

## Supporting children in the community who need special care

Co-op Kobe carries out various activities to support children who need special care in response of members request to build a relationship with these children.

In 2007, Co-op Kobe started to study about children with disabilities in co-operation with universities, governments and other regional organizations.

In 2011, the Co-op started a new activity 'Co-op After School Kids Club'. This activity, which is subsidized by Hyogo prefecture, is to give children a study support, as well as offering them a place to stay after school. The activity includes direct approaches to the disabled children to provide them love and support to develop their sense of self-worth.

Also Co-op Kobe strives to deepen the community residents' understanding about these children. Through therapy and play, community residence can help the children deal with their disabilities while realizing their full potential.

Though participants are not many for now, judging from the number of inquiries and what are being asked in the interview when applying, Co-op Kobe supposes there are hidden needs.



## Child-rearing support by Co-ops Nationwide

Throughout Japan, consumer co-ops have expanded their social services to include organizing child rearing support schemes. Co-ops are an ideal organization for this with their highly organized system and wide reaching membership. Co-ops provide support through its business outlets.

### Store and Home delivery Business:

Co-op's store and home delivery businesses carry many different types of services and activities to support the regional community and members with small children.

For example, Co-op stores offer several services for families with small children including discount of some products, special discount of the day and special additional point service to its regular point service. Some Co-ops offer free delivery service to the members who purchased goods at the stores, while others offer temporary nursery service for customers while they enjoy shopping.

Other than these shopping supports, Co-op stores provide rooms for *Kosodate Hiroba* (child-raising circle) and other events to support members' child-raising life.



Scene at child-raising circle

## this issue

Co-ops Child-rearing support **P.1**

News from member co-ops **P.2**

Report on ICA General Assembly **P.3**

JCCU news **P.4**

In the home delivery business, many Co-ops offer discount or free delivery service for families with small children when they show their maternity health book.

Many Co-ops provide supportive goods for small children and babies' catalog (including allergen-free food and suggestions for other baby food).

### Through Member Activities

Besides these supports from the businesses, Co-op applies its child-raising support to the members' activities.

In particular, *Kosodate Hiroba*, to which parents and children can join freely to foster mutual learning between other families, has expanded nationwide. In 2010, more than 100 thousand families joined in this event.

Usually Co-op's *Kosodate Hiroba* is held monthly and hosted by members. However, in recent years, request from local administrative authorities facilitated some Co-ops to hold the event permanently. In 2010, five Co-ops started the 'Hiroba' activity in a permanent base and held them at 16 places in total. Some 'Hiroba' are managed by NOPs, while governments subsidize others.

Basically *Kosodate Hiroba* has no pre-established programs because it purposes to encourage children's free activity and interchange as well as parents' spontaneous mutual-learning. Participants can share their anxiety and troubles in raising children. Sometimes the staff helps parents by consulting their worries. Also it occasionally has some special events for families with small children.

This 'Hiroba' activity isn't limited only for mothers with children. Many Co-ops promote fathers' participation, too. Child-raising course for fathers and father's cooking schools are some examples.

## Co-op Kobe's free iPhone application

Co-op Kobe has developed application software for smart phone users, which can be used for shopping, and have already started free-distribution.

This software includes a calendar, shopping memo and folders to keep pictures of homemade dishes. This is the first application software developed by a Co-op.

The free software 'Happy Diary' has a schedule management system, a memo and diary. It was planned to support busy young mothers with small children and working mothers when they plan menus and go grocery shopping.

Very soon it will have a link with Facebook and Twitter. Co-op Kobe's membership is facing aging problems and to increase younger member registration, this software would be very helpful. It is also available for non-members.

## 'Co-op Safety Driving Meeting'

JCCU held 'Co-op Safety Driving Meeting' to prevent the occurrence of traffic accidents in Co-op's delivery business. The safety driving drill focused on the ability to systematically control the position and speed of the vehicle in a smooth and safe fashion. On the day of the meeting 21 male employees and 2 females from 10 Co-ops across Japan, competed in their skills of compliance, driving sense, eco-driving technique and a written test for safe driving. The participants also submitted an essay with a topic 'Co-op and safety driving' and exchanged opinions about safe driving.



## Co-op's environment donation campaign through sale of laundry detergent

For a considerable period of time JCCU and member co-ops have been working on environment and sustainable development.

