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Hans H. Munkner

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POSSIBILITIES AND PROBLEMS OF TRANSFORMATION
OF LOCAL VILLAGE GROUPS INTO PRE-COOPERATIVES
Experiences in French-speaking Countries of West Africa

by

Hans-H. Munkner

1. Problem Identification and Terminology

Unsuccessful Development Efforts in the Past

The new states of French-speaking West Africa became independent about 20 years ago. Since then tremendous efforts have been made, and large sums of money spent, on rural development schemes. Yet, the situation of the masses of the population in rural areas has not only not improved but has, in many instances, deteriorated.

Programmes of community development, "action intégrée," irrigation schemes and "integrated" rural development schemes have generally failed to provide for, or stimulate, the active, mass participation of local populations in the processes of development.¹ Similarly, attempts to initiate the development of a cooperative movement by propagating European models of cooperative societies as instruments for modernization of agricultural production, supply, storage, transport and marketing have been relatively unsuccessful if not outright failures. It is important to analyze why forms of self-help organizations which have been applied in Europe with great success are so ineffective when introduced into Africa. The following points can be made:

- European models are based on some premises which are not present in most countries of Africa, e.g., a competitive market for agricultural inputs and farm produce, which enables the agricultural producers to build up power by organizing themselves and to influence the prices and other conditions for supply of farm inputs and marketing of cash crops in their favour; farmers who decide, as free individuals, whether to form or join a cooperative society, mainly do so on the basis of economic reasoning and the tangible benefits to be gained.
- For a cooperative society in the European sense to work successfully, a number of minimum requirements have to be met, e.g., the members have to be informed on the

advantages that can be derived from cooperation and on the functioning of a cooperative society; they each have to be willing and able to make contributions towards the establishment of a joint enterprise; there has to be leadership and management capability and some backing from secondary societies or cooperative federations.²

- Agricultural cooperatives of the European pattern usually carry out the functions of supply, marketing and credit, and thus are oriented towards meeting the needs of commercial farmers (whose equivalent in developing countries would be the "progressive farmers"); the needs of subsistence farmers, i. e., advice on how to increase production, bearing of risks connected with innovations, etc., are usually not among the main objects of such societies.³

Thus attempts to introduce the unadjusted "pure" model of cooperative society with all its complicated rules and regulations, into a totally different socio-economic setting and efforts to replace the lacking preconditions and qualifications of members by government assistance and secondment of government staff seem bound to fail. Only where systematic and long term programmes for the creation of the requirements for successful cooperative action have been undertaken has the western model proved successful in Africa (e.g., the cocoa marketing cooperatives in Ghana between 1946 and 1959; the coffee marketing cooperatives of the Chagga in Tanzania before 1975). However, these cooperatives catered to the needs of progressive farmers, not to subsistence farmers.

Search for New Strategies

As a result of many failures experienced with programmes that were offered to the population by outside authorities and top-down methods, there is a general consensus among development planners that:

- a long-term improvement of the living conditions in rural areas will only be achieved, if the local population can be motivated to participate actively and with their own resources in the development programme;
- programmes cannot be directed towards the individual subsistence farmer but can only be carried out in collaboration with existing social groupings, local village groups usually being the most appropriate point of contact;

- readiness to participate in a new organization and in development-oriented activities can only be expected where the new activities help to satisfy basic needs in a better way than the traditional ways of dealing with perceived problems, and provided that the proposed new methods do not entail unforeseeable risks;
- organizational patterns which are imposed from outside and from the top down, and which are not in conformity with local norms of behavior, will not be accepted as local self-help organizations in which the local people will participate with their own resources. To achieve that commitment, organizational patterns have to be developed from within and from below; the local farmer must be recognized as a specialist on survival under prevailing conditions; he must be involved as a partner in planning of local self-help organizations, on an equal level with the promoter/adviser;
- local autochthonous self-help organizations are not as static, backward oriented and conservative, as has been widely believed; they are often capable of adjusting to changing conditions and, therefore, cannot be considered to be impediments to development which have to be destroyed in order to make room for more appropriate forms of organization; rather they can be used as starting points for development programmes.

