

What a creative council!

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I felt so comfortable at the council even though all the members except me are actively involved in Co-op activities.

The prime reason of my feeling is that each member had a firm intension of making a breakthrough on the social issues in co-operation with Co-op members, officials and staff.

Even though this council was positioned as a private study group of the executive director Mr. Haga, it is an important council to create a major turning point to co-operatives in the future.

My position has given me many opportunities to participate in various study groups; however, this council is the one that I experienced nervousness coupled with fun and stimulation. I was also deeply moved by the various activities that many regional Co-op's are carrying on.

Modern age requires more community-based comprehensive co-operation and integration for issues such as medical treatment, health, welfare, housing and education.

In other words, we need to restructure the welfare state in the age of regionalism.

Co-op, as a life supporter, must be a driving force to address these problems co-operating with social welfare council and other organizations and agencies.



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The state of the community and Co-op's role

Building a safe community for the people (Report from the Community Welfare Council)

A super-aging society is becoming a real issue, entailing a sense of crisis accompanied by a collapse of our social safety net. Daily news of abused children and senior citizens reminds me of the Laidlaw report (1980) stating, 'Modern age is the "age of madness" and co-operative has to be an "Island of sanity"'

What is Co-op's role in our society based on the values such as 'equity', 'fairness' and 'co-operation', which are opposite to some keywords representing modern society, that is; 'poverty', 'isolation' and 'disparity'.

To answer this question, the Community Welfare Council summarized Co-op's five major roles. Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, established by the poor labors during the Industrial Revolution, started in the form of a store to sell goods with high quality and fair prices. The pioneers aimed at building a mutually assisted community by the people themselves.

In Japan, Toyohiko Kagawa (Founder of JCCU) who helped people in the poor community realized that 'the vulnerable groups in the society must help each other to survive' and started to establish co-operatives and labor unions. Since then Co-op has been expanding its activities especially for women who want 'safe and secure food' and has become a large social existence.

By passing down the founder's heritage, Co-op is making a next step to build a 'safe community for everyone' while being sensitive to what people need for their life and society.



Mr. Haga - MD JCCU

In September 2010, JCCU Community Welfare Council summed up problems in the community and published a report titled 'Building a safe community for people - to mark a first step' describing Co-op's role in the region.

In the report, Co-op explained its capability and role towards creating an affluent community. A brief summary is given here in this newsletter.

Present situation of the community

These include:

- Aging population combined with the diminishing number of children
- Increasing income disparities and poverty
- Senior citizen's biggest problem is inconvenience in everyday shopping for food and daily necessities
- Poor community relationship and increasing isolation

Five roles of Co-op

Co-op's approach to tackle the projected problems is as follows:

- To support members and the community residents through its food and retail businesses
- To support community networking in co-operation with local governments, NPOs, social welfare councils and other regional organizations
- To offer members and regional residents a place to organize various voluntary activities
- To establish an inquiry counter to handle issues of daily life using its community network
- To lobby the national and/or regional governments to fulfill the regional demands such as putting in place necessary systems and policies that would solve community problems.

**Building a safe community:
Kochi Co-op's approach**

In October 2007, Kochi Co-op concluded 'an agreement to protect the regional community' between Kochi prefecture and Kochi Joint Conference Committee of Social Worker and Child Committee. Under the agreement the three organizations pledged to offer mutual support to realize a safe regional community in which people can live in with a sense of safety.

To assist the community-based traffic safety programs, Kochi Co-op has been using its Co-op's fleet to fulfill a role as a community patrol vehicles. Kochi Co-op has about 100 trucks to deliver products to 45,000 members weekly. These trucks are always on road and it could report any human behavior that endangers vehicle occupants, pedestrians, and bicyclists. If a driver sees an accident or crime during one's course of delivery, he/she shall inform/ report to the regional social worker/police. Since April 2010, all delivery trucks have had a sticker saying 'We are watching the community'.



Delivery truck (100 of them)



Agreement with local government

Co-op's business and activities supporting community life

Building safe communities for everyone by providing economic and social convenience to members is all what Japanese consumer co-op does. Community networking has always been a concern of the co-operative. Co-op creates new partnership that can provide ideas, opportunities, and resources to safe communities coalitions.

