



# MAPIGO



International Year  
of Cooperatives  
Cooperatives Build a Better World

THE PULSE OF COOPERATIVES IN AFRICA AND AROUND THE WORLD



## Cooperative News from Africa, The diaspora, and around the world...

### Co-op Development - Kenya

- Co-op Bank Partners Visa To Launch Innovative Business Cards

### Co-op Development - Morocco

- Strategic Dialogue on Advancing Cooperative Development for Rural and Agrifood Systems in NENA

### Co-op Development - Kenya

- Sacco Leaders trained as the International Year of Cooperatives Begins

### Co-op Development - Nigeria

- Nigerian National agricultural cooperative plans cattle ranches in 774 LGAs

### Co-op Development - Cote D'Ivoire

- Hershey signs pact with IVORIAN cocoa cooperatives

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- Co-ops involved in Indonesian government's free meals scheme

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- Co-op announces £820K sustainability fund for British farmers

### Co-op Impact: India

- Sewa, the union empowering informal women workers through co-ops

## Co-op Bank of Kenya Partners Visa To Launch Innovative Business Cards

*Finance Co-op. Development... Kenya, Africa*

**Co-operative Bank of Kenya**, in partnership with Visa, has introduced a Debit Card, Credit Card, and Pre-paid Business Card to enhance financial management for SMEs. These new solutions allow businesses to separate personal and company expenses, access interest-free credit, and streamline payments both locally and internationally. Available to both existing and new customers, the cards offer a seamless way to digitize and track office and travel expenses, improving financial oversight and efficiency for small and medium-sized enterprises.

This initiative is part of Co-op Bank's broader digital transformation strategy, following a \$38 million upgrade to its core banking system in 2023. The investment reflects the bank's commitment to leveraging technology to support businesses in

their digitalization efforts. Speaking at the launch event, Visa East Africa's leadership highlighted that digital payments are crucial for modern business growth, improving financial inclusion, and increasing economic resilience in an increasingly competitive market.

In recognition of its innovation, Co-op Bank recently received top honors at the CIO100 Awards, cementing its position as a leader in digital transformation within the banking sector. These efforts demonstrate the bank's continued commitment to providing cutting-edge financial solutions that empower SMEs and commercial enterprises. By integrating technology with banking services, Co-op Bank is playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of digital payments in Kenya and beyond.

• *Source: <https://cioafrica.co>*

**STRATEGIC DIALOGUE ON COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL AND AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION**



Strategic dialogue on Cooperative development for **Rural and agrifood systems transformation** in the Near East and North Africa region

28 October 2024 - 10:00 AM Cairo time  
Virtual event



Agri- Co-ops Development...Morocco Africa

The ICA-AP Regional Office, in collaboration with FAO NENA and ICA Africa, held a virtual strategic dialogue on 28 October under the ICA-EU Financial Framework Partnership Agreement 2 (FFPA 2). The event explored the critical role cooperatives play in transforming rural and agrifood systems in the Near East and North African (NENA) region. Experts from Jordan, FAO, and ICA discussed the contributions of agricultural cooperatives to food security, inclusion in national strategies, and the importance of policy frameworks for cooperative development.

A roundtable discussion featured key stakeholders, including representatives from FAO, Lebanon's Ministry of Agriculture, UMNAGRI, AAACO, and ICAO. Speakers shared cooperative success stories and emphasized the need for enabling environments to foster cooperative growth. The event also highlighted upcoming discussions at the in-person regional dialogue in January 2025, where key strategies for cooperative development will be further explored.

The dialogue reinforced cooperatives' role as catalysts for agrifood transformation and sustainable development. It underscored shared challenges across Asia-Pacific and NENA, emphasizing the need for policy reforms, cross-border learning, and collaborative strategies to address climate change, food security, and economic inequality. Closing remarks from ICA-AP and Morocco's ONCA Ministry of Agriculture invited participants to continue discussions at the regional dialogue in January 2025, marking a significant step in global cooperative collaboration.

Source: [www.icaap.coop](http://www.icaap.coop)

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**EVENTS - MONTHLY WEBINAR**

Cooperation Africa Webinar slated for **Wednesday February 26, 2025.**

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## SACCO LEADERS TRAINED AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES BEGINS

*Financial Co-op Development... Kenya, Africa*

**The United Nations** has proclaimed 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives, focusing on the theme “Cooperatives Build a Better Future.” ACCOSCA is leading efforts in Africa to highlight cooperatives' role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To support this initiative, ACCOSCA will host a SACCO Philosophy and Education training in early 2025.

This program aims to empower leaders of African Credit Unions, equipping them to drive financial sustainability and stronger decision-making across the continent. Preparations are underway for the 2025 World Credit Union Conference, scheduled for July 14–20, 2025. The conference will commence in Stockholm, Sweden, from July 14–16, with subsequent “Learn and Share Initiatives” events hosted in Vilnius, Lithuania, and Berlin, Germany, from July 17–20. These events will foster knowledge sharing among cooperatives, focusing on innovation and inclusive growth.

As part of its broader strategy, ACCOSCA is engaging member states across Africa with pre-conference meetings, emphasizing the cooperative movement's transformative potential. Registration for the conference remains open, offering cooperators an opportunity to participate in shaping the global agenda for cooperative development.

