

## THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN COOPERATIVES DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

The role of Learning Organizations (academic and training institutions) in cooperative development is to teach /train, coach and mentor people on how the co-operative model functions within different contexts and how it can contribute to meeting economic and social needs. Most importantly, Universities/training institutions focus on how the co-operative model can help to empower people and communities in controlling the forces that shape their lives. Universities and training institutions provide: Education, training, learning and training materials through curriculum development, consultancy and publications related to co-operatives, social enterprise and other organizations in the social economy and through action research for the cooperatives. Through fostering research, training and education about cooperatives, there has been growing awareness of the importance of cooperatives as a necessary model especially for an agrarian economy particularly in developing countries. In Rwanda, both public and private Universities/institutions are contributing in the development of cooperatives either directly or indirectly through their mission of teaching, research and community development. Some of these institutions have established programs focusing on cooperatives development for example, the Independent Institute of Lay Adventists of Kigali (INILAK) have an Undergraduate program in Cooperatives Management and Accounting and plans are underway to start a Postgraduate course on Cooperatives Management. It is anticipated that collaboration between public and private institutions/universities with other stakeholders will enhance the cooperative sector towards achieving the desired socio-economic development goal in Rwanda.

**Key words:** *Academic and training institutions; Cooperatives Development; Rwanda.*