

ENGAGING CO-OPERATIVES IN ADDRESSING LOCAL AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES:

Building Strong Membership and Human Resources to Strengthen Co-operatives

By Dr. Esther Gicheru

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Abstract

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Co-operatives are value-based private sector enterprises that are member-based, member-owned and democratically controlled. The primary purpose of a Co-operative is to satisfy the social and economic needs of its members. A strong membership base is the foundation of a strong Co-operative enterprise: everywhere, every time and for everyone. Building strong membership and human resources, not necessarily capital, is the basis for building Co-operatives that both economically strong and sustainable.

QUOTE

“If we had to start our movement afresh and if we were given the choice between two possibilities - that of starting without capital but with enlightened membership ... (or) starting with a large amount of capital and ill-informed members - our experience would incline us to choose the first course”. (Shimelles, 1995).

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF A CO-OPERATIVE?

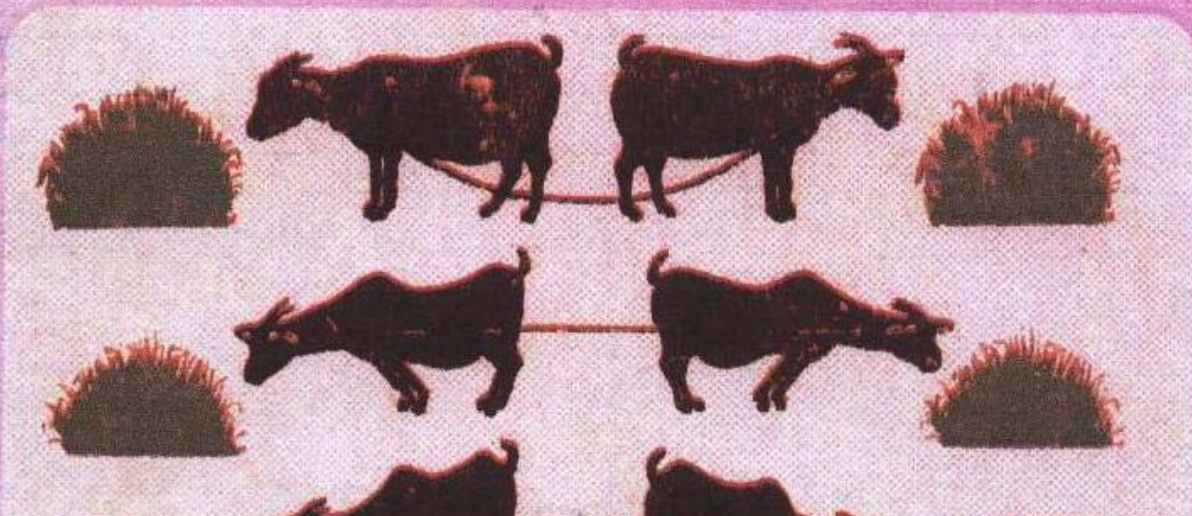
- Membership in Co-operatives may be divided into four categories according to their relationship with Co-operatives:
 1. Shareholding members including elected officials;
 2. Employees including managers;
 3. Government officials who are engaged in the promotion and supervision of Co-operatives at the various levels of the state administration; and,
 4. The general public that constitutes potential members and supports of Co-operatives.

