

Organization of School Cooperatives

By Laureano Avendaño

1. In order to help the teachers in the implementation of General Memorandum No. 130, s. 1956, which is the basic foundation of our school cooperatives, the following guides are hereby issued for the information of all concerned:

A. Main Objectives:

Elementary — Development and formation of ideas and habits of cooperation — Practice rather than theory.

Secondary — Planning and carrying out of activities conducive to understanding and practicing the cooperative way of life.

B. Phases of Work:

Teachers of each grade in the elementary and secondary levels should use the orientation unit before teaching the subject matter.

1. Teaching of theories.

2. Practical application of same as are experienced in the organization, management, operation and administration of school laboratory cooperatives.

C. Problems to be Considered in Teaching:

1. What to teach —

a. Kinds of cooperatives —

(1) agricultural — FACOMAS — Act 821 — ACCFA

(2) non-agricultural — credit union — etc. Act 565 — Cooperatives Administration Office (CAO)

b. Types of cooperatives — definitions, purposes and objectives of each type.

2. Why teach —

a. Understand the value of cooperative in the economic aspects

b. Understand why cooperatives in the past have failed

c. Alien control of our retail trade

d. "Bahala na" attitude — no self reliance — we should trust ourselves to counteract the "bahala na" attitude.

e. The failure of our government to regard and utilize cooperatives as a business scheme to attain national economic development.

3. When to Teach —

a. In the elementary grades — early childhood

b. In the secondary schools — receptive minds

c. College and adult life — right observance and correct practice

4. How to Teach —

a. The learner — Interest the child in the school cooperative movement by making them participate in the task — drafting rules and regulations; formulate, shape and execute their plan; management and supervision of same as responsible owners of their own cooperatives.

b. The teacher — He plays the role of a guide — He should have preliminary training in cooperative principles and practices. He should be interested in the social, educational and economic importance of the cooperative movement as a means to improve the living conditions of the people.

c. Facilities — Reading materials, such as books and magazines. Holding of programs, plays, dramas and cooperative pageant. Contests in theme writing, poems, playlets, etc. Annual distribution of patronage dividends.

D. How to Organize School Cooperatives—(4 steps)

1. The teacher calls all the students for an informal meeting, explains and discusses with them what a cooperative is, its objectives, aims and purposes; and the reason for organizing a cooperative association. The first meeting is informational in nature, the students being free to ask questions. All questions should be patiently answered. If the pupils agree to get together to organize a cooperative, they should appoint or elect a committee of five or seven members to draft their constitution and by-laws.

2. Working committee — The teacher should explain to the members of the committee the significance of the by-laws of the cooperative, and the main points to be considered in drafting these by-laws. Even if there is already a prepared by-laws of the school cooperative, the members of the committee should discuss it, article by article, not only for the purpose of making modifications, but also to be able to answer any questions that may come up during the discussion in the general assembly. A glance at the model constitution and by-laws of the school cooperative will serve to show how educative such organizations are.

3. The committee calls a general assembly meeting which functions as in any other type of cooperative are, the discussion and approval of the constitution

and by-laws, election of the Board of Directors, Finance Council, etc. establishment of plans, programs and policies and final organization of the cooperative. Whenever possible it is a good policy to have all grades in schools represented in the board of directors and finance council, in order to obtain better integration and broader understanding among the members. The teachers should be included in the Board of Directors and Finance Council to guide the young children in this matter. If government subsidy is given the teachers may compose the majority in the board of directors. A representative of the government branch of the cooperative should attend the general assembly to give official and moral support to the association and to arouse the cooperative feelings among the children.

4. After the by-laws are approved and the whole administrative set up organized, the Board of Directors should take steps (a) to put the cooperative function according to its constitution and by-laws, (b) to get in contact with the cooperative supervisor or cooperative agent in the province to set up the program, for the whole cooperative.

II. For practical purposes, each grade may organize a laboratory consumers cooperative which may deal on pencils, papers, ink, and other school devices. The capital may be raised by the purchase of shares of low denominations and monthly savings deposit as a result of thrift. The class laboratory cooperative may be federated and organized into a school cooperative. In this way, a pupil becomes a member of the school cooperative, for six years before he graduates. By that time he must have learned the tenets, principles and practices, the ideals and objectives of cooperatives. Every member is entitled to his patronage dividends and the refund of his deposit when he graduates or leaves school.

III. The teacher plays a leading role in this cooperative movement, hence the necessity of cooperative seminar where they will fully understand the history, methods and principles and practices of cooperation. When they are fully trained, they will serve as the best agency in carrying out the promotion and organization of cooperatives in the rural communities thru the Parent-Teachers Associations with whom they are in direct contact. When the parents have been fully enlightened, they will spontaneously cooperate to join the cooperatives association, which is a strong foundation of our national economy.

IV. Demonstration classes for each grade may be held during the teachers conference to show how the Orientation units and the objectives as suggested in General Memorandum No. 130, s. 1956 may be tried out by teachers in the municipality.

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