CHAPTER 6 : PROBLEMS IN CARRYING OUT THE TRAINING AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

This chapter will discuss the problems encountered by the three organisations in promoting and providing training and education activities for the co-operative movement.

In the previous chapters four and five, we have discussed the roles and functions of the three organisations involved in conducting training and education activities for the co-operatives such as the Co-operative College of Malaysia (CCM), the Co-operative Development Department (CDD) and the National Co-operative Organisation (ANGKASA). It can be seen the CCM is the main player since she is the training institution for the co-operative movement while CCD is more of the regulatory and supervisory body to the co-operative movement. ANGKASA being the Apex, the role in providing training and education activity should only be a small fraction of the responsibility.

However, since the three organisations did make their contribution in this area (training and education), this chapter will look into the problems faced by the three organisations especially CCM in carrying the training and education activities for the co-operatives. The problems faced by the three bodies are as follows:-
6.2 Curriculum Development

From the previous chapters (Chapters 4 and 5), we have seen the different roles and functions of the three organisations namely CDD, CCM, and ANGKASA. According to the agreement at the Langkawi Seminar, 1990; CDD and ANGKASA, generally concentrate in providing member education namely pre-registration courses and post-registration courses to the masses while CCM should provide advance management courses for the co-operatives.

The CDD and ANGKASA do not encounter much problem regarding the curriculum development as compared to CCM. CCM being the only co-operative training institution in the country is expected not only to provide basic member education programs but also training programs aimed at building management skills among the co-operative leaders, (the board members and the committee members) and the co-operative employees. CCM trainers generally faced the problems of having to develop suitable teaching materials to meet the requirements of the non-homogenous groups of participants.

The participants attending the training program at the college came from various background such as working staffs of all ranking, from government and non-government organisations, pensioner, self-employed and school children. In terms of age and qualification; it
ranges from twelve years old to 80 years old and they have basic qualification of standard six to Ph.D. level.

Thus with varied difference in ages and academic qualifications in one class, all the participants usually expect to be accommodated for. A class with graduates intermingling with the old folks with the basic qualifications of standard six, can posed some difficulties for the trainers. They have to use the right materials and teaching methods in order to please both parties. Thus curriculum adjustments in meeting the varied needs of the participants can be extremely challenging for the trainers at the college.

Another problem encountered is the limitation of time that need to be considered while preparing the curriculum. Most participants are in favour of shorter programs and the program planners are normally torn between structuring comprehensive programs that stretch for more than a week or limit the number of topics that can be taught in just three and four days, so that more participants can attend the training programs. Usually the medium and small-sized co-operative organisations respond well to the courses offered by the college. Unfortunately, with limited manpower resources, they (the medium and small-sized co-operatives), are the ones who cannot afford to release their staff to attend the long programs. The need to select specific topics of interest to be included in the short-program can sometimes be mind-boggling for the trainers.
6.3 Training Methodology

Having been exposed to new training methodologies used in the local and foreign institutions, some trainers have taken the initiative to improve the style of teaching at the college. Participative methods by using case studies, role plays, management games and stimulation exercises are some of the examples which have been adopted to stimulate learning. By adapting such techniques, a great amount of time is required for preparation purposes. Insufficient time allocated may result in failure to achieve the objectives of the programs. Thus more time must be given to ensure that trainers gave their best performance. This may sometimes be difficult because of the need for the trainers to do research and other related activities besides giving lectures.

6.4 Audio-Visual Aids

Generally, audio-visual aids are widely used for the cooperative training and education in Malaysia. Before the Training Methodology course was introduced at the college, many co-operators did not feel the significance of using such aids while conducting cooperative education programs. However, with the introduction of audio
visual aids, education programs will certainly be more attractive to members.

Flip charts and green boards are popular aids for the training programs outside the college. The usage of transparencies, films and videos are sometimes not possible in the rural areas where electricity supply is limited. For example in the Land and Development Scheme co-operative in the FELDA and FELCRA. Although battery-operated generators are available but they have been found to be quite unreliable at times. Overhead projectors, films gadget are heavy investment and not many co-operatives can afford. The co-operative college is privileged to be equipped with all these teaching aids but it can do more to provide more effective training programs.