The following discussion provides some specific examples to show how planners can try to develop new strategies which:

- are oriented towards meeting the basic needs of the masses of the rural population, and which stops migration from village to town by improving the living conditions in rural areas;
- make it possible to mobilize local resources for local development;
- take existing autochthonous self-help organizations as a starting point;
- transform traditional norms of behaviour with great care and step by step, and only where this is necessary to improve the conditions of the local people and where these

changes are accepted as useful and beneficial by the persons concerned after having been informed on the new norms that will replace the old ones. This implies that hybrid forms of local self-help organizations have to be created and adjusted to local requirements;

- offer an institutional framework in which the persons concerned can participate actively in planning, decision making and implementation and where they can represent their economic and social interests more effectively than hitherto at local, regional or national level, and build up power vis-à-vis the government and other groups of the population.

The problem is to find organizational patterns which can generate development from inside and by themselves, without long term and intensive promotion from outside. Forms of self-help organization have to be developed, which can be considered as models in the sense that they are replicable and can lead to development of the mass of rural people.

Terminology

There is some confusion about the meaning of the term "cooperative." Some authors (mainly sociologists) refer to autochthonous self-help organizations as traditional cooperatives⁴ and thereby use the term "cooperative" in a very broad sense, while others define "cooperatives" as a special type of western style self-help organization (Raiffeisen cooperative, Credit Union, etc.). In order to avoid confusion on terminological questions, the meaning of the key terms "self-help organization," "autochthonous self-help organization," "cooperative" and "pre-cooperative" are defined as follows:

Self-help organization is an organization the members of which have joined together because of community of interests in order to pursue their common objectives over an extended period of time by improving their economic and social conditions. Self-help organization is used as a general term which covers some forms of mutual aid, cooperatives and pre-cooperatives, but also pressure groups, friendly societies, trade unions, etc.⁵

Autochthonous self-help organizations are self-help organizations which are based on existing institutions and norms of behaviour which are applied by the majority of the population concerned and which have developed over an extended period of time or spring up spontaneously to meet local needs without direct and planned influence from outside (e.g., mutual aid among neighbors, rotating saving groups, groups for communal works, guilds, etc.).⁶

Cooperatives are organizations which undertake joint economic activities over an extended period of time, to solve their problems with their own resources. For this purpose the group establishes a joint enterprise which has as its object the promotion of the economic (and social) interests of the members of the group. Cooperatives are a special form of self-help organization and have, as characteristics, features of a joint enterprise and a certain degree of formalization (registration, corporate personality, by-laws).⁷

Pre-cooperatives are all types of self-help organization which are established with the intention to be transformed after a certain period of time (formation phase, learner phase) into a cooperative or to form or join a cooperative on a higher level together with other pre-cooperatives.⁸

2. Examples of Programmes to transform Local Village Groups into Pre-cooperatives

Official programmes for the improvement of living conditions in rural areas which use autochthonous self-help organizations as a starting point have been undertaken in several African countries (e.g., the nnoboa in Ghana, the fokonolona in Madagascar). For the study of problems related to transformation of autochthonous self-help organizations into pre-cooperatives, the nam groups in Upper Volta,⁹ the village groups for mutual assistance (G. M.) in Niger¹⁰ and the pre-cooperative groups (G. V. C.) in Ivory Coast¹¹ can serve as examples of different approaches achieving different degrees of transformation.

In Upper Volta, Niger and Ivory Coast programmes for the promotion of the European model of cooperatives were launched during the last years of colonial government until the early sixties. In the sixties all of these programmes were abandoned because they were not successful. Thereafter new approaches were initiated.

Village Groups and Nam Groups in Upper Volta

According to the policy of the Government of Upper Volta cooperative societies are considered as important and desirable organizations which are promoted by the state.¹² However, the real self-help activities are not carried out by the few cooperatives that exist in the country, but rather in local village groups which have developed in great numbers since 1966.

There is no official legal framework for such village groups. The Cooperative Societies Act of 1973 (Loi No. 1/73 AN) does not contain any provisions governing pre-cooperatives. There are also no official guidelines for the promotion of village groups, their registration, audit, etc. The Regional Development Organizations (O.R.D.'s) are left free to take all necessary measures to encourage the development of such self-help groups in their respective region. However, an official declaration of government's policy on cooperative development¹³ emphasizes that there shall be no top-down directives on how to organize village groups and no stereotype pattern for their operation. On the contrary, the local village population shall be encouraged to create their own organizations according to their own capabilities and needs. These village groups receive assistance from the O.R.D.'s which can grant loans, provide farm inputs and help to market cash crops. Many village groups work without written bylaws. Under this liberal policy many different kinds of local self-help organizations have sprung up. One form of self-help organization is the nam groups. These groups reflect traditional forms of communal work in villages of the Yatenga region.

