

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 co-operatives. 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.*

An Overview of Co-operative Management, Administration, Education and Training for enhancing cooperative movement in Rwanda.

Create cooperators before creating cooperatives – it is the watch word of cooperative movement.

Management and administration cooperatives are guided by the management principle and principles of cooperatives. The Management principles are useful in cooperative management and administration because it can improve the operational and business efficiency. It helps to reduce their complexity, decision making in different level of management to achieve the success of cooperative enterprise as a business organization and social institution. Cooperatives are economical organization that solve economical problem of their members. It is also a social organization with an aim to serve the society. In this context, this paper has incorporated the principles of cooperative viz.

Principles of Cooperation:

International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) describes the following principles of cooperatives as guidelines for judging behavior and making decisions within the cooperatives.

Principle 1: Voluntary and open membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination. This principle emphasizes the following points: That membership is voluntary. Nobody is, therefore,

coerced to join cooperatives even if the cooperative formation is based on the mandate of a law. In the same line, every member can withdraw his/her membership as soon as s/he assesses that the cooperative no longer serves her/his needs, except of course, when this member has obligations such as debts to fulfill.

Principle 2: Democratic member control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner. All women and men elected representatives are accountable to the membership. Their actions, therefore, should be transparent and responsive to the needs and interests of their membership. This principle further obliges them to regularly report, consult and echo the voices of their members to the decision-making bodies of the organization. That all members of primary cooperatives, no matter how disparate the amount of their contributions is to the coffers of the cooperative, have equal voting rights.

Principle 3: Member economic participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. This principle relates three main practices of cooperative. And these practices distinguish cooperatives from capitalist-oriented business organizations: That the capital of the cooperatives comes from the equitable contributions of the members. That is the members are democratically control the capital of the cooperatives. Hence, final authority for all decisions rests with the membership; that the members have the right and obligation to decide

on the allocation of surpluses created from the activities of the cooperative.

Principle 4: Autonomy and independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy. This principle protects the cooperative from the intrusion or control of other people or groups whether for social, political or religious reasons. In effect, this makes cooperatives a fertile ground for people empowerment, including women's empowerment, with power emanating from the bottom from the inner or bottom selves of the members as well as from their unity and collective action and mutual caring.

Principle 5: Education, training and information

This research paper shall deal with the fifth principle of cooperation Viz. Principle 5: Education, training and information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively and efficiently to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public particularly young people and opinion leaders about the nature and benefits of co-operation. This principle emphasizes the vital importance played by education and training within cooperatives.

Principle 6: Co-operation among cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local,

national, regional and international structures. This principle gives the most important value to the networking of various cooperatives in different parts of the world. To the women cooperatives, this principle gives them the opportunity to connect with women of other cooperatives, to join hands in raising their common interests and in ensuring that cooperatives are able to respond to their practical and strategic needs, and therefore are able to move towards gender equity and equality.

Principle 7: Concern for community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members. As this principle upholds, cooperatives have a special responsibility to ensure the sustainable development economic, social, and cultural of their communities. Very importantly, this principle supports the advocacy for women's empowerment beyond the confines of cooperatives. In actualizing this principle, a cooperative is bound to respond to gender issues experienced by their members in their households and communities. In this manner, this principle together with the six other cooperative principles, truly, make cooperatives an instrument for people centered sustainable development, a critical component of which is women's empowerment, gender equity and equality (ICA, 2005).

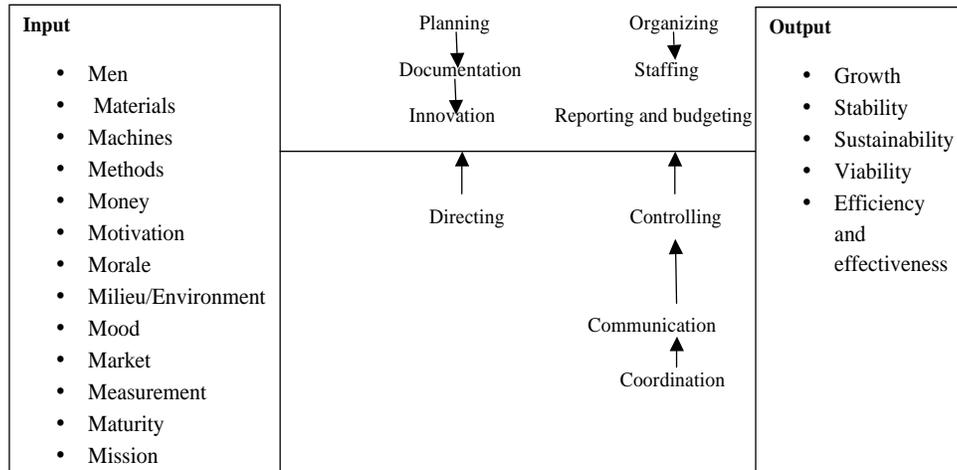
Co-operative Management process

Management is a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling to determine and accomplish stated objectives by the use of human being and other resources

The Process of management involves the determination of objectives and putting them

into action. The process can be understood in the following diagram namely;

Diagram of cooperative management process



Enhancing Co-operative Autonomy in cooperative enterprise.