Co-op carries out many community-based welfare activities including relationship building in the community through its home delivery service and mutual support activities for members.



Dementia supporter wristband

**Co-op Kobe in Hyogo Prefecture
Regional consultation services for senior citizens
In-store community support center**

Commissioned by the local government, Co-op Kobe has set up a community support center in some of its stores. In one of these centers, "Secure and healthy center" co-op staff along side with nurses, senior care managers and social welfare counselors promotes consultation services to advance health-care development in the city. These staff supports senior citizens in the community for their nursing care, welfare, health and medical treatment. Shoppers can stop by at the in-store center and receive advice on his/her request. This facility has largely contributed to the building of a deeper relationship in the community.



Life Consultation center in Co-op Days store

**Co-op Yamaguchi in Yamaguchi Prefecture
Meal delivery service to senior citizens**

Co-op Yamaguchi offers meal delivery service to senior citizens that serves as part of the solution to healthy senior nutrition.

The Co-op started this service as part of its countermeasures towards eliminating problems associated with senior citizens being unable to access markets for the purchase of daily meals. This service delivers side dishes or boxed meal for dinner at reasonable cost, five times in a week. Delivery fee is free for the Co-op members. This year 2010 marks the 4th anniversary of this business.

The menus planned by the national registered dietitian are conscious of health maintenance of the senior citizens. Not only just delivering meals, the service also helps to confirm safety of the users.

When something abnormal is found, such as 'too much leftover' or 'a user is injured', such information will be conveyed to a care manager in charge.

This service is now expanding to others who have difficulties in cooking dinner, for example; families with small children and those who have two incomes.



A typical scene of dinner being delivered to a senior citizen



Nutrition balanced menu

Aging generally changes our relationship with food as well as what our bodies require from the foods we eat.

Making a society where dementia persons can live in with security

Co-op Kagoshima

Co-op Kagoshima in Kagoshima Prefecture, promotes 'a million supporters caravan for dementia' (sponsored by Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) to realize a community friendly and secure to persons suffering from dementia.

Through this promotion many community members including workers have come to appreciate the importance of offering support for community persons suffering from dementia

Co-op Kagoshima holds a 'dementia supporter training course' for staff to better understand how to deal with people suffering from this sickness. Staff workers are trained to be enthusiastic, self-motivated and fully empowered to deliver high standard help to dementia members using co-op store and the home delivery service.

The training, consisting of group discussions about frequent troubles and simulated role-playing, deepens staff's understanding for dementia and teaches them some basic manners to treat dementia.



Orange wristband worn by supporters



Dementia supporters group meeting

Dementia supporters outline:
130 Co-ops, about 25,000 staff
Dementia caravan mate (lecturers of the training course):
129 Co-ops, 890 lecturers

Member's mutual life support activities

Co-op Shiga in the Shiga Prefecture has promoted a member-based activity to help domestic chores under the name 'Mutual Life Support'. This activity aims at supporting senior citizens, disabled or members with small children who need assistance in daily life.

This support service is a paid-for type and it is exclusively for members. Many senior citizens encounter so many problems in their daily life and Co-op Shiga runs 'Mutual Life Support', to bring a relief to the users. Supporters include both men and women.

The project can also meet various users' requests including dog walking, gardening, house rearrangement and other domestic chores such as cooking, house cleaning and shopping.

This handy and useful support system covers small domestic troubles, which cannot be covered by the care insurances.

No admission charge or annual fee is required.

Presently 65 co-ops nationwide are engaged in this mutual life support activities. In 2009, the total activity time recorded was approximately 1.6 million hours. The number of supporters was 21,000 and the number of users 49,500.



Men supporters used for relocating



Dog supporter (walking & feeding dog)

"Interaction Salon, providing senior citizens a place to communicate

Co-op Toyama in the Toyama Prefecture

Co-op members take the lead in organizing "interaction salon" in which senior regional residents come together and interact with each other through chatting and playing hobbies with experience volunteer teachers.