The modern nam groups were designed to serve as recipient structures for young farmers, who--after having completed their three-year training at agricultural schools--were encouraged to return to their villages.¹⁴ There are at present about 300 nam groups in Yatenga. Similar to the traditional models, the modern nam organizations are based on age groups. The object of a nam group is to work on the communal fields of the village with the approval of the village council and to apply the modern production techniques that the young farmers had learned in school. Upon request the nam group also works on fields of individual villagers and receives a remuneration in cash or in kind. The earnings are partly invested in agricultural implements, draught animals, etc. In addition the nam group builds and maintains communal facilities, produces building materials, undertakes reforestation works and organizes educational and cultural meetings.

Thus the modern nam group divides its earnings into three funds:

- a reserve fund which is kept in a bank account;
- a fund for cultural, educational and recreational events (festivities and ceremonies such as weddings, baptisms, funerals, gifts, etc.); and
- a fund for investments.

A modern nam group is made up of about 30 members who are young men between the ages of 20 and 35 and young women between the ages of 15 and

20. Following the traditional model there are numerous offices and titles so that almost every member has a well-defined role to play, and well-determined responsibilities within the group. Such offices are:

- the Kombi-Naba, i. e. , the leader of the young people and the head of the nam group;
- the Togo-Naba, i. e. , the speaker of the Kombi-Naba and the organizer of all meetings;
- the Ganga-Naba, i. e. , the messenger of the Togo-Naba and the chief drummer;
- the Rassem-Naba, i. e. , the person responsible for the funds of the nam group;
- the Soré-Naba, i. e. , the person responsible for the itinerary of the group, their way to work and to festivities;
- the Bassi-Naba, i. e. , the general prosecutor in charge of prosecuting offenses committed by members of the group;
- the Tilb-Naba, i. e. , the person empowered to pardon a group member who has been convicted by the traditional village court for an offense;
- the Sam'hamba-Naba, i. e. , the person in charge of contacts with strangers;
- the Manem'Yam-Naba, i. e. , the person in charge of maintaining discipline and decent behaviour among the members of the group; and
- the Limbé-Naba, i. e. , the person in charge of tasting the meals before they are eaten by the group members.

This listing is only partial: there are many more offices and titles in the traditional nam.

The advantages of the nam groups over imported models of self-help organizations are obvious. The modern nam is continuing old traditions which are accepted and understood by every villager. Young and old persons work together for common objectives, tradition and modern development are combined. This is achieved among other things by electing members of the

village council to serve as honorary presidents of the nam group. The nam is a democratic organization in the sense that leaders and office-bearers are elected and tasks are distributed according to capabilities and merits by the members of the group. All members submit themselves voluntarily to a strict discipline. Those who break the rules of conduct are punished, but there is also the possibility that a wrongdoer will be pardoned to re-establish harmony within the group. The nam group serves as an instrument for the continuous education of its members.

Compared to the traditional nam the modern nam groups have diversified their objectives considerably and thereby responded in a flexible way to the changing needs of the village society. The individual member is responsible to the group for the proper discharge of his tasks and his social standing within the group and within the village as a whole depends on how he fulfils his duties. Young men and women work together in one organization. From its internal structure, the nam group is a fully balanced micro society, resembling the traditional social order of the larger tribal groupings of the Mossi.

The adjustments made in the modern nam groups as compared to the traditional nam can be summarized as follows:

- The modern nam group carries out permanent activities. While the traditional nam groups usually operated only during the rainy season (four to five months in a year) and only once or twice a week, the modern nam groups continue their activities during the dry season and undertake numerous functions in the economic, social and cultural field in addition to the traditional work on collective fields and on fields of needy villagers.
- The titles, tasks and responsibilities of the office-bearers have changed, e.g., the Kombi-Naba as head of the nam group has to establish and maintain the necessary contacts with government authorities in addition to his traditional task as coordinator of all group activities; he becomes the president of the group. The Togo-Naba has to take minutes during meetings and to do other secretarial work and so becomes a "secretary" in the modern sense. The Rassem-Naba who is responsible for the funds of the group has to develop some skills in the field of bookkeeping and accounting and becomes a "treasurer." Many of the traditional offices and office-bearers become obsolete while new functions have to be taken over, e.g., trainer of the football team.

