



18 - 19 October 2007

Raffles City Convention Centre

Theme: "Innovation in Co-operative Business"



ICA Youth Conference

"Co-operative Business Innovation through Youth"

14-15 October 2007, Singapore

The ICA Youth Network is inviting all ICA members to send at least one young delegate to participate both in the ICA Youth Conference and ICA General Assembly in Singapore.

Globalisation is here. It is setting challenges for organisations, movements and ideologies of all types. Co-operatives are not excluded of such challenges and their elected leaders and management must set sustainability as a priority, not only in administrative and financial terms, but also in terms of the human talent associated to it. Youth becomes much more than just an optional target audience for those with social concerns, but a strategic ally to help assess and re-assess the co-operative movement in view of increasing global competition.

Youth is moving up on the agenda of the co-operative movement. ICA too has focused increasing attention on youth issues in the past few years in recognition of the need to increase the number of committed young talent active within the ICA so to enable a process of "inheriting the movement" and all the aspects associated to it. Accordingly, for the first time, at the 2003 General Assembly, a young co-operator was invited to join the ICA Board and to participate in its strategic discussions. This invitation was reiterated at the General Assembly in Cartagena in 2005 and it's expected to continue after Singapore 2007, thus showing leadership in the development of co-operative youth.

Over the last few years, the ICA Youth Network has gained recognition within the movement. It has organised a number of activities to sensitise, motivate and involve both young people and co-operative organisations, and although it still needs to be better structured and strengthened, it has made a positive impact in enabling young people to have their voice heard, to share experience and together identify new areas of work. Given the intrinsic short-term character of youth, this network needs to be fed with new visions, energy and ideas of more and more young people and co-operative leaders.

Today, there are positive experiences of youth in co-operatives in Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Colombia, Mexico, United States, Canada, UK, Italy, Poland, France, Nigeria, Iran, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines, Singapore, Japan, Nepal and Vietnam – in all at least 22 countries in the four ICA region have initiatives for youth and co-operatives which provide solid ground on which to build.

The ICA global youth conferences, held in conjunction with ICA General Assemblies, have provided young people an opportunity to network and share progress on the participation of young people in co-operatives.

It has created continuity for youth action and raised expectations on what is possible for ensuring a broader participation of young people in co-operatives. The Youth Conference held in Cartagena (Colombia) in 2005 was a breakthrough in terms of youth involvement. Singapore 2007 promises to be not only a continuation of this, but a step forward in strategic discussions regarding co-operative development and the role youth play in that challenge. The theme; "Co-operative Business Innovation through Youth", proposed by the newly formed ICA Asia-Pacific Youth Committee, is not only appealing but is seen to be necessary

We encourage ICA members to enable young people committed to the development of the movement to actively join us. We trust that the commitment of co-operative leaders will translate into actions.

On behalf of the ICA Youth Network, may I thank you in advance for your acting on your commitment to increase the participation of young people in the co-operative movement.

Juan Carlos Mejía Cuartas

ICA Youth Network representative to the ICA Board

To register for the Youth Conference, please contact:

Mr TEO Say Hong, Chairman
SNCF Youth Committee and ICA Asia Pacific Youth Committee
Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF)
510, Thomson Road, #12-02, SLF Building, Singapore 298135
Tel (65) 6259 0077 / Fax (65) 6259 9577
Email: globalyouthconference@sncf.org.sg

Deadline for registrations to the Youth Conference: 31 July 2007

IMPORTANT: All registered participants to the youth conference **who are under 35 years of age** are invited to attend the ICA General Assembly as observers with no registration fee. When registering for the Youth Conference, please indicate that you plan to attend the ICA General Assembly.