



### AgriFinance Consultation In Nepal & Bangladesh: Farmers Need beyond Credit

ACCU has completed two consultation workshops on AgriFinance for credit unions in Bangladesh on November 10-12 and in Nepal on November 19-20. The two workshops were attended by 30 participants from 15 credit unions. The workshop sought input on the design of AgriFinance Program for credit unions as Business Solution no. 20. The solution was developed due to the growing challenges faced by farmers due to climate change, the recent food and financial crises, and falling investments in agriculture. The marginal farmers' become most vulnerable and become the poorest of the poor.

Although access to financial services may prove crucial, credit unions need to fill the needs of the farmer-members to improve their lives. The participants agreed that there is a need for credit unions to be more active in making use of the available technical expertise of specialized agencies to address watershed development, livelihood promotions, organic farming, agriculture extension services, environmental impact assessments, training and capacity building, education, skills development and financial literacy. As indicated in the action plan, participating credit unions will implement AgriFinance.

### 14 Credit Unions in Bangladesh Getting Ready for ACCESS Branding



The ACCESS orientation workshop was attended by 24 participants from 14 credit unions on November 13-14 in Bangladesh. It was agreed that the MOU and first payment of technical fee to CCULB on the ACCESS branding accreditation will be submitted by December 31, 2012. Diagnosis, PEARLS training, deployment of policies on Finance, Credit and Organization shall be the technical assistance to be provided by CCULB until March 2013. CCULB is also supporting a credit union model building part of its strategic plan. ACCESS will be a special technical assistance program on a fee for service basis.



## Bhutan: First Two Credit Unions will be organized in 2013

ACCU hosted the study visit of 9 technical staff of the Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives (DAMC), Ministry of Agriculture and Forests in Thailand on November 25-30. The program included two days credit union orientation in ACCU office and three days visit to credit unions: FSCT, CULT, Klongchan Credit Union, Police General Hospital Employees Savings and Credit Cooperative and St. Peter Credit Union. With the knowledge gained on credit union values and its application to the operation, the participants plan to organize two credit unions in 2013: one among the employees of DAMC and one in a pilot district.

DAMC is the regulatory body for cooperatives. The amended cooperative act in Bhutan was only passed by the parliament in 2009. DAMC recognizes the need to build its capacity to promote and strengthen cooperatives in Bhutan and thus, ACCU commits to support the department. A Memorandum of Understanding is being chartered to seal the partnership of ACCU and DAMC. The latter also expressed its intention to become an Affiliate member of ACCU.

### AVRDC Participants: Call for Financial Literacy among Farmers

Participants of the AVRDC – World Vegetable Organization’s 31st International Vegetable Training Course visited ACCU on November 7.

From the presentation ACCU made on credit union differentiation, the 18 participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam realized that farmers need education to change their financial behavior. It was acknowledged that farmers are living in subsistence economy. Lack of financial literacy hinders them to get out of the cycle of poverty. The participants are agriculturists and community workers.

### Preparations for the 2013 Asian Credit Union Forum in Nepal Commences

Inspection of the venue for the 2013 Asian Credit Union Forum in Nepal was made on November 18 to 22. The meeting with the management and executive committee of the host: NEFSCUN (Nepal Federation of Savings and Credit Unions) on November 18 explained the responsibilities of the hosts and the facilities required at the venue. Based on the three quotations received, the Forum participants would be limited to 350 due to the capacity of the venue.

The final venue of the forum will be announced by December 2012. The members will be notified accordingly.

## Laos Volunteers Intensify Knowledge on Credit Unions



Review of policies, upgrade of products and services, and development of welfare program are among others the steps to be taken by the Board of Directors of Lao credit unions after the November 19-21 study visit to Chiengrai, Thailand.

Organized by ACCU-SACUDIL project in Laos, the study visit was participated by 30 Directors of credit unions and technical staff of the Rural Development and Department of Planning and Investment. Three credit unions from Chiengrai and CULT's Northern Branch welcomed the group.

Six credit unions under the SACUDIL project has been registered with the Bank of Lao PDR and five are in the verge of registration. A secondary level organization for credit unions will be organized during the project period. The federation will assume the role SACUDIL in the promotion and strengthening of credit unions in Laos. The project is supported by Rabobank Foundation.

## ACCU President Represents ACCU at ICA-AP Meetings in Kobe



The President Mr. Simon A. Pereira represented ACCU at the 10th ICA- Asia Pacific Regional Assembly and related meetings in Kobe (Japan) from 26th to 30th November 2012. As requested by ICA-AP, the President served as the Chair of the Election Committee for the election of the 11 member Board of ICA-AP. On November 28th, the ICA-AP Regional Assembly, which meets once every two years, brought together the representatives from member

organizations in the Region. ACCU is a member of ICA since 1992.

## ACCU Supporter Membership: Help Promote Growth of Credit Unions

ACCU provides opportunity for large credit unions to be part of its development work. The annual dues contributed by supporters could accelerate the promotion and strengthening of credit unions in countries where credit unions are its initial stage.

Welcome to New Supporter members from Australia:

- First Choice Credit Union
- Sutherland Credit Union
- Community Mutual Group