

PD BAYZIL

COOPERATIVE TRAINING AND EDUCATION (635-0208)
PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the project was to improve local management of Cooperatives through increased and upgraded training at village and primary society levels.

The Gambia Cooperative Member Education Program (MEP) begun in 1980 by the Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA) has been successful in initiating a demand for knowledge about the Gambia Cooperative Union. It has helped Gambians better understand how to improve their quality of life through the use of the Cooperative as their own business enterprise. The MEP has reached the capacity where it is hoped that the government's Department of Cooperatives (DOC) can support and maintain the current program following CLUSA's departure in September 1984.

By the completion of the project, the following which are discussed below in detail were expected to have been achieved.

- (1) Establishment of a comprehensive MEP for agricultural cooperatives and cooperative thrift and credit societies (CTCS).
- (2) Trained cooperative inspectors/education with new skills in numeracy, non-formal education techniques, use of educational radio, and cooperative principles and practices.
- (3) Increased The Government of the Gambia's support for Cooperative member education programs.

(1) Establishment of Comprehensive MEP:

At the beginning of the project in September 1980, Cooperative member education originally took the form of village/society meetings and series of broadcasts over the national radio station. In the first year, a technical advisor for the MEP arrived from CLUSA. Twenty-two staff of the DOC were assigned to the MEP which started as a pilot activity in the North Bank Division. Field level program introduction and a survey was carried out by the MEP staff, i.e., Cooperative education advisor (CEA), Cooperative inspector/education (CIE) and the education and training unit of the DOC. Various village and Cooperative member problems were identified together with the training/education needs of the members.

Evaluation of the MEP was done after the first year which coincided with the introduction of the numeracy component of the MEP. The evaluation revealed positive results with some problems that were subsequently addressed.

The MEP started with the objective of increasing the members' understanding and participation in cooperatives. To achieve the objective and assist Cooperative members in meeting the identified needs, four activities were launched: the Bantaba Discussion Group (BDG), the Radio Learning Group (RLG), on-the-job training and Committee Member Training (CMT). These activities were to introduce non-formal education for the Cooperative members and provide Cooperative inspectors/education (CIE) an opportunity to assist in the identification of the felt needs of the groups and guide them toward satisfying those needs. To ensure that the MEP achieved its objectives, there were structures set up at national and field levels which made it possible for the implementation of the program to be continuously monitored and evaluated.

Each Cooperative circle has a general body for the MEP consisting of:

- . 22 Committee Members - (2 per coop including CTCS)
- . 6 Cooperative inspectors/education (CIE)
- . 1 area education supervisor
- . 11 secco managers/supervisors
- . 3 chiefs
- . 1 assistant registrar (AR)
- . 1 field coordinator
- . 4 other local representatives
- . members of non-government organization (NGO's)

Representatives of Cooperative members, extension agents (agriculture, community development and non-governmental organizations), district chiefs and Cooperative societies' staff have these bodies to allow for their direct participation and management of MEP.

The general body is also responsible for making final decisions for all activities and policy recommendations for the smooth running of the program in the area. The circle meets once every six months.

In December 1980, a new structure for the DOC was established to better address its functions. Also identified was the education and training unit at Yundum as a resource centre for the MEP. After the renovation of the DOC office at 14 Marina Parade by CLUSA in January 1983, the MEP unit moved in from the training centre at Yundum, thus giving the assistant registrar for MEP and the CLUSA advisor better access to DOC as well as other resources in the Banjul area.

By the end of training, farmer members became village facilitators (in numeracy classes) and CIEs were able to carry their duties of supervision of village facilitators and MEP groups. Five US Peace Corps Volunteers and ten thrift and credit society secretaries were assigned to the MEP to work with income-generating projects in an effort to make villagers more self-sufficient, provide income for MEP and encourage thrift and credit. Fifty farmer members were selected from the top students of numeracy class to become village facilitators.

An international workshop to strengthen the Cooperative through member education was organized. The workshop demonstrated the potential of Cooperative education aimed at the membership rather than government staff.

During the first half of 1983, after attending an eight-week Cooperative course, 6 students were assigned as inspectors either for audit or education. At this time, the program was expanded to serve all areas of the country. Along with the expanded field effort came the recognition of the need to provide a broader base of education through the use of mass (multi) media resources. A consultant on cooperative communications and development was retained to develop a mass media educational and promotional campaign. A comprehensive campaign package was developed and produced. The final work for the project on cooperative thrift and credits societies (CTCS) came in July 1984 when Mr. Patty Bailey, consultant from the World Council of Credit Unions, conducted a 6-week study including a short training program for CTCS secretaries, PCVs and CIEs. He also presented a final report with recommendations for improvement in the CTCS movement in The Gambia. The majority of Mr. Bailey's recommendations called for a strengthened and expanded MEP.

(2) Train Cooperative Inspectors/Education

Training of the staff was provided by the CLUSA MEP to DOC and Gambia Cooperative Union staff (CIEs, assistant registrars, PCVs, CTCS secretaries, etc) who were or eventually would be in charge of the MEP field and support activities. Staff training was the most important and positive aspect of the four-year program. After training, participants were well prepared for their respective job duties. The training essentially went according to the original schedule contained in the project planning document but exceeded it in many areas, e.g., some on-the-job training occurred within the working relationship developed between the Gambians and CLUSA staff.