Whether the nam groups and other village groups will be transformed one day into cooperatives is still an open question. Nam groups and village groups have established their own secondary organizations at district levels. The draft Cooperative Societies Bill, elaborated in 1980, gives village groups the choice to transform themselves alone or together with other village groups into cooperatives, if certain legal minimum conditions are met, or to remain indefinitely as informal, self-help organizations.

Village Groups for Mutual Assistance (G.M.) in Niger

Since 1966 the Government of Niger has pursued a policy of encouraging the formation of small pre-cooperative village groups with an average membership of 30 to 50 farm families. These village groups for mutual assistance (called "G.M.") constitute the basic units of a nationwide cooperative system in which five to ten G.M. form a cooperative and five to ten cooperatives form a secondary cooperative. In 1976 there were about 5,300 village groups with some 100,000 members, 447 cooperatives and 70 secondary cooperatives in the country.¹⁵ Each G.M. serves as a distribution outlet for farm inputs and as a collection point for cash crops, and as agents for collecting savings and granting loans.

When this "new system" of cooperative development was started in 1966, the IRAM¹⁶ devised special procedures for the formation of village groups and education of their members. Each village group was aided by a well-trained promoter over a period of up to two years. The organizational pattern of each village group was developed in dialogue with the villagers as an original form and was adapted to the aspirations and needs of the local people. The villagers were invited to take an active part in the preparation of the internal regulations and the action programme of the G.M. from the very beginning of the projects. This method turned out to be effective but also time-consuming and expensive.

When the programme was extended to cover the whole country it became impossible to employ sufficient numbers of well-trained promoters and to allow long periods of preparation of the villagers for the development of a G.M. Shortage of funds and of trained staff forced the promoting agency (U.N.C.C.) to employ less experienced field workers and to reduce the duration of information and training periods.

Over the years the G.M. in Niger have developed some peculiar features which characterize them as an adjusted form of a pre-cooperative:

- Collective membership, i.e., all adult villagers are members of the G.M. and the G.M. is a collective member of a cooperative, and is represented at meetings of the cooperative by elected delegates of the affiliated G.M.

- No need for individual share contributions, i. e., instead of requiring every member to make personal contributions in cash or in kind to finance the joint enterprise, which would eventually prevent the very poor villagers from becoming members, the joint enterprises of the cooperative and the G.M. are financed by non-distributed portions of surplus.

Until 1978 there was no legal framework for the G.M. in Niger. The village groups existed in a legal vacuum, which gave the promoting agency a free hand to develop appropriate legal patterns adjusted to local needs. In October, 1978, the Ordinance No. 78-19 and three months later the Decree No. 79-05 PCMS/MDR were promulgated. In effect they legalized the system that had been developed since 1966.

The formation of a G.M. remains easy, the only requirement being to deposit a copy of the minutes of the inaugural meeting competent authority. The new legal provisions require every G.M. to have a general meeting of members (to be convened at least twice in every year), to elect a board of directors and auditors and to prescribe the distribution of powers among the different organs of the G.M. The new legislation has brought some rigidity into the cooperative system. It allows only one G.M. to be formed in every village, only one cooperative in every district, only one secondary cooperative in every province, and only one apex organization. Article 5 of Ordinance No. 78-19 states that G.M. are considered to be pre-cooperatives and are supposed to work in accordance with the internationally-recognized cooperative principles.

Pre-cooperative Groups in Ivory Coast

After bad experiences with a liberal cooperative development policy and cooperative legislation oriented towards establishment of European-type cooperative societies, the Government of Ivory Coast made a new start in 1966. New legislation was promulgated (Loi No. 66-251 on 5 August, 1966 and Decree No. 66-409 of 13 September 1966) which provided for a two-stage formation process. Persons desiring to form a cooperative had to pass through a pre-cooperative, learner stage of one to three years, before their self-help organization could be officially recognized as a cooperative society. According to Article 1 of Decree No. 66-409 a pre-cooperative group (G.V.C.) can be formed for the purpose of preparing the group for the establishment of an economically and socially viable cooperative society through member education and training in methods and techniques of cooperation. Hence, the G.V.C. is a compulsory, temporary learner period with the aim of transforming the G.V.C. into a cooperative society of the European type.

