



MATCOM

training for the management of cooperatives

international labour office geneva

TRAINER'S MANUAL

STAFF MANAGEMENT

material for management training in agricultural co-operatives

by Malcolm Harper



MATCOM

material and techniques for cooperative management training

The MATCOM Project was launched in 1978 by the International Labour Office, with the financial support of Sweden. In its third phase (1984-1986) MATCOM is financed by Denmark, Finland and Norway.

In collaboration with cooperative organisations and training institutes in all regions of the world, MATCOM designs and produces material for the training of managers of cooperatives and assists in the preparation of adapted versions for use in various countries. MATCOM also provides support for improving the methodology of cooperative training and for the training of trainers.

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ISBN 92-2-102939-5

First published 1981

Third impression 1986 Printed in Vienna, Austria

Preface

This training package is one of a number of training packages designed by the ILO-MATCOM Project to assist people who plan or carry out training for the managerial staff of agricultural co-operatives in developing countries.

The training provided under this training package, as well as under the other packages in this series, is based on a thorough analysis of:

- (i) the tasks and functions to be performed in agricultural co-operative societies in developing countries;
- (ii) the common problems and constraints facing the effective performance of these tasks and functions.

The result of this analysis is reflected in the MATCOM "Curriculum Guide for Agricultural Co-operative Management Training". The Guide contains syllabuses for 24 management subjects and MATCOM has produced training packages, similar to this manual, for the following subjects:

- Collecting and Receiving Agricultural Produce
- Transport Management
- Storage Management
- Marketing of Agricultural Produce
- Supply Management
- Rural Savings and Credit Schemes
- Staff Management
- Financial Management
- Cost Accounting and Control
- Risk Management
- Project Preparation and Appraisal
- Work Planning
- Export Marketing
- Management of Larger Agricultural Co-operatives

For more information on the above training material, please write to:

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THE TRAINING PROGRAMME1. Target Group

Target groups for this training programme on "Staff Management" are managers and assistant managers of agricultural co-operative societies.

Co-operative officers or extension staff supporting the above target groups could also benefit from the programme.

2. Aim

The overall aim of the programme is to enable trainees to make the best use of the human resources available to them and to put into practice all the formal and legal procedures related to the employment of personnel. In particular the programme will enable trainees:

- to describe the formal organisation structure of a co-operative enterprise and to identify and explain the vital role of informal groups within such a formal structure;
- to set appropriate objectives for a society and its individual staff members in order to achieve unity of action;
- to analyse job content, select appropriate techniques for work measurement and to draft job descriptions;
- to apply effective procedures for selection and recruitment of staff;
- to ensure that staff are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities and that necessary information about staff is recorded at all times;
- to identify the various influences on salaries and to select the appropriate payment method for a given job;
- to motivate staff in order to create work satisfaction, to recognise the tedious nature of "easy" jobs and to select ways of "enriching" them in order to improve employee morale and productivity;
- to communicate efficiently and effectively within the work environment;

- to identify the reasons for performance appraisal interviews, to conduct such interviews and to deal with disciplinary problems;
- to identify the role of trade unions in co-operative labour relations and to negotiate effectively with trade unions or any other organisation with whom they must deal, thereby taking applicable labour law into consideration;
- to identify what training of staff can and cannot achieve and to select appropriate training methods and training institutions to achieve increased efficiency among staff.

3. Use

The programme as described in this manual can be used for a special course on staff management. The complete programme, or parts of it, can also be incorporated in the curriculum for a more comprehensive management training programme.

4. Duration

The complete programme, as described in this manual, consists of 31 learning sessions. Session times vary from 1 to 3 hours (action commitment 8 hours). The total programme will take approximately 60 hours, or approximately 10 days, depending on the qualifications and experience of the trainees. A timetable should be prepared accordingly.

5. Training Approach and Methods

The programme is based on the assumptions that training is expensive and that money for co-operative management training is scarce. Therefore, it looks upon training as an investment, and unless the training yields results, the return on the money invested in it will be nil.

On their return home from the training programme, the trainees should therefore be able to show concrete results of improved management. In order to prepare and equip the trainee to achieve this, the programme has adopted a highly active learning approach through the use of "participative" learning methods and a built-in action commitment.

Trainees will not learn about staff management in a general and passive way. Their day-to-day management problems have, as much as possible, been translated into realistic case studies, role plays and other problem solving exercises. Trainees (working mostly in groups) will learn by solving these problems as in real life with the necessary assistance and guidance from the trainer, who will act more as a "facilitator" of learning than as a lecturer.

The built-in action commitment at the end of the programme will give each trainee the opportunity of using the knowledge and expertise of his colleagues in the training programme to find a concrete and acceptable solution to a specific problem he is faced with - a solution to which the trainee will commit himself for implementation.

6. Structure

The programme is divided into 13 topics (see the table of contents on pages XI and XII). Each topic is covered by a number of sessions. The following material is provided for each session:

- a session guide for the trainer (yellow pages), giving the objective of the session, an estimate of the time needed and a comprehensive "plan" for the session, including instructions on how to conduct the session;
- handouts (white pages) of all case studies, role play briefs, etc., to be reproduced for distribution to the trainees.