The means of bringing more autonomy in co-operative enterprises are

1. Effective education of cooperative membership before organizing cooperatives
2. Discriminate financing to cooperatives without strings attached to them
3. Withdrawal of government officials in a phased manner without effecting its smooth functioning
4. Training of the society personnel on managerial skill to take over the positions left by government officials
5. Developing cooperative leadership both in first line and the second line within the cooperative membership
6. Removing legislative restrictions on cooperative autonomy

7. Restricting government involving to the minimum and leaving the rest to the people in the movement

Enhancement of Cooperative Leadership

Cooperative Leadership consists of the capacity to shoulder the responsibility and to carry it out.

Qualities of cooperative leadership are as follows:

- Good Character
- Good Intelligence
- Good Temperament
- Imbibing the idea of Dedication
- Must be Courageous
- Must have Broad – Vision / Wider vision
- Must have Clarity
- Must have Common sense

Pitfall of Cooperative Education and Training:

- Most of the cooperative education and training programme / schemes/ plans are not well drafted, designed and implemented
- Most of it are not fully appreciated and recognized by various organizations
- Many persons are not joining in the courses with willingness and urge
- There is absence of sound and scientific organization set-up to implement the scheme and plans of their educational and training programmes
- The Educational and Training infrastructure are very poor
- Member educational programme is not well linked to other programmes
- The financial support, grand-in-aid, is not adequate to meet their requirements of the educational and training programmes
- The duration of the courses are some time lengthy and lessons prescribed are not in tune with the modern changing business environment

Factors affecting Cooperatives Development in Rwanda

Different factors play a critical role in cooperative growth, development and progress. Such factors include but are not limited to what is always referred to as 7Ms.

- Man** (Human resource management and Human resource capital);
- Money**(Financial Management, Cooperative accounting systems, cooperative audit and accounting systems);
- Machines** (Technology and Equipment, Tools & Other

gadgets and also Upgrading of old technologies) focusing on thrust areas of cooperatives and frontiers of cooperatives in which such machines are being used.

- Markets**(Produce what we can sell rather than selling what we produce);
- Milieu/Environment** (Emphasize liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). Consider the role of WTO standards especially sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures.
- Mood** (Behavior, perception, attitude, skills and knowledge of employees) with clear focus soft skills.
- Motivation** (Motivate employees to go for training example those who do not need to be re-trained and are even adamant).

Desirability of Cooperative Education and Training

According to J.S. Mill “Education is desirable for a mankind, it is life’s necessity for cooperation”.

Cooperative education is of paramount importance for the cooperative movement. That is why from the time of Rochdale pioneers insisted that; education is prime principle of cooperation. Cooperative education creates awareness among the people. It helps the members and leader to know and understand the cooperative institution at all the levels. Therefore, the training and education of members and leaders is of vital importance.

Thus, the term cooperative education refers to all the programs which seeks to increase the knowledge and understanding of the members and leaders of the cooperative

institutions as far as the principle objectives; of cooperatives are concerned. Education of leaders and, members with regard to current problems should. Therefore be, a continuing process. Cooperative training refers to all the institutions. It enables to improve the knowledge, skills and creativity and also enables them to adjust to the socio-political environment thereby contributing to the improvement and rationalization of such environment.

Purpose of Cooperative Training

Training is the method of introducing a new employee into the organization with a view to gaining his confidence and developing in him a sense of cooperation. Both these factors, in turn, promote good morale in the organization the effective functioning of any organization requires that employees learn to perform their jobs at a satisfactory level of proficiency.

Training refers to the teaching leaning activities carried on for the primary purpose of helping members of an organization to acquire and apply the knowledge skills abilities and attitudes needed by that organization.

The role of academic and training institutions can be envisaged in two different ways, namely;

1. Academic institutions (Colleges and Universities) through curriculum design especially for the young people in primary and secondary schools. Through an approach often referred to as “**catch them young**” and turn them into cooperators before forming a cooperative institutions;
2. Role of training process in promoting or enhancing cooperative

development can be part and parcel of growth and sustainability in the twenty first century.

The role of Academic and Training Institutions in Cooperative development would broadly be embraced in the following areas:

- Training/Teaching;
- Coaching;
- Mentoring;
- Orientation and Career guidance.