A "Co-operative Environment Campaign Fund" has been established by Japanese Co-operatives to support co-operatives' domestic and international environment activities.

JCCU held 'Co-op's environment donation campaign' through the sale of laundry detergent from May 21 to October 20 2011.

By buying Co-op laundry detergent, one can support national and international environment preservation activities.

In this campaign, one yen is donated in every purchase of a particular laundry detergent. 117 Co-ops nationwide joined in this campaign and raised 4.82 million yen during the five-month-long campaign.

Co-op Clean Co., Ltd. (a subsidiary company of JCCU) contributed one million yen bringing the total to 5.82 million yen.

The total amount was donated to the national and international environment preservation organizations.

The Borneo Conservation Trust Japan, an NPO would receive funding from this campaign to purchase two hectares of land in Borneo for wildlife conservation.

Co-operatives members have been learning about the effect of the environment on their daily lives through study sessions provided by JCCU and individual members are advancing consumption practices that protect the environment.

In co-op business activities emphasis are being placed on best production technologies, pricing policies (through *sanchoku*\*), products, distribution systems, and others to reduce the burden on environmental deterioration.



(\* *sanchoku*=direct transaction with farmers)

## Social role and reputation of South Medical Health Co-operative (MMH)

Local volunteers and residents established the south medical health co-operative in 1959.

Since its establishment MMH has pursued various activities such as daily life consultation, health checkups, mutual aid by way of *han* activities. (The *han* is the basic membership grouping, consisting between 3 and 20 members in a neighborhood).

Every clinic of MMH has been utilized as a place for *han* meetings and has also worked as a center for co-operative activities where the hospital and clinic staff, including doctors, nurses and nutritionists often attend as volunteer instructors or in a supporting role.

Now MMH has 5 clinics and 2 dental clinics serving more than 60,000 members. MMH also operate helper stations, assisting dementia patients, disabled and senior citizens who require assistance in daily life. As part of MMH social commitment it cooperates with Co-op Aichi and local NPO's to organize free health check for foreign residents in Seto city in the Aichi prefecture.

Seto city is a home for many foreign nationals who have language barriers posing communication difficulties between them and their Japanese neighbors especially when it comes to medical consultations.



MMH has produced a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary documentation film showing its interpersonal networks and social role.

## Chiba Co-op held a festival in commemoration of the launch of IYC 2012.

On October 30, the 22nd Chiba co-operative festival was held. This festival aimed at exchanges between the co-operatives in the Chiba prefecture, and was held for the first time for the purpose of launching IYC 2012. The festival was sponsored by four co-operatives organizations, (JA, the fishermen co-operative association, the forestry association, the consumer co-operative).

The co-operative groups and four local organizations including the Japan Broadcasting Corporation Chiba and the UNICEF carried out exhibitions displaying their products in booths. Other activities include, food tasting by JA, distribution of pamphlets to raise awareness of the social value and role of co-operatives, encouraging a large number of participation in IYC events to be held in 2012 and beyond.



## Eco-bag produced as IYC Novelty Goods



## ICA General Assembly, Cancun-Mexico (14-21 November, 2011)

The ICA General Assembly, a biennial meeting of ICA members was held on 14-18 November 2011 in Cancun – Mexico.

Nearly 2,000 co-operative delegates from around the world participated in this meeting, which was held under the theme "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World".

At the opening address the ICA President, Dame Pauline Green mentioned "this is a busy and stimulating time to be a co-operator: The UN has offered us a once in a generation opportunity to demonstrate the size, scope, reach and value of our model of business. And we must take full advantage of that gift".

The meeting also included the global co-operative sector launch of the 2012 International Year of Co-operatives.

At the Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide (CCW) meeting, Mr. Asada Katsumi the president of JCCU was elected as an Executive Committee member. He later gave a presentation highlighting on the main commitment and planned activities of the Japanese Co-operatives towards the launch of IYC.

In another session, the president also gave a speech in support of Mr. Ian MacPherson proposal about the role of co-operatives in peace-building.

At the Board Committee on Gender Equality, Ms. Tanaka Hitomi, Board member of JCCU was re-elected as an Executive Committee Member. She presented a report on the Gender mainstreaming activities of the Asia Pacific Region.

During the General Assembly, there was a resolution to amend the 7th principle to read: "Concern for community and environmental sustainability."

The Managing Director of JCCU, Mr. Haga Tadashi and other delegates from other countries proposed that the resolution be referred back to the ICA board, who would be mandated to develop a process for amending the Co-operative Principles when it is found necessary.