Participative teaching style is appealing to many participants at the co-operative college but yet there are a handful especially those above 60 years of age who prefer the old lecturing method. This may be due to lack of alertness and physical fitness. Thus the trainers sometimes have to combine the two styles, depending on the type of participants attending the training programs.

Another problems encountered while adopting such new training methods is that it causes strain on all the trainers involved not only preparing the course but also while conducting the programs. At least two trainers have to be present during each session so as to supervise the group activities to make the necessary observations and to give appropriate comments after the session. Furthermore, the
lack of physical facilities like classrooms; so as to isolate one group from the other can be a problem during 'peak' periods when all the lecture rooms at the college are fully occupied. The lack of sufficient video recorders and techniques to operate them, while the participants from different course groups carry out their simulation exercises simultaneously, can hinder progress. With the existing facilities, careful planning and co-ordinating has to be done in order avoid a clash in demand.

About 80% of the participants who attended the training at the co-operative college were Malays, therefore the usage of any training materials; which are available in English will have to be translated into Bahasa Language. Therefore in the usage of case studies, time will be required to translate those in English into the local language, in Bahasa Malaysia, which is lacking at the moment. Furthermore, the videos and films used for viewing during the management courses are all in English. Participants have expressed their inability to fully understand the film shown. Thus there is a need to dub these good films into our local language which again require time and the necessary expertise to do so.

6.5 Measurement of the Learning (Evaluation)

The measurement of the learning is lacking in all the three organisations undertaking the training and education programs for the
co-operatives and not much effort has been done to measure the
ability of the participants in comprehending and applying what has
been taught by either CCM, CDD or ANGKASA. However, minor steps
taken to get some feedback from the participants. During some of the
financial courses offered by the college, the participants are tested at
the end of the course to gauge their understanding.

In participative teaching, worksheets are given to obtain
feedback on what they have learnt. Furthermore, after every course
conducted at the college, evaluation forms are distributed to every
participants in order to know the necessary corrective measures that
must be taken in order to improve the program.

However, admittedly, there is a general weakness in conducting
follow up evaluation after every program that have been conducted.
One of the reasons for the non-commitment in this area is due to the
fact that the board members, committee members and co-operative
employees keep changing and it is difficult to keep track of them for
the feedback. In 1995, a nation wide survey was conducted by CCM
to find out the ex-participants response to the programs conducted by
CCM at the college (in-campus program).¹ On average about 80%
indicated that they had benefited from the training program and 74%
have implemented what they have learnt from the college. Other than
that, not much has actually been done to conduct periodic post-course
evaluation.

¹ Survey on the Effectiveness of the Training Program Conducted by CCM, 1995
6.6 Education Planning and Management

There is a general lack of co-ordination between CCM, CDD, ANGKASA. Although a thin line does exist but there is still room for improvement so as to avoid duplication of services and wastage of limited resources. There is also a difficulty in having long-term or an overall training and education plan for the co-operatives due to the fast changing co-operative environment. Only short-term plans seem most appropriate and viable at the moment.

Every year about five percent of the planned programs at the CCM have been cancelled because there are insufficient number of applicants. This may due to some eligible individuals who are unaware of the various programs which are offered at the co-operative college. Furthermore, some co-operatives have very few employees that they cannot be readily released to attend the different courses. Due to this CCM tried to conduct out-campus programs for the co-operators by going out to the districts and villages and to the co-operatives location. This will enable the co-operators at their places to have more opportunities to be trained as time can be flexible to suit their working schedule, for example classes can be held in the evenings or during the weekends.

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2 Fail Academic and Production Unit, CCM
In this context, the co-operative college planned to set up branch campus, outside the capital city including in Sabah and Sarawak and it hopes to place one course co-ordinator in each region. Plans have been submitted to the government for approval and positive responses have yet to be obtained. CCM Branch in Sabah have started its operation in June, 1997.

