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A reminder of Doctor Salvador Mussons, an ambassador for health co-operation

In this issue of **Compartir** we have tried to cover each and every one of the components of the complex realm of Espriuan health co-operation. From its beginnings to the present day, which now includes the Chairmanship of an international co-operative organisation - the IHCO. Along this long route there have been many collaborators who, at some time or other, have helped this ship stay afloat and sail ahead. But one of them, Doctor Salvador Mussons stands out in particular and that is obviously why we would like to dedicate a few lines of gratitude and reminiscence to him.

Doctor Mussons, who had always been a friend of Doctor Espriu's, began collaborating with him towards the final stage of his life. He was Director of SCIAS and, with the friendliness and cordiality that were typical of him, he began to organise his co-operative committees, though not much later he collaborated on the setting up of the Health Co-operation Study and Promotion Office - the embryo of the Espriu Foundation.

The vast amount of work done by the Office led to the organisation of interesting Health and Co-operation Conferences which, as we shall see later, generated a great deal of debate in the co-operation and health realms, because they tried to touch on every aspect connected with health co-operation.

The first Health and Co-operation Conference was held in Zaragoza in 1982. It lasted three days. Eight presentations and six talks were given, and a series of communications was issued.

The second Conference was held in April 1983 in Madrid. It was opened by the Minister for Health and Consumption. Five presentations were given, and then a debate was held.

The third Conference was held in Seville in January 1984. Doctor Espriu gave the closing speech entitled Health co-operation, a self-management challenge.

The fourth Conference was held in Barcelona in March 1985, and one of the guests was an internationally renowned man from the co-operative realm: Doctor Edmundo Castilho, President of Unimed do Brasil. This Conference was also called the first Consumer Health Co-operation Conference.

The fifth Conference, the second consumer or user



one, was held in Madrid in November 1986. Sebastián Reyna took part in it. At that time he was Director General for Co-operatives.

The sixth Conference dedicated to second-degree health co-operation was held in Santander in December 1987.

The seventh Conference entitled Health co-operation in the framework of a national health system was held in Madrid in December 1988. The then Minister for Health and Consumption, Julián García Vargas, intervened in the Conference closure.

The eighth Conference was held in Barcelona and was the final one organised by the Office, since that was the time when the Espriu Foundation was founded.

All the work involved in organising and

coordinating these conferences, together with the subsequent tasks of compiling all the texts of the presentations and minutes of discussions held at them, etc. to create a book, was done by the untiring Salvador Mussons.

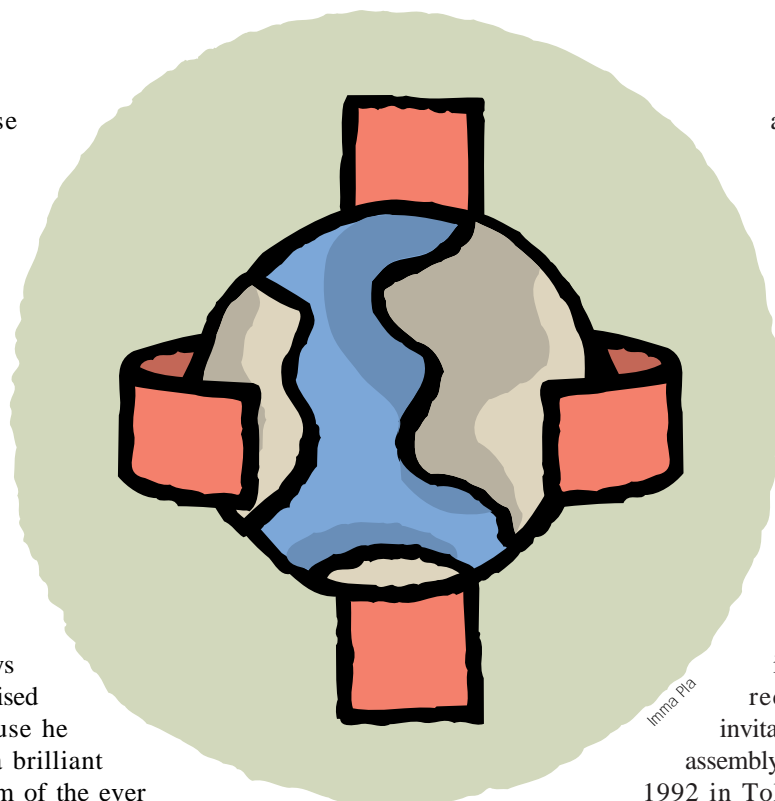
But his dedication went beyond that. He wanted the Espriuan model –as he had always called it– to be recognised the world over, because he believed that it was a brilliant solution to the problem of the ever increasing costs of medicine, which is well examined in his book entitled *Sistema público de Seguridad Social y cogestión cooperativa* published by his own Office in 1988.

For Doctor Mussons the 1980s were a very busy period. In 1989 he attended the 27th congress of the ICA (International Co-operative Alliance) in Moscow, where he gave a presentation that caused obvious surprise.

In 1982 he attended the second International Worker Co-operative Conference held in Warsaw, and there he had made friends with Bruno Catalano, Chairman of the CECOP (European Committee of Production Co-operatives). Catalano became interested in the health co-operation model and announced that a study would be done to see if it could be applied to the Italian Social Security system.

In 1984 it was in the French-speaking region of Canada –Quebec– where he established close contacts with the Canadian Council for International Co-operation. The correspondence exchanged between Ivan Forest, President-CEO of that Council, and Doctor Mussons is an example of the great interest that Doctor Mussons had in that Council, which was implementing a Latin American support campaign for the co-operative movement. That was how he, at that meeting, began to strengthen ties with Latin America.

Also in 1984, Doctor Mussons attended the first Continental Congress on Co-operative Doctrine organised by the OCA (Organisation of Co-operatives of America)



and held in Brazil. There he made many friends, and he invited many of them to come and see our co-operative model in situ. Today, many years after his death, people from all over who are interested in the Espriuan model still come to visit us.

In 1988 he attended another ICA congress, this time held in Stockholm. There he received the official invitation to attend the general assembly scheduled to be held in 1992 in Tokyo. There, the Espriu Foundation, which had joined the ICA in 1990 in Berlin (a time that was very intense for Doctor Mussons) would finally be able to officially present its way of thinking and its reality.

I am sure that I must have forgotten one trip or another, but if you bear in mind that everything I have mentioned here was done by a man who was over 70, you will understand that he really must have been untiring.

In biblical times, we would have said that he was a good apostle. I think that Doctor Mussons was an excellent apostle for Espriuan health co-operation.

His energy was contagious, and that is how any of us lucky enough to accompany him knows about his never-ending conversations, his smile, his hugs and his tenacity, through which he made himself carefully heard. And those who listened to him ranged from base co-operation advocates to top executives of the ICA or other international organisations.

The Espriu Foundation would probably not exist were it not for Doctor Mussons' efforts because, to a large extent, it was he who conquered Doctor Espriu's reticence about having a Foundation in his name and it was he who became the artificer of international recognition for health co-operation - the *raison d'être* of the foundation itself. **F**