



	ICT for Rural Economic Development
	Berlin, Germany
	November 18 – 19, 2010

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND
CO-OPERATIVES IN RURAL ASIA
THROUGH ICT

WHY IS *IT* IMPORTANT IN CO-OPS?

- Co-ops have long been recognized for being vehicles of empowerment of people in rural areas.
- Co-ops are instruments for the social and economic well-being of the women and men members.

Why Women?

“Women compose half or more than half of the total membership of co-operatives”



Over 800 million people are members of co-operatives around the world

.....and these women are mostly entrepreneurs needing IT support in their micro, small and medium sized-enterprises.

The it@coops project:

The logo for the it@coops project, featuring the text "it@coops" in a stylized font where the '@' symbol is a red circle with a white dot, set against a yellow background.

Information Technology for
Southeast Asian Co-operatives

Partners:

The logo for inwent, consisting of the word "inwent" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font with a stylized wave-like underline.

Internationale Weiterbildung
und Entwicklung gGmbH

Capacity Building
International, Germany



Umbrella Organizations:



Thailand



Indonesia



Philippines

Supported by:

FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC
COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (BMZ)

OBJECTIVES

it@coops

Information Technology for
Southeast Asian Co-operatives

PROJECT PERIOD: 2004-2007

- **Training of IT Trainers (multipliers)**
 - Co-operatives and their umbrella organizations fighting poverty and working for women empowerment were provided with IT knowledge in order to increase competitiveness of self-helping approaches;
- **ICT-Supported Business Development Centre**
 - The establishment of ICT-Supported Business Development Centres widely accessible for the public were initiated and supported;
- **Virtual Networks**
 - The establishment of virtual networks of the co-operatives and their umbrella organization both on national and on transnational levels were supported and promoted

RESULTS

1. Training of IT Trainers (multipliers)

Graduated 60 IT Specialists/Trainers. With a second-wave of 14 IT Specialists/Trainers

All 74 (46 women and 28 men) IT Specialists were able to conduct roll-out training or transfer of learning creating greater awareness on the importance and application of IT for the co-op organizations and its members

Year	Total Participants	% of Women
2006-2007	4,728	60%
2008-2010	3,740	65%
Total	8,468	

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SOUTHEAST ASIAN IT@COOPS SPECIALISTS & TRAINERS

RESULTS

2. ICT-Supported Business Development Centre

17 Business Development Centres at the co-op level were set-up to provide business development services to member-entrepreneurs

3. Virtual Networks

43 Websites and portals were established as of Sept 2010 and were being maintained by the three umbrella organizations

Strengthened networking and linkages among partners through the established virtual networks of the co-operatives and their umbrella organization both on national and on transnational levels

IMPACT

- ④ Improved collection and reporting of financial data on the part of primary co-ops leading to faster and accurate decisions as ICT in co-ops made computerization possible—e.g. accounting system, digital membership data, loan collection system by mobile phone, ATM, e-load system
- ④ Co-op services were well promoted leading to increased membership as ICT is maximized by the co-ops in promoting their programs and services (websites, brochures and posters, tarpaulins, etc)
- ④ Increased number of co-ops served with ICT as the IT Specialists are now being tapped both at the national and provincial levels according to his/her specialization (IT trainers, web designers, programmers, hardware technicians, etc.)

IMPACT

- ◎ IT training sustained by national umbrella organizations (IT related training courses are calendared and regularly offered to co-operative members in the Philippines and in Thailand)
- ◎ Increased economic empowerment of co-ops benefiting mostly women in rural areas (established Community Telecenters and BDCs)

IMPACT

- ◎ **Efficient delivery of services of umbrella organizations led its primary co-operatives and their individual members have easy access to vital business information** e.g. how to improve business, price monitoring, new designs, source of supplies and market, etc.
- ◎ **Well established capacity-building approach of InWEnt (advance training, networking, participation of partners) harnessed project management capacity of AWCF**

LESSONS LEARNED

- ❖ Training of Trainers - multipliers is a good capacity building strategy. The IT Specialists/Trainers are the agents who bring technology in the rural areas.
- ❖ Ownership/Commitment of the co-ops to use their resources to sustain the program even after funding since ICT involves costs
- ❖ Acceptance that ICT and Business Development Centers (BDCs) are important tools and mechanisms to support livelihood of women and men members in co-operatives in the rural areas
- ❖ Video: Empowering Women and Co-ops in Rural Asia



THANK YOU!

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