Till then, the college will continue to work jointly with the CDD, ANGKASA and other government agencies involved in the supervision of the co-operative organisations to conduct as many out-campus programs as possible for the benefit of the co-operators.

6.7 Member Education and Staff Training

Currently there are over four million co-operative members in the country and it is not possible for CCM, CDD and ANGKASA alone to reach out to every co-operatives individual. Thus co-operative organisations themselves must take the initiative to encourage all members to attend at least one session on co-operative education. If the co-operatives do not have their own resources to provide such exposure, they can always seek the assistance of CCM, CDD and ANGKASA.

Ideally, co-operatives should conduct pre-membership programs before individuals can be allowed to become members. Potential members must know the co-operative philosophy, principles
and practices, their roles and responsibilities before they decide to fully commit themselves to the organisation. This is lacking in Malaysia and should be implemented by all co-operatives for long term benefits and loyal members participation and commitment towards their co-operative organisations.

In the field of member education, there is a need to improve the training materials used. Up-dated notes and information must be shared with the members and some films may have to be weeded and replaced with the new ones. Apart from that, the style or teaching methodology should be improved such as conducting a forum, a panel discussion or a dialogue would certainly be more beneficial then just a lecture-style of communication.

The trainers themselves should attend teaching methodology courses in order to upgrade and improve their teaching techniques. There are courses offered at local universities and abroad, INTAN and private training college like MIM for the training methodology programs. While the existing trainers need to improve themselves, certainly more manpower would be needed to help promote the co-operative training and education. This responsibilities should not only rest on the trainers from CCM, CDD and ANGKASA but the board members and the committee members themselves can do their part for their members and employees. It was for this purpose that the Training Methodology course was conducted in the college about
seven years ago. More courses aimed at training of the trainers will have to be identified and introduced at the college.

Co-operative officers and trainers need to attend in-service staff development programs consistently. Besides attending courses offered locally, they should also be exposed to international programs which will enable them to gain more exposure and experience. Upon returning, they could act as a catalyst or be able to share the new ideas that they have learnt. Furthermore, such exposure will enable them to adapt what they have learnt to the local environment and thus improve on their teaching techniques and the materials used.

Cost in upgrading the academic qualification and in giving practical exposure to the trainers and officers are usually very high, thus this can pose as a problem. Since most of the training staff of the college are young and willing to learn, opportunities should be given to them to improve themselves and for the benefit of the movement. However, with limited funds, little can be done unless there are external aids from ICA and ILO.

Since co-operative trainers and officers generally lacked practical training and exposure, there is a need to place them on attachment with the local co-operatives. This would mean that they must be given time off, about three to six months in a year, in order to gain practical experiences. The co-operative college recognises that her trainers cannot be effective and efficient if they do not have an understanding of the real problems that are faced by the co-
operatives. Unfortunately, with limited manpower, this idea of attachment had been shelved a number of times in the past. However the above problem can be replace with research as the benefit of research will be shared by the co-operatives and trainers.

6.8 Lack of Information Regarding the Co-operative Movement the Cooperative College of Malaysia.

The most significant findings of the survey, "Public Perception and Images of the Co-operatives in Malaysia", 3 shows that, "... a sizeable number of the respondents which is about 54% are still ignorant of the fact that co-operatives are self-help organisation, set up by people who have common needs to further their economic and social goals. There is also a lack of awareness of the co-operative values and benefits of co-operation". 4

With regards to the CCM, some of the co-operators and the public do not know what is CCM, her roles and functions. This information is gathered by the writer through interviews and discussion with them. Majority said they never heard of CCM before.

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6.9 Conclusion

The problems mentioned above need to be addressed by the three organisations seriously, especially by the CCM. In the effort to solve the problems mentioned above, it should not only involve the three organisations but representatives from the co-operatives should also be invited to get their views pertaining to the matter.

However, these problems should not be seen as an obstacle in the promotion of training and education activities for the co-operative movement but as a challenge to upgrade this and to keep pace with the contemporary needs and requirements of the co-operatives.