

ICA DGRV ILO CONFERENCE APPROACHES TO CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING
The Experience of the Moshi University College of Cooperative and Business Studies

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1.0 Introduction

Tanzania is a rural micro-agricultural country. Seventy four percent of the 34 million population is rural and depends largely on small-scale agriculture. The state of technology in agriculture is still poor, posing a major constraint against widening and deepening investment in that sector. The predominance of the agricultural sector has historically been associated with cooperative marketing organization. But apart from agro-marketing cooperatives, other types of cooperatives emerged in the financial services, industrial production and consumer retail and wholesale business sectors. The effectiveness of cooperatives in addressing poverty, among other things, depends on education and training, directed to the members, the committee, the staff, managers and cooperative promotion officers.

Cooperative training alone however, does not generate effective cooperative movement. Cooperative training must be supported by the cooperative institutional context where apart from the training delivery institutions, government, other cooperative support institutions and cooperatives themselves are all geared to support training. Secondly, the process of change in the cooperative movement itself, demand cooperative training. At the advent of liberalization and competition, cooperative training was subordinated to survival strategies. Strategies to carry out any money earning business were seen to be more important than cooperative training. Third, is the structure of the cooperative movement itself. The structure consists of members as individuals, the nature of their association as members of the cooperative organization and the nature of the business they are carrying out through the cooperative organization. Apart from this level at the primary society, the cooperative movement is usually structured in a tier system of vertically linked levels, from primaries, secondary organizations, apex bodies and federations. The structure of cooperative organizations must be in a position to accept cooperative training as an input into the improvement of performance of cooperative organisations, both from perspectives of the internal as well as the national structures.

In this presentation we want to share the experience of cooperative training approaches in Tanzania and make brief observations on their effectiveness. We shall first discuss important concepts of cooperative education, training and human resources in general. Then we shall discuss the approaches which have been put into practice by the Moshi University College in Tanzania and finally the challenges for cooperative education and training.

2.0 Conceptual Framework

Training in general is the process of acquisition of specific skills needed by the individual, in order to perform a certain function in development. Cooperative training therefore, is the process of acquisition of cooperative management and development skills to enable the individual enhance their performance in cooperative development work. Approaches to cooperative training consist of the totality of ways, means structures, methods and processes of making cooperative management skills, effectively delivered to those who need them.

There are two major sources of cooperative training: the institutionalized and non-institutionalized training. The institutionalized cooperative training is designed and delivered by formerly registered institutions whose core function is training. The Moshi University College offers institutionalized training because it was established to deliver cooperative training and education as its core functions. In institutionalized training, the methods of delivery are more structured and graduated. One measures their achievements by moving from one stage to another in the attainment of qualifications. It is more objective-driven more structured, long-term and methodological. It is geared at the creation of long-term skills for sustained long-term organizational development for cooperatives movement.

Non- institutionalized training is usually offered at places of work inside cooperative organisations themselves. It is usually short term and tailor-made to meet certain specific training objectives or involve particular organizational problems. Non- institutionalized training cannot be suitable for institutionalized training. It is of a short-term nature and more geared towards the generation of individual competences in the short run to meet immediate training needs.

According to Carlson (1962), cooperative education and training are differed to meet important aspects of the cooperative movement. First, is the development of competences and capacities on creativity, innovation, capacity for trading and general knowledge in the functioning of markets. This can be offered institutionally as well as in open-ended systems of non-institutionalized training. The second aspect of cooperative training is the one geared for the production of different categories of professional people in the cooperative movement. This specialized training can only be carried out institutionally.

Institutionally developed human resources Is the amount of human capital in the cooperative movement, with the ability to design new and adaptable systems for a competitive cooperative enterprise system It is needed to improve the quality of organizational performance and output. In order for cooperative education and training to be more relevant and effective, it must be demand oriented but above all, it must be well coordinated nationally.

Lack of coordination creates three problematic planning scenarios (Chambo: 2006) First, institutionalized training may outgrow national cooperative requirements. When this happens, cooperative education and training becomes redundant. But sometimes the growth of the cooperative movement may become higher than the existing competences of the institutional training. Here, the movement may design non-institutionalized training programs which may be irrelevant and costly. Thirdly, the movement may be small but under pressure of growth, while the institutional training facility is also small. Here, both the movement and training institutions are in a crisis situation and need help from outside.