In addition to training of staff, the following chart compares actual and proposed project outputs:

Proposed Vs. Actual Outputs

Activity	Proposed	Actual
<u>(i) Staff Training</u>		
<u>Coop inspectors/education</u>		
Non-formal education		
workshops	3	4
Numeracy classes	3	4
Radio seminars	2	2
Committee member courses	3	4
Evaluation workshops	2	2
Coop thrift & credit lessons	2	2

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Department of Coopera-
tive staff:

Committee members trained	3	0
Inspectors' introduction	3	3

GCU staff

Secco supervisors (Coop Managers) seminars	3	3
Refresher courses for Secco Supervisors	2	2
CTCS secretaries trained	2	2

ii. Village Level training Proposed Actual

<u>Numeracy</u>		
Committee members	216	265
Farmer members	4300	2356
CTCS members	200	40
Village classes	196	101
Village facilitator classes	2	7
<u>Bantaba discussion groups</u>		
Committee members	332	255
Farmer members	6440	1905
Sessions held	332	N/A
<u>Radio Learning Groups</u>		
Committee members	100	36
Farmer members	1480	504
Radio broadcasts	208	200
<u>Committee member training</u>		
National seminars	4	3
Area seminars	21	40
National congresses	6	2
Executive committee	500	76

The above figures on farmer member participation are on the conservative side and do not take into consideration farmers trained by village facilitators which would thereby double the number. In addition, Radio Gambia estimates that 50% of the farmers listen to Cooperative radio programs even though they are not members of the Radio Learning Group.

iii. In addition to the aforementioned scheduled outputs, the following outputs were also achieved:

- (1) total rehabilitation and furnishing of CLUSA/MEP office;
- (2) purchase and installation of radio recording studio;
- (3) 3000 slates for writing for MEP participants were produced;

- (4) 3000 workbooks for MEP participants were developed and produced;
- (5) 50 each of the following manuals were developed and produced:
 - Coop MEP Handbook
 - Facilitator Manual
 - CTCS Manual
 - Numeracy Games Workbook
 - Village Facilitators Guide 1,2 and 3.
 - Income Generating Project Manual
 - Co-op principles flip charts;
- (6) mass media campaign materials, including the following:
 - 100 Coop flags
 - 1000 Coop hats
 - 500 Coop T-Shirts
 - 3000 Coop stickers
 - 2000 Coop posters
 - 30 dozen cassette tapes;
- (7) Coop calendars for 1981, 82, 83, and 84 - 300 each year;
- (8) trained 12 Peace Corps Volunteers in Cooperative principles/practices and MEP;
- (9) Financed 3 scholarships for DOC employees in U.S.; and
- 10) DOC-CLUSA personnel participated in 7 overseas workshops.

(3) Increase the Government of The Gambia's (GOTG) Support for the MEP

- (1) The GOTG's contribution to the MEP was as follows:

Year One	=	D168,225	
" Two	=	D185,048	
" Three	=	D203,553	
" Four	=	<u>D223,908</u>	
Total	=	D780,734	= \$398,367 (This is equal to 28 percent of total MEP budget).
- (2) Since its inception, the support of the MEP has steadily grown. Thirty DOC Inspectors now work full time on the MEP.
- (3) The DOC has taken over the salaries of three CLUSA drivers and one secretary. The maintenance and fuel for the five project vehicles purchased by CLUSA also is provided for in the DOC budget.

Lessons Learned

- (1) The project period was too short to achieve the desirable objectives.

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- (2) The MEP had a major impact in creating awareness and skills among a majority of the members involved. This was evidenced by 1) a reduction in conflicts at Seccos, 2) new involvement of farmer members in weighing and 3) a professed willingness to be more active in the management of the societies.
- (3) Farmer members become directly involved in the affairs of their cooperatives through regular active participation in the MEP activities.
- (4) Numeracy/literacy training has proven to be the most successful and demanded activity of the MEP. This activity should be used to kick off other educational programs.
- (5) Gambian field workers are eager to receive training and implement a structured field program.
- (6) Although the field workers were well trained and a structured job set up for them, some lost sight of where they were supposed to go because of not enough field supervision and support.
- (7) Field staff began to lack motivation due to the high amount of deductions made from their salaries for motor cycle purchases and maintenance as well as by the slow payment of allowances.
- (8) Close coordination and working relationships must be developed with village elders in order to assure acceptance of the MEP in villages.
- (9) Many areas of the country could not be covered by the MEP due to the limited number of Cooperative inspectors assigned to education.
- (10) Various factors which could not be controlled or assisted by CLUSA or USAID had limiting effects on the project (e.g. transportation, allowances, salaries, assignments, etc).
- (11) Collaboration with other government agencies is essential to assure a more integrated approach to rural development.

In conclusion, the project established a comprehensive member education program and trained Cooperative inspectors/education. It undoubtedly raised the level of consciousness and sensitivity of the GOTG on many issues (e.g. non-formal education, numeracy, radio seminars, etc.) but it did not and probably could not increase GOTG support to this area. The MEP has the potential to bring about innovative changes in the operation and management of government controlled and run programs.