Enhancement of cooperative Management and administration for sustainable growth and development in business, are due to the following factors namely:

- Cooperative Business Environment is affected due to increasing severe competition.
- Complexity of Technological innovations and dissemination in cooperative business
- Rapid higher Growth of technological instruments and simplification of operations
- Freedom at national and international market level
- Growing computerized information communication and technology
- Growing competition in business
- Rivalry for markets power, progress.
- Growing competitors programmes making business difficult to manage leading to complexity of growing competition.
- Increasing size of business organization
- High degree of division of labour and specialization
- Increasing government regulations and controls to make business more social oriented institutions.

- Organized union activities and attitudes to put pressure on management
- Pressure of various conflicting interest groups to meet their demands for organization
- All these factors demand more and high level of efficiency in the cooperative management process. Hence, there are imperative needs to apply sound and better management practices, strategies, standardizes principles and practices.

Training/ Teaching

Teaching and training have to work in tandem. Although teaching and training may be thought of as the same thing, but they, in fact, have many differences. Teaching is typically defined as, "to cause to know something, to guide the studies of, to impart knowledge or to instruct by example, precept or experience." Training seeks "to form by instruction, discipline or drill" or "to make prepared for a test or skill." Training usually has a more specific focus than teaching, which seeks to instill a deeper knowledge over a longer period of time. Training, on the other hand, seeks to help people master a specific skill, or skill set, until they are able to execute it efficiently. Training is usually a one-time or short-term event, as with job training.

What is meant by training?

Training refers to a programme that facilitates an employee to perform the job effectively through acquiring increased knowledge and skills.

Proctor and Thornton define training as, "the intentional act of providing means for learning to take place".

According to Planty, M.C. Cord and Efferson, "training is the continuous, systematic development among all levels of employees of that knowledge and those skills and attitudes which contribute to their welfare and that of the company".

Elements of Training

The effective training programme has the following features:

- i. Continuous process;
- ii. Effective utilization of existing knowledge and skills;
- iii. Expanding the present knowledge and skills for future requirements;
- iv. Helping the employee to find his present position and preparing him to accept greater responsibilities.

Importance and Need for Training

The importance and need for training arises on account of the following reasons:

1. *Non-availability of trained personnel:* It is very difficult to find fully trained workers for all categories and levels of an organization. The organization selects the persons who having little training or no training. Adequate training will be given by the employers themselves to the untrained workers.
2. *Suitability for the job:* A worker is assigned a job for which he is not trained. Then a need arises for giving the same special training to the concerned worker. All types of training are not provided in the vocational school. Supplement

training is also essential to the worker on the basis of the peculiarity of the job.

3. *Getting the knowledge by latest methods*: The rapid development of science and technology has made it necessary to give training to the workers. The reason is that the worker might have been trained in any one of the methods. It will be useful for a certain period. Further training is essential due to the innovation and invention of new methods. If proper training facilities are not available to workers, the organization will face the danger of closing down the business. The adoption of old methods results in increasing administration expenses and other expenses making it difficult to survive the competition. So, adequate training is essential in latest methods.

Objective of Training

- *To integrate and consolidate management*
- *To impart and maintain the vitality of the organization as a whole and morale of its employees.*
- *To improve job performance, ensure adaptation to change and generally increase productivity*
- *To fulfill the human desire and the need to develop*

Training inputs

There are three basic types of inputs. They are

1. *Skills* : Training an employee for a particular skill is undertaken to enable him to be more effective on the job

2. *Attitudes*: Through orientation programmes, organizations develop attitudes in new employees which are favorable towards the achievement of organizational goal
3. *Knowledge*: Training aimed at imparting knowledge to employees in the organization provides for understanding of all the problems of modern industry. Therefore, knowledge related to quality of the product are imparted through training.

Areas of Training

- *Training in cooperative policy and procedures*
- *Training in concerned skills*
- *Human Resource Management Training*
- *Training in Problem solving / handling strategies*
- *Managerial and supervisory*
- *Apprentice Training*
- *Training in communication*
- *Training in financial management*

Training in personnel management

Training is an integral part of personnel management. According to M.D. Mikhilias defined "Training as the preplanned and timely presented set of events designed to initiate actives and support learning in a human learner". Training provides for leverage the managerial skills and obtains the knowledge and develops the positive attitude for development of cooperative sector.

Types of Training

Training is provided to those persons who are eager to take training. Next, training is provided to those persons who have to

undergo the training. In this way, training is provided to employees whenever a need arises. This type of training results in the attainment of the desired objectives in a better way. Training methods can be devised according to the mental caliber of personnel in any organization and the importance of on the job training.