Under the official policy of the Government of Ivory Coast it is the objective of its cooperative development schemes to create structures at village level, which favour the initiative, dynamism and autonomy of the rural population and through which the peasant farmers can be more and more involved in planning and implementation of governmental development programmes.¹⁷ The educational and advisory work in connection with the promotion of G.V.C. at village level is carried out by a special promotional agency, CENAPEC,¹⁸ and financed by international development assistance (e.g., I.L.O.). CENAPEC employs its own research team and developed a special audio-visual system for member education. It also trained a number of promoters and some 3000 G.V.C. office-bearers. While the model of G.V.C. was tested in practice during the years 1966 and 1977, the legal framework for the G.V.C. was frequently amended in the light of experience gained in the field. For instance, the period of the learner stage was initially (in 1966) fixed at one to three years for all new cooperatives. In 1972 it was made possible to prolong the learner stage where three years proved to be too short. In 1977 the pre-cooperative learner stage was only made compulsory for "civil" cooperatives including all agricultural cooperatives, while "commercial" cooperatives were exempted from the pre-cooperative stage.

Differently from the approach applied in Upper Volta and in Niger, the G.V.C. in Ivory Coast is from the very beginning modelled along the line of a cooperative society of the European type with registration, bylaws, entrance fees, shares, liability of members, democratic decision-making, organs and auditors. The only matter in which G.V.C. are exempted from provisions governing cooperatives is with regard to the obligation to keep books. There are no regulations giving the officers of the government agency for cooperative development powers to interfere with the activities of G.V.C.; however, in practice government inspectors/promoters do intervene where they think that this is necessary. While it is the declared official policy to encourage popular participation and autonomous local self-help organizations, this policy is not always implemented at village level, where government officers and local leaders do not fully endorse such a change in power structure.

Like the case of Niger, the extension of the relatively successful G.V.C. programme to a large number of villages made it necessary to over-stretch the available resources, to use less experienced promoters and to cut down the periods of information and education of new members of G.V.C., with negative effects on the efficiency of the entire programme.

3. Possibilities of Transformation of Autochthonous Self-Help Organizations into Pre-cooperatives

Combination of Elements of Autochthonous Self-Help Organizations and of Cooperatives

Social changes in developing countries reach even remote villages and influence the working of autochthonous self-help organizations. Disintegration of traditional social structures and the power of local village chiefs and village social sanctions make it difficult to enforce unwritten rules governing autochthonous self-help organizations, maintain group discipline and the readiness of all group members to make contributions to the village community according to their capabilities. Where such problems arise it may become necessary to replace unwritten rules by written bylaws and social sanctions by fines or expulsion of the wrongdoer from the organization.

Where small-scale farmers start to produce cash crops and to use fertilizers and selected seeds which have to be purchased from outside suppliers, it becomes necessary to change the structure of a local self-help organization from one that is oriented towards solving internal problems with locally available means into another one that is appropriate for establishing more and more contacts with the outside world, that is capable of organizing supply and marketing channels and that is suitable for the discharge of predominantly economic functions. In this case it may be necessary to reconsider the objects of the local self-help organization and to redefine the priorities in terms of economic, social and cultural objectives. Where the decision is taken to place more emphasis on joint economic activities, the rules regarding management and representation have to be adjusted, and the duties of members to make contributions in cash or in kind towards the financing of a joint enterprise may have to be introduced.

As shown in the case of the modern nam groups in Upper Volta, investments have to be made and a reserve fund has to be established out of surpluses and, accordingly, the sums available for festivities and ceremonies may have to be reduced. For certain permanent economic functions it may become necessary to join forces with neighboring self-help groups in other villages and to establish a joint undertaking or joint facilities at district level, for which the required personal and financial resources have to be made available.

Where a local village group wants to enter into business relations with third parties, to apply for loans, to participate in development programmes or to limit the liability of its members, it is necessary to formalize the group, to seek official recognition, registration and the status of a body

corporate. On the other hand, the composition of the membership of the group can remain the same as in the case of autochthonous self-help organizations, i. e., all adult persons who were born in the village and who are working in the village. Where insufficient economic potential exists in the individual village there is a need to realize the economics of scale by joining with other village groups to work together and this does not necessarily imply that the individual members of the collaborating village groups have to come together for general meetings of the joint organization. As in the case of the G.M. in Niger it may be sufficient to ask every village group to elect delegates to represent their respective village group at district level.

