

Co-operative Member Education for Tanzania

**By
Ngulula, D.M**

Danida wanted to fund a cooperative member education programme designed for the Danida supported rural primary cooperative societies in the Dani da Project Area of Kagera, Mara, Mwanza, Shinyanga and Tabora regions. Before doing so, Dani da requested that a study be conducted to evaluate the status of the existing training programmes particularly the secretaries' course that had been running for the past two years by 1989. After failing to take-off in its original form, the challenge was thrown to us to undertake. Instead of limiting the study to its original form we widened its scope. Instead of covering Danida project area only, we extended it to include the whole of mainland. Even then for reasons beyond our control, the study finally ended in more or less within the original area. Also, the original aim of the study shifted from merely evaluating existing training programmes to an investigation or inquiry or assessment future cooperative member education needs in Tanzania. This inquiry sought to assess the training needs of members and prospective members of co-operative societies in Tanzania. In order to accomplish this exercise, we designed research instruments which were to be used in collecting data. That done we conducted a brief orientation of our tutor/ study organizers who were to collect the data. Also, they were expected and required to conduct a similar orientation exercise to co-operative officers on the instruments and how to use them. These were to be their assistants. Then we took a sample of the cooperative societies we wanted to study. We distributed the sample in such a way as to ensure that all types of co-operative societies were represented. Also, we made sure that they were taken from all parts of the geographical area of study. When the study finally took off, the circumstances within the environment had changed. Thus, certain variables had to be dropped in line with the changed situation. Having defined our area of study, we visited the sample societies physically. Then we administered a structured written questionnaire to respondents who were sampled there and then out of the members present. The first phase of the study left a lot to be desired. Its data had to be discarded. In phase two the researcher himself did the data collection exercise. He did that after conducting an orientation to the enumerators of phase two within the context of changed circumstances. The resultant data was fed into the college computer. It was then processed, analysed and inferences drawn once the report was written. The findings were then tested against the proposed hypotheses and vice versa. The test led to the following conclusions:

- i) Members and potential members of co-operative societies felt they needed to learn something about their occupation and their societies and they chose course-subjects of study pertaining to their occupations.
- ii) The losses in co-operative societies had nothing to do with the recording and keeping of their books of account.
- iii) The age of a secretary of a co-operative society had no direct relation with the performance of that society.
- iv) The education of a secretary of a cooperative society, had no direct relation with the performance of that co-operative society,
- v) The ignorance of the members of a cooperative society had a direct relation with the performance of that society.