3.0 Approaches to Cooperative Training

For the cooperative movement, cooperative training is a complex issue because both institutionalized and non-institutionalized training must be offered at different levels of the cooperative movement. In the delivery of cooperative training to the cooperative movement, the Moshi University College formerly the Cooperative College Moshi, has followed the following principles:

- Getting the members into entrepreneurship.
- Getting the right methods and processes of delivery.
- Getting the best educational processes for group action.
- Students to acquire theoretical and practical skills of managing large and small people-owned enterprises.

Over the past 43 years of its existence, the College has made use of five approaches to cooperative training in its residential and field programmes. The approaches have always been guided by central themes linking classroom theory and field practice.

3.1 Between 1963 to 1970: Getting Practical Knowledge

During this period, Tanzania had a vibrant marketing cooperative movement which was economically effective. The main approaches used in cooperative training were:

- (a) A mixture of centralized classroom training of short courses followed by long periods of practice. As most students came from the cooperative movement, the short courses were used to impart the appropriate skills for them to be able to manage the operations of agricultural marketing cooperative societies.
- (b) The same style was used for government cooperative officers. But the officers recruited from secondary schools, started to work in the field first under the supervision of long experienced Cooperative Officers and later went for long field practice. While the primary society managers went for three months training, the Cooperative Officers had six months training after they worked in the field for three months.
- (c) Field intervention programmes were managed through the Cooperative Education Centre included- correspondence courses, radio, and study circle groups. All these were programmes education designed at the headquarters.

3.2 Between 1970 to 1980: Theory Practice Theory

During this period, policies influencing the cooperative movement changed. The statist model of cooperative policy and legislation came in. At the same time higher education was expanding and major approaches to cooperative training drastically changed.

- a. Long courses were expanded to include a two-year Diploma course.
- b. The first year was more used for theoretical training in standard but relevant subjects such as economics, statistics, accountancy, marketing, cooperation and management. During the second year, students would go for field assignments where they would work in cooperatives.

The main approach here was theory > practice > theory. The second year would start with theoretical training for three months followed by two months of field training and finally completing with four months of theoretical training.

This course would produce the managers, accountants and cooperative development personnel. But during this period, as government influence, became predominant, cooperative unions were disbanded while the Cooperative Development Department remained. College graduates from the disbanded cooperative unions had to seek employment in alternative public and private sector commercial organizations.

- c. Field training continued through the radio, correspondence courses and study circles. Although field training received international funding, the training approaches remained top-bottom, receiving declining numbers of course participants.

Declining performance of cooperatives questioned the validity and relevance of cooperative education and training. During this period, the cooperative structure, the cooperative process and the whole institutional framework for cooperatives was under the government and political influence of the ruling party. Under such circumstances, whatever form of cooperative education and training, it would have very marginal effect on the performance of the cooperative movement.

3.3 The Era of People's Participation: 1980 to 2006

Our collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, through the People's Participation Programme opened a new chapter in our approaches to cooperative training. The People's Participation Project sent the College into the field again and started to work with small farmers and fishermen. The project opened a real window of opportunity because trainers would go to the villages and discuss with farmer groups about their development potential, their competence and the gaps which needed external educational and training intervention. Small farmers showed great potential to manage their own development.

The experience of this programme, made the College re-think about the future of cooperative education and training through the popular use of participatory approaches and methods in both residential courses and field programmes.

i. Training in Cooperative Principles 1989

This was another collaborative training approach with the FAO and thanks to Bern Harms who assisted us in propelling this programme of transforming the intervention skills of cooperative officers to institutionalize participatory cooperative development.

The approach used participatory methods but aimed at enhancing the promotional skills of cooperative officers. It mainly covered two weeks of classroom, three weeks of field work assignments and finally two weeks classroom where field reports were discussed, sharpening the intervention skills and action plans developed for a new phase of intervention.

ii. Comprehensive Participatory Training Programme

From short Training in Cooperative Principles project, the College developed a more comprehensive approach known as Comprehensive Participatory Training Programme.

It made use of flexibility principles in the application of participatory methods. It maintained the sandwich approach and attached to it the action planning phase aspects of follow-up, monitoring and evaluation. A part from being applicable to cooperative organisations, the CPTP was also applicable to other forms of people owned, democratically managed organisations such as local government, non-governmental organization and donor funded programmes.