7. Adapting the Material

Before "using" the programme in a real training situation, it may be necessary to adapt it. This can be done as follows:

Read through the programme and decide whether:

- the programme can be run as it is;
- only certain topics or sessions should be used;
- new topics and sessions should be added.

Your decision will depend on the training needs of your trainees and the means you have at your disposal.

Carefully read through the sessions you have decided to use. Check the subject matter in both session guides and the handouts. Modify them where possible to include local currencies, names, crops and so on. Such adaptation will help trainees to identify themselves more easily with the people and the situations described in the handouts, and will considerably increase the impact and effectiveness of the training programme.

Do not feel that this manual is like a book which contains the only answers. It is merely a collection of suggestions and ideas, which you must adapt, modify, use or reject as you think fit. The best evidence that you are using it properly will be the amount of changes, additions and amendments you have yourself written into this copy.

8. Preparing the Handouts and other Learning Aids

Handouts constitute an important part of the training material used in the programme. They can be reproduced from the original handouts supplied in the ringbinder, after the necessary adaptation has been made. Reproduction may be done using whatever method is available: stencil, offset printing, photocopy, or other.

The only item of training equipment which is absolutely essential is the chalkboard.

Some suggestions for visual aids are given in the session guides. If flipcharts or overhead projectors are available, you should prepare these aids in advance. If they are not available you can still use the chalkboard.

The Pre-course Questionnaire (see Session 1) should be sent to trainees in advance. Trainees should be asked to complete it and hand it in at the beginning of the training programme.

9. Preparing Yourself

Some trainers may feel that material of this sort means that they need only spend a few minutes preparing for each session. This is not the case.

You should go through the following steps before conducting any course which is based wholly or in part on this material:

- a. Read it carefully; be sure you understand the content, and that you can envisage what is intended to happen in the classroom.
- b. Work through all the exercises; be sure you understand them completely and try to predict the errors that trainees are likely to make, and the different answers which may not be wrong, but which will be worth following up.
- c. Work through the case studies yourself, and try to predict all the possible analyses and answers which trainees may come up with.
- d. Look up and write down on the material itself, as many local examples as you can to illustrate the points that are raised.
- e. Plan the whole session very carefully; try to predict approximately how many minutes each section of the session is likely to take, and make the appropriate modifications to fit into the time that you have available. Do not take the suggested time at the beginning of the session too seriously.

10. Conducting the Programme

While using the material, you should try to observe the following guidelines:

- a. Arrange the seating so that every trainee can see the faces of as many as possible of the others; do not put them in rows so that the only face they can see is your own.
- b. Be sure that the session is clearly structured in the trainees' minds; outline the structure at the beginning, follow it or say that you are diverging from it, and summarise what has happened at the end.
- c. Bear all the learning points in mind, and do not forget the job-oriented objectives of the session.
- d. Be flexible, do not follow the material slavishly and be prepared to change the approach, depending on what trainees, themselves, suggest.

- e. Avoid, whenever possible, telling the trainees anything; in a successful session all the points will have been elicited from them by skillful questioning.
- f. If you fail to elicit a particular answer from the trainees, it is your fault, not theirs. Persist, by asking the same question in different ways, by hinting and so on, and only make the point yourself if all else has failed.
- g. Use silence as a weapon; if nobody answers a question, be prepared to wait for 20 or 30 seconds in order to embarrass somebody into making an attempt.
- h. Avoid talking yourself. Trainees' discussion and suggestions should occupy around three quarters of the total time; ask, listen and guide rather than talk. (The more you yourself talk, the more you are revealing your own insecurity and ignorance of the subject, in that you are not willing to risk questions or comments with which you cannot deal).
- i. Never ridicule a trainee's answer or suggestion; there is bound to be some merit in it somewhere, and the very fact that he or she has put forward a suggestion is commendable.
- j. If you cannot answer a trainee's question, or comment on a suggestion, (or even if you can) ask another trainee to answer or make a comment. You are the facilitator, not the source of knowledge.
- k. Write trainees' own words on the chalkboard whenever possible; do not follow the words in the material, even if they are more precise.
- l. Be prepared to act as "Devil's Advocate", there are usually no right or wrong answers to management questions, and trainees must see and understand both sides of every issue.
- m. If trainees appear to be following a quite different track from that suggested in the material, do not dismiss this out of hand; it may be as useful or more so.
- n. Call on the silent and, if necessary, silence those who talk too much.
- o. Be sure that everybody understands what is going on; do not allow the discussion to be taken over by the few who understand.

11. After the Course

Be sure to contact every trainee, in person or at least by letter, about six months after the end of the course to find out how they have managed to apply what they have learned, and how well they are doing with implementing their "action commitments". If they have failed, it is not they who were at fault, but the course.

Either the training was ineffective, the trainees were poorly selected or you failed to recognise problems which might prevent them from applying what they learned.