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2014 Peace Action in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

At the occasion of the 69th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japanese consumer co-operatives promoted the "peace action 2014", with various activities including peace parades and seminars by co-op members to express their objection against war and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The Hiroshima event which was held for three days from August 4 to 6 was co-sponsored by JCCU and the Hiroshima Prefecture Consumers Co-operative Union. It was attended by 1,200 co-op members from 68 co-ops nationwide. The Nagasaki event was held for two days from August 7-8 under the co-sponsorship of JCCU and Nagasaki Prefecture Consumer Co-operative Union and was attended by 650 co-op members from 49 co-ops nationwide.

The Hiroshima event took as its main theme "succession and creation – building a peaceful future from Hiroshima" by taken a fresh look at the atomic bomb survivors stories, sharing their experience and renewing our commitment to promoting the abolishment of nuclear weapons.

Niji-no Hiroba Event

This event consisted of two parts, the 'Niji-no Stage' and the 'Minna-no Hiroba', was held on the afternoon of August 5, at the Hiroshima Prefectural Sports Center 'Green Arena'.

The Hiroshima 'Taiko group' kicked off 'Niji-no Stage' with drumming performance conveying peace messages.



It was followed by a message from Mr. MATSUI Kazumi, mayor of Hiroshima, inviting all to strengthen effort towards the realization of a peaceful world without nuclear weapons.



Mr. MATSUI Kazumi, Mayor of Hiroshima

At the 'Minna-no-Hiroba' many events were held including booths from various Co-ops nationwide featuring their various peace activities.

There were also booths from peace organizations explaining the situations surrounding nuclear weapons and the 2020 Vision Campaign pushing for a nuclear-weapon-free world by the year 2020.



Booth introducing co-op peace activities

During the period August 4-6, monuments and Hiroshima bomb ruins tour were organized for school children.

Images from the
Nagasaki 2014 Peace
Action

Above: the mayor of Nagasaki Mr. TAUE Tomohisa delivering the Peace Action Message.



Opening ceremony: A dance performance by a group from Nagasaki University.



Learning session: a lecture by NAKAMURA Keiko, Associate Professor, Nagasaki University Research Center for the total abolition of nuclear weapons.



Storytelling play by Kassui High School girls.

UNICEF summer workshop for children (Sorting foreign coins)

In cooperation with the Japan Committee for UNICEF, JCCU and co-ops nationwide have engaged in UNICEF activities since 1983.

The community-based consumer co-operatives have been collaborating with the prefectural UNICEF Associations in organizing various UNICEF activities at local level.

One of such activities is the sorting of foreign coins and donating to UNICEF.

People returning from foreign countries donate foreign coins and notes at the airports. The money is collected once a year and sorted into respective countries.

On July 26, 2014, at a meeting room in Miyagi Co-op Culture Center WITH, about 70 participants including elementary school children and their parents participated in sorting foreign coins collected from Sendai Airport led by a social welfare committee official.

In the morning, they watched a video titled "Friends of the Earth and UNICEF" and then answered true-or-false questions. After receiving instructions regarding how to sort, they were grouped into six and started the task. Through this workshop the children learned about different countries and UNICEF activities during their summer vacation.



UNICEF activities learning session



Scene at the coin sorting

JCCU held Workshop on issues of Social Welfare

Towards the revision of the elderly care insurance system by the Government in 2015, in which municipalities will serve as the implementing bodies of the home help service and the day care prevention benefit under the "new community support project", JCCU has been organizing workshops at various places across the country to enlighten co-op members about the issues concerning the new project.

JCCU shares credit for the guideline development of the new community support project by submitting members' opinion and comments to the Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly, at the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) for the preparation of the guideline draft which was finally submitted to the MHLW on July 28.

On July 30 in Osaka, 67 co-op members from 16 member co-ops and co-op business federations participated in the workshop held by JCCU on the issues of social welfare, particularly the new changes in the elderly care insurance system.

The first part of the workshop was a study session led by Mr. YAMAGIWA Atsushi, Welfare Business Promotion Department of JCCU, explaining the changes in the elderly care insurance system and the future social security, by making reference to the final report of the "social security policy examination committee" formed by JCCU to gather members' opinion to reflect on the guideline development.

He also discussed with the members the kind of social security they are seeking for and co-ops role in addressing those challenges.

During the second part of the workshop members received explanation about the new changes in the insurance system as detailed in the draft. It was followed by opinion exchanges and idea sharing regarding how co-op could cooperate with municipalities to see to the appropriate and effective implementation of the new project.