The CPTP approach is still the main framework of the University College intervention in all training events in the field.

iii. Member Empowerment and Enterprise Development 1995 - 2006

The College used the statist control period on cooperatives to demonstrate that if left free, members of cooperatives had the capacity to manage the affairs of their cooperatives. But with state control, cooperatives would continue to play the game of dependence.

At the beginning of 1990s, the government initialed the policy framework of privatization and liberalization, allowing competition in business. But then, the statist controlled cooperative movement was heavily indebted by the state-owned financial institutions. With a new Cooperative Act 1991, followed by a more liberalizing Cooperative Development Policy of 1997, the College produced a new programme called Member Empowerment in Cooperatives - MEMCOOP and Enterprise Development in Cooperatives (EDCOOP) as new approach to cooperative education and training.

Member Empowerment and Enterprise Development targeted competence development of the members with the assumption that if cooperatives wanted to succeed the competition, first, principles of good governance and ethical business practices were necessary. Secondly, if cooperatives were to compete effectively, members had to be entrepreneurs on their own right. It was thought that, if members gained such competencies, they would produce good leaders,

challenge the costly structure of the cooperative movement and push their cooperative organizations to perform profitable business. The College implemented this programme in collaboration with NORAD and Norges Vel of way.

The MEMCOOP-EDCOPO programme made use of CPTP approach where leaders and members of cooperatives would be trained in a classroom then they would go to practice at their primary societies and they would come back for a classroom situation session before they formulated action plans through which they were going to introduce changes in their own cooperatives.

The immediate impact of MEMCOOP-EDCOOP in Kilimanjaro was the emergence of 32 primary societies trying to do profitable business of the coffee crop outside the costly traditional channel of the cooperative unions. This experience is of its infancy but the registered successes are great: there is transparency accountability, more money into the members and members demand external audit reports. They are now planning to restructure the union to become a business support organization.

3.4 Community Intervention Networks Approach 1998 - 2006

With the collaboration of the former German Foundation for International Development now INWENT or Capacity Building International, we developed a more broader training approach towards community development.

The College accepted the reality that cooperatives were important institutions for local economic development. But there were also other types of people owned organizations which needed capacity building through our intervention.

We therefore designed COPIN or Community Participatory Intervention. Built around CPTP approach, the COPIN intervention approach starts with the larger community guided through participatory approaches, to carry out critical diagnosis of the community situation, its problems and possible solution areas. Then, in the next stage, the community may identify organizational development as one of the solutions. Then, our facilitators would now take 'them into CPTP proper. We have tested the COPIN approach with regional and district governments with greater success.

3.5 Business Development Approaches

Business Experience Exchange, Formative Process Research, Farmer Enterprise Development and Competence Development Programme.

a. Business Experience and Formative Research

In order to strengthen the position of small farmers in dealing with markets, the College in collaboration with NORAp and the Royal Norwegian Institute for Regional Research designed two programmes to enhance the position of small farmers learning about competitive business. The Business Experience Exchange Programme is a participatory learning process carried out through exchange visits by small farmers. The process is linked to the Formative Process Research where researchers collect data and analyze it with small farmers and from the analysis, they identify critical problems which they need to resolve in order to bring about change in their own organizations. After the research process, then farmers can be organized to visit other farmers who have been facing similar problems. We observed that small farmers learn faster by interacting with other small farmers than if they are taken through a standard classroom session. After the study visit, they can review their original analysis and formulate more effective action-oriented programs for their businesses.

b. Farmers Enterprise Development (FED)

In collaboration with the Swedish Cooperative Centre, we have designed a training approach which deals with farmers through farmer groups than the traditional cooperative organization. This training approach takes small farmers groups through a dynamic business development process. The critical learning instruments are: first, the reconceptualization of the farm as a business enterprise. The small farmers are facilitated through a learning process where they will have to redefine their farm and farming activities from the subsistence cultural frame to a business enterprise, enjoying the advantages of bookkeeping, cost accounting and marketing. They use these business techniques to carry out enterprise selection. The second instrument used is the process and the output of business planning. Each farmer is facilitated to formulate their own individual farm level business plans. Then, the individual farmer business plans are consolidated at group level to formulate the group business plan through which they can negotiate for farm credit. These processes started one year ago but one of the

outcomes of them is the enthusiasm of small farmers demanding to be trained in business planning. But they have to apply and show commitment of meeting the cost of training.

c. Competence Development Programmes

Like the former TCP which we did in collaboration with the FAO for cooperative officers. We have a Competence Development Programmes. In this programme, we are using the CPTP training approach and GOPIN in order to strengthen service delivery by change agents to small farmers. The areas of intervention are the districts where the management team is trusted with making development intervention in the district.

d. Rural Microfinance Development Programme

In this programme, we have four components: One is the training of trainers in specific skills for microfinance development in the rural areas. The skills on the techniques of microfinance development, enterprise development and curriculum development.