From these few remarks it can be seen that it is possible to combine elements of the structure of autochthonous self-help organizations and of cooperatives and to create hybrid forms of organization. Where there are traditional norms and rules which are known and accepted by all members, e.g., concerning decision making in a group, use of the advice of chiefs and elders, settlement of disputes by arbitration, encouragement of participation by creating numerous offices, sub-committees and titles, all these rules can be used as a starting point for the organization of joint cooperative activities. Where objects are redefined, regular contacts with the outside world have to be maintained, economic results have to be achieved, surplus has to be invested or distributed, the structure of autochthonous self-help organizations that were originally devised for different tasks has necessarily to change, some offices within the traditional structure become obsolete and disappear, other officers have to assume additional functions and gradually change the character and the denomination of their office.

Where reasonable traditional norms of behaviour exist that are known and respected by everyone, the introduction of new rules may only cause confusion, e.g., rules regarding a quorum in village assemblies, majority vote and protection of outvoted minorities where decisions are usually taken by the chief after consultation with the village council, fixed terms of office for office-bearers where leaders are elected until such time when they lose the confidence of their voters. At village level such traditional norms could very well be maintained in a pre-cooperative organization until the need is felt to change them for practical reasons. This approach was taken in Upper Volta and Niger, while in Ivory Coast the attempt was made--at least in theory--to change well-established traditional norms of behaviour for instance by introducing democratic decision making according to the European model even in pre-cooperative village groups.

Legal Framework of Pre-cooperatives

If one accepts the idea that pre-cooperatives can be established at village level by combining structural elements of autochthonous self-help organizations and modern cooperatives, this will have important consequences for the lawmakers. Because the norms governing autochthonous self-help organizations may differ from one province to another or even from village to village, it will not be possible to promulgate a detailed set of rules for pre-cooperatives regarding all matters that are normally dealt with in a law for cooperatives. On the contrary, the legal framework for adjusted pre-cooperatives will have to be strictly limited to such provisions that are absolutely necessary for practical purposes while all other matters should be left for the members to regulate according to their needs and to their local habits.

The legal framework for adjusted pre-cooperatives could be restricted to the following matters:

- How to form a pre-cooperative. The formation procedures should be simple and without many formalities, i. e., deposit of the minutes of the inaugural meeting at the nearest agency for the promotion of cooperatives. The law should indicate the minimum contents of these minutes.
- Official recognition as a body corporate as a consequence of registration in a decentralized register kept at the nearest agency for the promotion of cooperatives.
- The obligation of registered pre-cooperatives to inform the nearest agency for the promotion of cooperatives on any change of the president of the pre-cooperative.
- The limitation of the liability of the members for debts incurred by the pre-cooperative.
- Provisions governing the formation of unions or federations of pre-cooperatives.
- Detailed provisions regarding the requirements for transformation of pre-cooperatives into cooperatives.

The members of pre-cooperatives should be offered information, education and advice on how to regulate all other matters of their organization according to their needs.

4. Problems Related to the Transformation of Autochthonous Self-Help Organizations into Pre-cooperatives

The Role of Government

The intention to give priority to programmes aiming at the improvement of the living conditions in the rural areas is expressed in many policy statements and party manifestos. However, the political will to take real action and to make substantial efforts to deal with the problems of the masses of subsistence farmers is often relatively weak. Many programmes for rural development still pursue the object of increasing the production of cash crops for exportation while the earnings do not accrue to the farmers but are largely used by government or parastatal organizations to finance other tasks.

Programmes for the development of social competence among the rural population which aim at changing the power structures at the grass-roots level in favour of the peasant farmers, are the exception rather than the rule. Where such programmes for the mobilization of the local population by means of intensive information, education and advice on self-organization and participation in power are offered, e.g., in pilot projects of the ILO in Ivory Coast (CEANAPEC), in Cameroon (CENADEC) and in Niger), villagers are obviously prepared to participate actively and with their own resources.

Speed of Development

Formation of a cooperative is a long-term social and economic process and the pre-cooperative learner stage is part of this process. Usually programmes for the promotion of self-help organizations of small-scale farmers in developing countries are planned for two to five years. The continuation of such programmes often depends on the approval of yearly budgets and on the political backing by politicians or government officials who change frequently. Assessments of the time needed for such social and economic processes and for the transformation of traditional forms of organization are often unrealistic. Sometimes deadlines for these processes are calculated in the same way as in the construction of roads or buildings (e.g., in Senegal the transformation of a pre-cooperative into a cooperative was supposed to take two years). Only in Niger has a more realistic time frame been officially mentioned, namely 25 years for building up a viable and self-reliant cooperative movement.¹⁹

Cost of Development

Experiences in Niger, Upper Volta and Ivory Coast have shown that programmes for the transformation of autochthonous self-help organizations

into pre-cooperatives and cooperatives can only be effective, where there is an intensive and long-term information, education and counseling programme and where favourable conditions for the economic operations of the new self-help organizations are created simultaneously. In Niger and Ivory Coast the programmes were successful as long as they catered for a relatively small number of villages with trained promoters in sufficient numbers and the necessary financial means to offer education and training over an extended period of time, measured in years rather than in months. In Upper Volta the nam programme is limited to the Yatenga Region. In all three countries the programmes were backed up by an effective promotional agency.