JCCU has drawn a roadmap for municipality visits through their social security institutions in the local regions to discuss the social role co-op could play regarding the implementation of the new project.



Okayama Citizen Co-op held CO-OP Product Fair

CO-OP product fair for the fiscal 2014 by Okayama Citizen Co-op was held in the Okayama Prefectural Museum on July 26th under the theme "escorted by a wonderful living".

The event was planned and held intending to promote the loyalty of members and non-members for CO-OP products.

Approximately 50 CO-OP brand product manufacturing companies gathered and performed a variety of events in booths attracting about 2,000 members and non-members.

Under the sub-theme "healthy and refreshing taste", cooking recipes were proposed in Italian, Japanese, Western, and Chinese foods using CO-OP products.

There was also a time for exchanges where visitors listened to the commitment to safety and security being practiced by each manufacturer at the production site.

The day's event also included the manner of cooking of some new products and tasting.



There was also kids' corner with various events such as making of butter, konyaku and providing kids working experience by performing as clerk or manager of a café etc.,

There were smiles and feeling of satisfaction on the faces of both children and adults who took part in the events.

ICA-AP Regional Director visits Japan

On August 6, 2014, the newly appointed Regional Director for the International Cooperative Alliance Asia-Pacific Region, Mr. Balasubramanian Lyer, affectionately called Balu, paid his first visit to Japan and had a round-table discussion with Mr. ASADA Katsumi, president of JCCU.

One of the reasons for the Regional Director's visit was to meet the Japanese cooperators for the first time since he assumed office in April 2014, and to introduce himself as the new Regional Director for the region and besides get familiarize with the cooperative business condition in the region.

At the meeting held at JCCU headquarters in Tokyo, Mr. Asada briefed Mr. Balu about the business goals and the role of consumer co-operatives in the socio-economic development of Japan in the face of the aging Japanese society.

The Director was overwhelmed with the various contributions the co-operatives in the region are offering to the communities and expressed his thanks and further asked for continuous effort to solve various challenges through consumer co-ops business and activities. One of the highlights of the visit was a store visit to offer him the chance to see and experience store operational activities at Co-op Mirai.



(L-R) Mr. Balu and Mr. ASADA



A visit to Co-op Mirai Kasukabe store.

News in Brief

ICA-AP training program for Managers of Consumer Co-ops

The first batch of the 2014 training program for managers of consumer co-operatives organized by ICA-AP in collaboration with Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union (JCCU) was held from July 25 to August 9, with Miyagi Co-op and Co-op Net Business Association providing the training grounds, the facilities and resource persons.

The training program which lasted for 14 days was attended by three co-operative staff members from the Abra Diocesan Teachers and Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative, the Philippines (Ms. Ligaya Adame Barbadillo), Shree Warana Vibhag Sahakari Grahak Mandal Ltd., India (Mr. Tanaji Maruti Dhare) and Saigon Co-op, Viet Nam (Mr. Vo Hoang Anh) in the areas of store operation and management.

Participants were selected after having met the requirements of the interview conducted by the ICA-AP secretary to the consumer committee in Malaysia Business Office.

A comprehensive program, consisting of different training modules that covered the training proposals requested by the trainees to address their difficult challenges in their work place, was designed by the host organizations. Some of the challenges were, to mention a few, how to raise market share and competitiveness, how to retain staff and to raise members loyalty.

Upon arrival, the trainees received a 2-day orientation course at JCCU headquarters, where they received lectures on the Japanese retail industry, the Japanese consumer co-operative business and the Merchandising Policy of Consumer Co-op to gain insight to the retail business environment in Japan.

Trainees spent two and a half days at Co-op Net to receive lectures on structure and mechanism of business solidarity and social and environmental initiatives and then moved to Miyagi Co-op in Sendai for another 10 days training that allowed them to have a practical work experience at the store and to attend conventional meeting between the store manager and the chiefs of various sections.

At the end of the training, an action plan was drawn by each trainee to address what they intend implementing upon returning to their home countries.

The trainees returned home on August 10th.

The second batch of the 2014 ICA-AP training will be held from November 7 to November 23.

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The above picture shows the trainees visit to Co-op Net Eco-Center where recycling activities are being conducted.



The above picture shows the three participants having practical training at Miyagi Co-op Kuromatsu store.



The three trainees holding their certificate of completion pose for a picture with staff of Miyagi Co-op and JCCU.