The second component is critical formative research to profile the business relationships between rural financial institutions and rural agricultural enterprises. This will identify the critical areas of business finance and the farm as an enterprise.

The third component is the development of curriculum for the upcoming degree programme in Microfinance and Enterprise Management. The fourth component is the development of a reader in Microfinance in Developing countries. The publication will also support the degree programme. This programme is carried out in collaboration with CIDA of Canada and Humber College of Advanced Learning and Technology.

e. The Professional Financial Cooperative Management Programme

This is a distance learning programme for managers and promoters of savings and credit cooperatives on commercial principles. The programme is in seven modules preparing the participants in professional skills for the management of savings and credit cooperatives in Africa. It starts in March 2006 for Tanzania. But the Tanzania experience will shed light on the program to cover the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.

Observations

The reconceptualization of the former Cooperative College into the University College of Cooperative and Business Studies is accepting the reality that as people organizations, cooperatives are business organizations and are actually in business. At the same time, we are opening up and accommodate people who want to study ordinary business administration and management disciplines. But also, up-grading the former Cooperative College into the Cooperative University goes in line with the fact that the cooperative enterprise has become complex under globalization. We therefore need to produce thinkers and cooperative development experts who are able to develop new and adaptive cooperative systems in Africa.

The approach of the College has been to carry out careful reflection of current and future needs of cooperative education and training. The evolution of training approaches over time are a reflection of the dynamism of the College in its struggle to become all the time relevant to a fast changing cooperative movement in Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa in general.

Accepting the reality that education and training alone may not bring the required changes, the College has made use of its legal mandate in research and consultancy to influence policy and legislation to influence the structure, process and the context of cooperative development for the benefit of members.

The College training programmes need conducive changes in policy, legislation and the structure and operation of cooperatives themselves. This means that all cooperative support institutions need congruency on the nature of the strategy for change in cooperative development. To meet these needs, the college has always organized competence development programs in order to update the skills of other cooperative support agencies in Tanzania.

4.0 Challenges for Future Training

There are a number of challenges facing the College in its mandate to design appropriate training for cooperative development. The challenges exist because while training is an important catalyst for cooperative development, the cooperative movement can take the liberty of not having it and the costs will be seen in future. The costs of non-education *are* not immediate but are the best way to kill the cooperative movement *slowly* and *surely*. The main challenge is how to convince the cooperative movement to take education and training seriously and not as a *luxury*. The following are the clear challenges for the future of cooperative training.

4.1 Central Coordination and Implementation

Education and training for the cooperative movement are expensive. While the College can coordinate all the training programmes, it does not have the mandate to make the cooperative movement prioritise training. Moreover, the College does not have the funding to make training happen. That is why the College needs comprehensive collaboration from all primary players to support training for the cooperative movement.

4.2 Predominance of Non-institutionalized Training

As pointed out earlier, non-institutionalized training is just a complement to institutionalized training. The two cannot be substitutable. Between the two, institutionalized training is superior and critical to the other. The practical situation on the ground however, indicates that due to competition in markets, cooperatives have opted for short seminars and workshops against institutional training. The option on its own has marginally helped cooperatives out of poor performance. The challenges are how to make all players in the cooperative movement accept the supremacy of institutionalized training.

4.3 The Cooperative Context is Still Government Driven

Despite the production of all training packages appropriate to the current competitive scenarios in the economy, there is lack of homegrown programme of change inside the cooperative movement. As such, the government is still driving the cooperative movement. In this statist control framework, cooperative training will have marginal impact. There is a need to sensitize the cooperative movement to become a real home for change and accept the challenges of accessing appropriate education and training.

4.4 Research Funding for New Knowledge

Research is critical for the generation of new knowledge and new curricular appropriate for cooperative development. The challenge here is how to raise sufficient research funding to expand curriculum-based research in cooperative development.

5.0 Conclusion

The Moshi University College of cooperative and Business Studies is in the forefront in designing appropriate training programmes in managing fast moving changes in the cooperative movement in Africa. It however needs a comprehensive support from all other players in making training an important priority.

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