According to the importance of on the job training, the various types of training are given below:

(a). On-The-Job Training

- On specific job
- Rotation of position
- Special projects
- Apprenticeship.

(b). Off-The- Job Training

- Special courses and lectures.
- Conferences
- Case study
- Role playing
- Management games
- Brainstorming
- Transactional analysis.

Basic methods of Cooperative Training

- Public Lecture
- Conference
- Demonstration
- Study assignment and
- Group Discussion

Cooperative methods of Education and Training for leaders

- Publications and publicity materials
- Films on cooperatives produced by different organizations

- Other audio – visual aids – posters / pictures / film strips
- Radio Broadcast – weekly program, discussion and drama rather than lectures, Rural forums / Daily programmes
- Women and youth education programme - cooperative education implemented through women and youth and advisory board constituted for internship and integrative programmes
- Conference, seminars / workshops / symposium with other educational institutions in various field of cooperative management and administration in various educational institutions to impart knowledge and developing attitudes and leadership towards development of cooperatives.
- Study tour - for members / leaders / Employees to various successful and importance, gain practical knowledge to rectify various programme, motive and guide for running cooperatives successfully
- Cooperative publicity and propaganda and rally
- Exhibition
- Special pamphlet / Booklets / Leaflet / Cooperative Journals / ICA published regional bulletin

Curriculum, Design and Development

- Cooperation as a discipline or subject in social sciences or humanities
- Preparation of syllabuses
- Course preparation to be need-based

Coaching and its importance in Cooperative Development

What is "Coaching?"

Coaching is the process of helping people develop their capacity to think about things (such as problems, people, relationships, customers, products, services, the future) in new and creative ways so that they can accomplish what they really want to accomplish.

Coaching has an enormously important role in the building and sustaining of great organizations and extraordinary workplaces. People who want to accomplish great things often get stuck along the way. Coaching helps people get un-stuck. An example of this is that while many leaders, executives, and managers in organizations seem to "know" intuitively what they need to do to move forward, few of them actually follow through because they're stuck in some way. Coaching helps people focus on the things that are contributing to their being stuck, and then move beyond them.

A successful coaching process and experience involves several elements:

- An individual/group/team freely requesting/choosing to be coached and making themselves "coachable"
- A fully competent coach who is fully committed to the success of this person/group/team
- Clarity and a clear sense of urgency by the individual/group/team about a commitment to something specific and big
- A choice and commitment to continue learning through discipline and practice.

Mentorship and its importance in Cooperative Development

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is an effective method of helping inexperienced individuals develop and progress in their profession. Extension staffs have many opportunities to mentor volunteers and other community partners. The keys to establishing a successful mentoring relationship include creating a relationship of trust, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, establishing short- and long-term goals, using open and supportive communication, and collaboratively solving problems.

There are many benefits to successful mentoring relationships.

- i. Mentees are able to learn and grow under the mentor's guidance.
- ii. Mentees are able to experiment with creative solutions to problems within a safe and supportive environment.
- iii. Mentees become stronger and more intentional in their teaching.

Orientation and Career Guidance

Guidance in educational and career orientation has long been neglected within Rwandan education. This leads to less successful study and career choices of students in secondary education. The choices do not take into account the individual competences of the students. There is also a mismatch between the focus of the education system and the competences that are demanded by the labour market.

Part of the problem is low awareness of the importance of technical and vocational education and gender stereotypes persist towards career selection. Students, parents and teachers are often unaware of the potential of technical and vocational education in terms of employment opportunities and improving living

conditions. Consequently, most of them opt for general secondary education.

Conclusion

The role of Academic Institutions and Cooperative Education and Training plays a vital role to enhance the cooperative management and administration in all the

levels. Cooperative education and training are not only merely creating the awareness on this particular subjects, rather it develops the personality, positive attitudes, self-confidences, improve wider knowledge, high degree of managerial skills, problem solving skills, financial handling strategies, plans drafting skills, Human Resource managerial skills and enhance Government relational tactics in the fast changing world.

EDGAR PARNELL'S PRAYER FOR CO-OPERATIVES!

God save Co-operatives:

Keep them from

- *Academics who wish to pull them apart to see how they work;*
- *Professionals who believe that nothing can be achieved by ordinary men and women;*
- *Advisers who never tire of finding new problems but never have time to solve any;*
- *Managers who want a Co-operative to work for them rather than them to work for it;*
- *Politicians who seek to use the Co-operatives as their stepping stone to power;*
- *Governments that will bury them in bureaucracy;*
- *Peddlars of Dogma who try to make them fit their view of the world and will not accept Co-operatives as economic enterprises (sic);*
- *Investors who would take them over and cash in their assets.*

Help them to deliver benefits working in the interests of their members without transgressing the rights of those outwith the Co-operative.

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