When the programmes were extended in Niger and Ivory Coast to cover the whole country, because the success of the pilot zones had led to many requests for assistance, the financial resources proved to be insufficient. Qualified personnel became scarce, training periods had to be reduced, educational programmes for village groups were cut from years or several months to even several days. This overstretching of resources calls the success of the entire programmes into question and leads back to conditions which in the past had been the reasons for failure, i. e.:

- superficial education and training measures;
- distrust and apathy on the part of an uninformed population vis-à-vis government programmes which have failed in the past, particularly where people are expected to apply new norms of behaviour which they do not fully understand and which they do not consider as useful;
- lack of active participation and resource commitment; and
- inexperienced and non-motivated promoters who have to work under unattractive service conditions and who tend to deal with the villagers in an authoritarian and paternalistic way.

The new strategy of mobilizing the local people for active participation in their own development, the approach from within and from below (as opposed to the approach from outside and from top down) has proved to be effective but also to be expensive and time-consuming. Where governments are unable to provide the necessary financial means and personnel for a nationwide programme and over an extended period of time, non-governmental organizations could step in as partners of regional agencies for self-help promotion and could sponsor regional development programmes for a limited and manageable number of villages, while the different regional programmes could be coordinated at national level.

FOOTNOTES

1. Cf. Müller, J.O. Motivation und Anleitung zur Partizipation bei Mitgliedern von Selbsthilfeorganisationen, in Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung (DSE): Selbsthilfeorganisationen als Instrument der ländlichen Entwicklung, DOK 1039 A, S. 79-68-79, pp. 175-202; Müller, J.O. Bedingungen und Motive für die Partizipation an autochthonen Selbsthilfeorganisationen und Genossenschaften, in Münkner, Hans-H. (Ed.) Wege zu einer afrikanischen Genossenschaft, Institut für Kooperation in Entwicklungsländern, Studien und Berichte Nr. 11, Marburg 1980, pp. 15 et seq.; see also Münkner, Hans-H, Short Analytical Review of Research Results on Co-operatives and Rural Poverty and Indication of Priorities for the Future Research on Co-operatives and Rural Poverty...., Institute for Co-operation in Developing Countries, Papers and Reports No. 10, Marburg 1979.
2. Cf. Münkner, Hans-H. The Legal Status of Pre-cooperatives, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn 1979, pp. 58 et seq.
3. Cf. Newiger, N. Increasing Agricultural Production and Participation of Small Farmers and Landless Labourers through Cooperatives - Some Conclusions from FAO's Experience, in Groeneveld, S. und Meliczek, H. (Ed.), Rurale Entwicklung zur Übersindung von Massenarmut, Hans Wilbrandt zum 75. Geburtstag, Saarbrücken 1978, pp. 303 et seq.
4. E.g., Seibel, H.D. Autochthone Sozialsysteme und participative Organisationen, Ansätze zu einer "Entwicklung von unten und innen" durch einheimische Organisationen und Vereinigungen in ländlichen Gebieten, in Münkner, Hans-H. (Ed.), Wege zu einer afrikanischen Genossenschaft, op. cit., pp. 35 et seq.
5. Cf. Dülfer, E. Aufbau und Förderung von Selbsthilfeorganisationen in Entwicklungsländern nach "Phasenschema," in Zeitschrift für das gesamte Genossenschaftswesen, Bd. 27 (1977), p. 17.
6. E.g., Seibel, H.D. Autochthone Sozialsysteme und partizipative Organisationen..., op. cit., pp. 37 et seq. and other sources quoted there.
7. Cf. Münkner, Hans-H. Co-operative Principles and Co-operative Law, Institute for Co-operation in Developing Countries, Papers and Reports No. 5, Marburg 1974, Third Reprint 1976, pp. 23 et seq.
8. For details, see Münkner, Hans-H. The Legal Status of Pre-cooperatives, op. cit., and other sources referred to in the Selected Bibliography, pp. 98-111.

