpose to raise the awareness of consumers concerning food labeling.

A variety of people including co-op members participated in the session. The first part of the session was composed by a lecture delivered by the Agricultural Policy Office of Shizuoka prefecture. The lecturer made detailed explanation on the labeling of allergy substances contained in processed food, labeling of organic food and labeling of GMO food. The second part was a study tour and discussion. Participants made physical observation of labeled products in the store and exchanged their questions and opinions.



Participants checked labels of the products in the store showcase (Co-op Shizuoka)

## 'Multicultural Child-Raising Club' to support foreign citizen's

As a part of Co-op's international activities, Saitama Co-op organizes 'Multicultural Child-Raising Club Coconico' in cooperation with Saitama International Association.

This is a program held once in a week in a designated day for foreign citizens with small children and those who are in pregnancy. Parents and children can learn Japanese through some activities including cooking, reading picture books, singing lullabies and singing songs with motions. This program offers those foreign people an opportunity to participate in the local community by ex-changing information and making friends.



'Coconico' held in Co-op Plaza Urawa. Invitation for the program was widely announced in English, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese and Tagalog.

## Report on child raising activities of consumer co-ops

~To build a child-friendly society~

To build a child-friendly society Co-ops began to organize child-raising circles in the 1990s when it first became apparent that child abuse, with kids being left home alone and not fed was on the rise. In the major metropolitan areas in Japan, it is not so easy for young mothers to get to know each other in the community, nor be able to turn to anyone for advice or support. Co-op recognized this space in the community and started to organize support circles. Since 2000 Co-ops nationwide have become actively involved in organizing Child Raising Support Circles.

These circles are scheme in which mothers and babies/preschool children visit a designated place (public premises, co-op's meeting rooms etc) for a small or no fee.

Under the direction of a leader, mothers come together in a group where they can freely discuss child-raising concerns or seek the advice of consultants while their kids play nearby. The primary role of these circles is for mothers to connect with one another, learn together and from each other and avoid isolation, which often happens in nuclear families. In general the circles meet once or twice per month.

In 2009, 54 Co-ops participated in this child-raising activity with a total of 324 meetings in the designated areas.

The fact-finding report revealed that the number of parent/child participation in 2009 increased from 90,419 to 98,547, which is approximately 9% increase from the previous year



Play ground with mothers/babies

## News in Brief

### ICA-AP training program for managers of consumer co-operatives

The second batch of this year Asia Manager Training Program was held in Co-op Kobe and the Co-op Net Federation from November 1-13. Three co-operative managers from two Asian countries; Singapore and Viet Nam participated in the program.

At Co-op Kobe the trainees received various lectures including structural improvement of store operation, store management, staff training, member participation in co-op business and a practical training on making the sales floor.

Trainees were convinced and acknowledged the fact that it was important for them to understand the values and ideals of their respective co-operatives. They also deepened their understanding on the involvement of members in co-op brand product development.

Furthermore, the trainees were impressed about how Co-op Kobe educates the part-time workers at the store to make them proactive and loyal to co-op business. They expressed their interest in this kind of training and hoped to implement it upon returning to their co-operatives in their respective home countries.

At the Co-op Net Federation, trainees received lectures on environmental activities with emphasis on energy conservation leading to the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> in store operation. A visit to an eco-friendly store was made where trainees learnt about the three main concepts of environmental friendly activities employed at the store namely, energy conservation activities, barrier-free activities and earth-friendly activities.

Finally the trainees drew up their action plan illustrating how they could use the training experience to solve practical situations in their respective co-ops upon return to their home countries.

The trainees returned home on November 14, 2010

### Upcoming Event

ICA-AP Sub-Regional Workshop on Development of Consumer Co-operatives will be held in India on December 13-14, 2010.

The National Co-operative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd (NCCF) will host the workshop, which is expected to strengthen the network of consumer co-operatives through discussions/dialogue. It is expected that more than 20 co-operators from about 7 countries in the South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation (SAARC) would participate in the workshop.

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Group photo after training summary



Store visit at Co-op Kobe



Store visit at Co-op Kobe