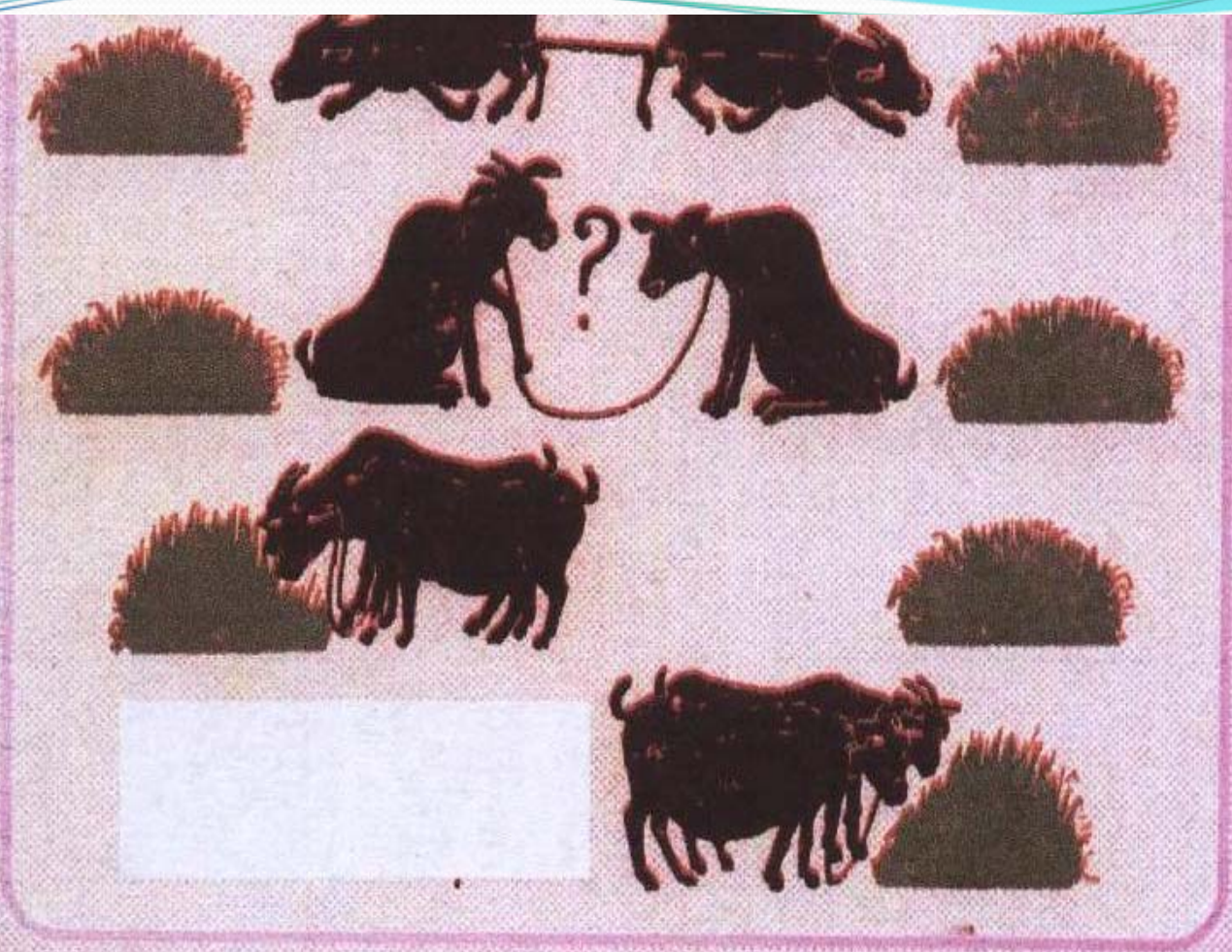
COOPERATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Development through Mutual Self-Help

Co-operatives:

Past, Present and Future





WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN CO-OPERATIVES?

- 1. Clarity and sharing of vision;**
- 2. Participation for self and group development;**
- 3. Commitment to common good;**
- 4. Placing priority on moral character;**
- 5. Commitment to gender parity and solidarity;**
- 6. Practice democracy and equity**
- 7. Basic management and leadership skills.**

HOW CAN WE BUILD STRONG MEMBERSHIP A STRONG MEMBERSHIP BASE IN CO- OPERATIVES?

1. *Continuous Co-operative education*
2. *Meaningful members participation*
3. *Effective communication mechanism*
4. *Continuous human capital development*
5. *A non-bureaucratic management system*
6. *Self-financing Co-operatives*
7. *Effective members services*
8. *Research*
9. *Effective support services*
10. *School-based Co-operative education*

WHAT ROLE CAN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM PLAY TO BUILD STRONG CO-OPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP?

- Offer co-operative education and training as part of the general education at all levels from school and Universities to vocational training institutions
- Establish alternative system of education for co-operative members and the public outside the formal school system (study circles, adult education, distance education, etc.)

CONCLUSION

- Co-operatives are value-based private sector enterprises that are member-based, member-owned and democratically controlled.
- The primary purpose of a Co-operative is to satisfy the social and economic needs of its members.
- A strong membership base is the foundation of a strong Co-operative enterprise: everywhere, every time and for everyone.
- Building strong membership and human resources, not necessarily capital, is the basis for building Co-operatives that both economically strong and sustainable.



Thank You

Asante Sana

Dr. Esther Gicheru, Kenya