In Co-op Toyama's "interaction salon", an additional activity such as making "origami" which, is a Japanese art created by folding square paper is organized while enjoying tea and sweets.

A welfare group consisting of member volunteers plans and manages this activity, while Co-op and other community facilities provide meeting places.

Not just senior citizens but also anyone who has less chance to make friends, such as members with small children, can join and have fun.



Interacting through Japanese traditional dancing



A scene of making Origami

Interaction salon participated by: 17 Co-ops,
106 groups
Activity times: 1,100 times
Number of users: 8,400 members



Origami (Japanese traditional art)

UNICEF Support Activity

~2010 UNICEF Angola Tour~

JCCU and its member co-ops in co-operation with the Japan Committee for UNICEF has launched a donation campaign since November 1st to October 31st, 2011 under the theme "CO-OP core non smile-school project" to raise funds to improve the educational environment for school kids in the Republic of Angola.

A staff from the UNICEF division of JCCU paid a week observation tour to Angola to ascertain the school conditions in the capital city Luanda and some remote rural part of Angola, coordinated by UNICEF.

Four schools were inspected. It was noticed that the schools in the rural areas were conducted in open spaces, in the fields, and under trees. The kids sit on log benches and use their laps as desks with virtually no exercise books or pencils even though they were eager to learn.

The pupil teacher ratio in the Kune district is roughly 300 to 5.

After this visit the JCCU staff came to realize how important it is to have established this fund raising campaign for school environment improvement in Angola.

JCCU hopes that through this campaign many people will extend assistance by purchasing CO-OP brand toilet roll paper "core non roll" from any of Co-op outlets for which 1 yen would be contributed to UNICEF towards the Angolan school project to assist the most needy school communities to complete unfinished classrooms and/or build new ones.



School condition seen in Angola
Children packed under the tree

News in Brief

Delegates from Korean Co-operatives visit co-ops in Kanagawa prefecture

From November 29 to December 2, five Directors from Korea Co-operative paid a two-day study visit to two consumer Co-ops in the Kanagawa prefecture (Co-op Kanagawa and the Seikatsu Club) to study about the member activities of consumer co-ops in Japan.

The first stop of the visit was at Co-op Kanagawa where the delegates received briefings on the general outline of member activities. It was interesting for them to learn that the activities are spread over 41 administrative blocks (areas) with each area having its own area coordinator who collaborates with Co-op Kanagawa, local administration and the NPO's for organizing its activities.

The delegates were also impressed about the various member driven welfare activities to elderly members such as home-care planning for coordinating welfare services, home visits by care-workers who provide care and everyday living assistance.

During the last day of the visit the delegates paid a study visit to one of the cultural facilities of Seikatsu Club and their store. They learnt about the structure and the activities of workers collective gearing towards improving the living as well as the culture of the members.

They expressed their thanks and satisfaction to the two co-operatives and commented that the activities they observed and learnt have given them an eye opener to various member activities, which they will try to adopt some in the co-operatives in Korea.



Receiving briefings at Co-op Kanagawa



A welfare staff of
Co-op Kanagawa explaining a point

JCCU International Activity Committee held second meeting

The international activity committee of JCCU held its second meeting this year on December 8 2010 at the headquarters of JCCU with the attendance of the managing director and 11 committee members.

A report on the 2010 international activities under the "Asian Co-operative Development Fund" was made followed by the proposal of a tentative program for 2011 activities.

The managing director explained the JCCU 2020 vision plan to the committee members and asked for their comments and opinions.

As part of information sharing, Ms. Hyungmi Kim, the head of the international team of iCOOP KOREA was invited to give a brief presentation about the general overview of the co-operative. She disclosed the intention of consumer co-ops in Korea forming a national federation of Korean consumer co-operatives taken advantage of the recent revision of the consumer co-operative law in Korea.

Season's Greetings to all our readers

As this is the final newsletter before the New Year, it seems a good opportunity to thank you all for your interest and reading of JCCU News over the past six months. JCCU News continues to grow and become stronger with each issue and we now have regular readers in a wide range of countries.

We would like to wish you all a 2011 that is filled with joy, love, good health and prosperity.

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