*Source: <https://co-opnews.com>*



## NIGERIAN NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE PLANS CATTLE RANCHES IN 774 LGAS

*Agri- Co-op Development... Nigeria, Africa*

**The National Agricultural Mechanisation Cooperative of Nigeria (NAMCON)** plans to establish cattle ranches across Nigeria's 774 local governments. This initiative aims to modernize livestock production, boost food security, and create jobs. The ranches will be equipped with essential infrastructure such as animal feed, mega dams, clinics, schools, and world-class equipment. Additionally, the ranches will cultivate economic trees like mango and cashew, while addressing the herder-farmer clashes prevalent in the country. This development is seen as a crucial step for the nation's agricultural and economic growth.



## HERSHEY SIGNS PACT WITH IVORIAN COCOA COOPERATIVES

*Agri- Co-op Development... Côte d'Ivoire, Africa*

**Hershey** has signed a five-year agreement with nine cocoa cooperatives in Côte d'Ivoire, reinforcing its \$500 million commitment to addressing challenges faced by cocoa farmers. Signed during the country's National Cocoa and Chocolate Days, this partnership, alongside commodities trader Sucden, aims to professionalize cocoa farming, improve profitability, and enhance long-term sustainability. With Côte d'Ivoire producing nearly half of the world's cocoa, the agreement also focuses on community investments, environmental preservation, and farm resilience. Hershey emphasizes that trust and collaboration across sectors are key to boosting farmer incomes, child welfare, and sustainable production.

*Source: <https://gazettengr.com>*

*Source: <https://www.bakingbusiness.com/>*



## CO-OPS INVOLVED IN INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT'S FREE MEALS SCHEME

Agri- Co-op Development... Indonesia, Global



**The Indonesian government's** Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) program aims to improve nutrition for 82.9 million people, including school children and pregnant women, with co-ops playing a key role as suppliers. Co-ops are tasked with providing essential food items like milk and red cooking oil, while some have also set up kiosks to prepare daily meals. The program was launched in January as part of a broader initiative to address child stunting, a significant concern in the country, with millions of children affected.

Despite its popularity, the program has faced criticism over its high costs and implementation challenges, including reports of food poisoning among schoolchildren. While the initiative seeks to tackle malnutrition, it has sparked concerns regarding its sustainability and the financial strain it places on the government. Co-ops are stepping up to meet the increasing demand, particularly for milk, but the strain on resources has made scaling production difficult.

In addition to their role in food provision, co-ops are also looking to incorporate financial education into the scheme. They aim to help children understand important concepts like saving and credit, while fostering group savings initiatives. This addition is seen as a way to empower the younger generation, helping them gain valuable financial knowledge for the future. The initiative is seen as a stepping stone to improving not only nutrition but also financial literacy across Indonesia.

Source: <https://www.thenews.coop>



## CO-OP ANNOUNCES £820K SUSTAINABILITY FUND FOR BRITISH FARMERS

Agri- Co-op Financing... Britain, Global



**Co-op** has unveiled an £820,000 sustainability fund aimed at supporting British farmers in advancing environmentally friendly farming practices. This initiative focuses on reducing carbon emissions and promoting biodiversity across the beef, lamb, and dairy sectors. Building on Co-op's long-standing dedication to British agriculture, the fund will reward farmers for their contributions to sustainability, alongside the fair pricing already provided for their products. The announcement underscores Co-op's continued commitment to local sourcing and its role in addressing climate challenges through collaborative efforts with farmers.

The fund encompasses two major projects. The first is a partnership with the Soil Association Exchange, targeting 140 farmers in Co-op's Dairy Farming Group. This project focuses on reducing carbon footprints and tracking key nature indicators like biodiversity and soil health. Farmers will receive expert guidance to create tailored action plans, which may involve reducing fertilizer use, improving energy efficiency, or integrating renewable energy solutions like solar panels. These sustainability payments offer both financial incentives and practical support to encourage meaningful progress.

Source: <https://www.co-operative.coop>





## SEWA, THE UNION EMPOWERING INFORMAL WOMEN WORKERS THROUGH CO-OPS

*Worker Co-op Impact... India, Global*

**Sewa**, founded by Ela Bhatt in 1972, started by advocating for informal women workers in Ahmedabad to receive fair wages and benefits. After successful negotiations, women began establishing their own cooperatives, leading to the creation of the Sewa Cooperative Federation. The initiative evolved, including the establishment of the world's first women's co-op bank in 1974. Over time, Sewa's impact expanded globally, offering financial services, childcare, healthcare, and skills training for women in marginalized sectors.

A key part of Sewa's success is its financial arm, Sewa Bank, which operates on trust. It serves women by offering savings, loans, and microinsurance, fostering economic independence despite limited digital access. Its approach avoids guarantees, relying on community networks to ensure repayment. Additionally, Sewa addresses a wide array of needs, including agriculture, with successful co-ops like the Shri Kada Fruit and Vegetable Cooperative, empowering farmers to bypass middlemen and access greater market opportunities.

The Sewa Federation's resilience was further tested during the COVID-19 pandemic. With support from the UK cooperative movement, Sewa managed to provide vital resources, including oxygen tanks and working capital. The solidarity fund helped keep smaller women's co-ops afloat during the crisis, which showcased the cooperative's role in times of hardship. Importantly, Sewa advocates for a sustainable livelihood fund that could support cooperatives through future challenges, ensuring long-term growth and stability.

Sewa's efforts also emphasize women's empowerment, with initiatives to involve younger generations in cooperatives. This includes digital training, self-defense, and soft skills, which encourage young women to become more confident and independent. The UK cooperative movement's partnership with Sewa represents a long-term commitment to expanding the women's cooperative sector, with future efforts aimed at addressing the unique challenges women face in India's patriarchal society.

*Source: <https://www.thenews.coop>*

*Thank you for reading!*

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