In another development, Ms. Lindy Bannister a Board Member of Co-operative Development Foundation (CDF) and General Manager of Wedge Natural Foods Co-op announced the contribution of the US Cooperative Community towards the recovery goal of Japanese Consumer Co-ops and presented a letter detailing the context to Mr. Asada.



Mr. Asada presenting at CCW meeting



Mr. Asada giving a speech in support of peace proposal



Mr. Haga expressing opinion about the amendment of the 7<sup>th</sup> Co-operative Principle



Mr. Asada receiving a donation note from Ms. Lindy

## UN official launch of IYC 2012 was held at UN General Assembly in NY

The kick-off meeting for 2012 IYC was held from October 31 to November 1 at the UN Headquarters and other places with participation of delegates from many countries.

Also 190 delegates from co-operative organizations from 58 countries participated.

Katsumi Asada, president of JCCU, and Yutaka Aotake, director of JCCU, participated as representatives of JCCU.

The UN General Assembly was held in the afternoon of October 31. After the opening by the UN, the ICA President Pauline Green, ex-UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other government representatives gave their speech in support of IYC.

The Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Asha-Rose Migiro remarked, 'In the global financial crisis, Co-operatives play a considerable role. I expect IYC to lead co-operative to an ideal and possible development in the future'.

In addition, the ICA president Pauline Green said, 'Co-operatives are an effective business model equal to corporate organizations and that 2012 and beyond will be a co-operative decade'.

On November 1, a Leadership Forum was held hosted by ICA, with an active opinion exchange by representatives from many countries.

Mitsuo Murakami, the vice-president of JA Zenchu, acknowledged for support for the Tohoku Earthquake, and stressed the importance of democratic management and members' participation.



## News in Brief

### ICA-AP Training Program for Managers of Consumer Co-ops

This training program is organized every year since 1995 by ICA-AP as part of its regional activities in collaboration with JCCU and member co-ops under the Asian Co-operative Development Fund.

The program was held in Co-op Net Federation and Co-op Kobe for a total of 17 days, from October 21 to November 6, 2011.

Six co-operative managers from four Asian countries; India, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam participated in the training program.

The program started with two-day orientation at JCCU where participants received lectures on the Japanese retail industry, the Japanese consumer co-operative business and observed a food dietary festival organized by Co-op Tokyo.

After the orientation participants spent two days with Co-op Net Federation. Here they were introduced to Co-op Net business practices including business management, social responsibilities and environmental initiatives. A visit to Co-op Net eco-friendly store and eco-recycling center were also made.

In Co-op Kobe participants received various lectures including store operation and management to increase productivity, employee educational training, scheme to collect, categorize

and analyze members' voice to find the members' need to reflect on co-op policies and management to enhance members' satisfaction. A tour to co-op Kobe stores were also made.

A field trip was organized to a producer of organic for the food plan project of Co-op Kobe. The trainees who had little interaction with producers were impressed to find the deep connection between producers and cooperatives in Japan.

At the last day of training, trainees drew up their action plan and presented to Co-op Kobe management in respect of how they could use the training experience to solve practical situations in their respective co-ops upon return to their home country.



Participants pose in a group photograph

### Inspection of radioactive materials in the product test center

On November 17, a group of Co-op Kobe members visited the product Inspection Center to ascertain the quality assurance initiatives taken by Co-op Kobe in respect of radioactive contamination of products. They observed the food checking processes including residual agrichemical, microorganisms and check for daily commodities and clothes.

The Inspection Center is responsible for the safety and quality of products produced under the 'Food Plan' dealt in Co-op Kobe. The center accepts about 1,800 visitors yearly.

The voluntary checking of radioactive substances using the 'germanium semiconductor detector' started in September and the center has already received 500 visitors.

The member visitors expressed their satisfaction on how products they purchase from the store and the home-delivery channels are secured and safe.



Co-op Plaza  
3-29-8, Shibuya, Shibuya-ku  
Tokyo, Japan 150-8913  
+81(3)5778-8103 tel  
+81(3)5778-8104 fax  
<http://jccu.coop/eng/>  
email:kokusai@jccu.coop

*JCCUNews is published by the International Department.  
For inquiries contact the address on the left:*

*Download the previous issues from:  
<http://jccu.coop/eng/jccunews/index.php>*