9. Cf. Direction des Institutions Rurales et du Crédit, Secrétariat Général, Ministère du Développement Rural; République de Haute-Volta: Le Mouvement coopératif en Haute-Volta, sa vie, son développement, sa nouvelle politique, Ouagadougou, Juin 1979, Ouédraogo, Lédéa Bernard, Les groupements précoopératives au Yatenga, Haute-Volta, Essai de modernisation d'une structure éducative traditionnelle: Le Naam, Paris, Centre de Recherches coopératives, EHSS, 1977; Ouédraogo, Lédéa Bernard, Associations Coopératives Traditionnelles et Développement Moderne, Ministère du Développement Rural, DC/SPCCDR, République de Haute-Volta, sans date; Ouédraogo, Lédéa Bernard, Participation et Auto-Développement, le cas des Groupements Naam au Tayenga, UNESCO, Paris, Division de l'étude du développement, Rapports-Etudes, sans date; Münkner, Hans-H., The Legal Status of Pre-cooperatives, op. cit., pp. 33 et seq.
10. Cf. Union Nigérienne de Crédit et de Coopération (UNCC), Eléments pour une organisation du secteur coopératif et mutualiste, Bureau des Etudes et Programmes, Niamey, 1971 (Document préparé par Lancelin, Marcel); Institut de Recherches et d'Application de Méthodes de Développement (IRAM), The Role of Grassroot Organizations and the Involvement of the Poor in the Rural Development, Situation in Niger; Paper presented at the COPAC Symposium on Cooperatives Against Rural Poverty: Successes and Limitations, Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, 31 July to 4 August 1978, SYM/78/07; Gentil, Dominique, The Establishment of a New Co-operative System in Niger, in The Plunkett Foundation: Year Book of Agricultural Co-operation, 1977, pp. 153 et seq.; Münkner, Hans-H., The Legal Status of Pre-cooperatives, op. cit., pp. 26 et seq.
11. Cf. Ministère d'Agriculture, République de Cote d'Ivoire, Centre national de promotion des entreprises coopératives, role, organisation, activités, Bingerville, sans date (1977); Nguyen-Manh Tu, Le droit coopératif en Cote d'Ivoire, l'étage pré-coopérative, le groupement à vocation coopérative, G.V.C., CENAPEC, Bingerville, sans date (1976); Münkner, Hans-H., The Legal Status of Pre-cooperatives, op. cit., pp. 46 et seq.
12. Cf. Direction des Institutions Rurales et du Crédit, Secrétariat Général, Ministère du Développement Rural, République de Haute-Volta; Rapport du Séminaire sur l'importance de l'assistance et du contrôle de l'Etat dans la promotion des institutions rurales à caractère coopératif, du 8 au 12 janvier 1979, Ouagadougou, 1979, pp. 2 et seq.
13. Cf. Direction des Institutions Rurales et du Crédit, Secrétariat Général, Ministère du Développement Rural, République de Haute-Volta; Le mouvement coopératif en Haute-Volta, sa vie, son développement, sa nouvelle politique, Ouagadougou, Juin 1979.

14. Cf. note 9. Dr. Lédéa Bernard Ouédraogo of Ouahigouya, who received his academic training in Paris, is the main promoter and spiritual leader of the nam movement.
15. Cf. Institut de Recherches et d'Application de Méthodes de Développement (IRAM), *The Role of Grassroot Organizations and the Involvement of the Poor in the Rural Development*, op. cit., p. 17.
16. Union Nigérienne de Crédit et de Coopération (UNCC), *Eléments pour une organisation du secteur coopératif et mutualiste*, Bureau des Etudes et Programmes, Niamey 1971, pp. 39 et seq.; Belloncle, Guy, *Pédagogie de l'implantation du Mouvement coopératif au Niger*, IRAM, sans date.
17. Cf. Mémoire du 24.4.1976 sur la coopération de l'office national de promotion rurale, ONPR, et la Banque nationale pour le développement agricole, BNDA.
18. Centre National de Promotion des Entreprises Coopératives, see note 11.
19. Cf. Münkner, Hans -H. Die Rolle der staatlichen Entwicklungsbürokratie bei der Förderung von Selbsthilfeorganisationen - Beispiele aus dem frankophonen Afrika, in Münkner, Hans -H. (Ed.), *Wege zu einer afrikanischen Genossenschaft*, op. cit., pp. 107 et seq. and other sources quoted there.