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WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

**A Case Study of Zimbabwe's Ministry of National Affairs,
Employment Creation and Cooperative Development, and
*Simbai Glen Norah Co-operative Society Ltd.***

by

DEBORAH A. CEILIN, B.A.

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts

Norman Paterson School of International Affairs

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

April, 1996

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Maureen Appel Molot

Maureen Appel Molot, Director
The Norman Paterson School
of International Affairs

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Professor J. Keil, Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Cooperative development has been widely promoted by many post independent African states as one instrument of national development policy. Formal government organizations have been established to promote cooperative enterprises as a means for developing solutions to high levels of unemployment. However, government involvement has often been to the detriment of the cooperative movement itself because cooperators have developed a dependency on outside assistance vis-à-vis the government or foreign donors, or have not adopted the movement as their own. Women's contribution to the cooperative movement has not been wholly recognized because their cooperative activities are dictated by continued patriarchal customs, laws and institutions that view women's labour as peripheral to the formal economy, therefore not contributing to national development policy. Greater emphasis on identifying women's needs in the community and in cooperative development must be considered to alter the present role of women in the cooperative movement.

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Many inspirational educators and kin have contributed to my attainment of this goal, and I am forever changed by this experience. Certain individuals have assisted me beyond my expectations.

Jared Keil, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, silently supported me until I was prepared to prove to him and myself that I could complete what I had started. I am grateful for his patience and his sound advice.

I would like to thank the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperative Development, of the Government of Zimbabwe for the open door policy they maintained during my field research in Zimbabwe. In particular, Mr. C. D. Hahlani, Senior Secretary in Employment Creation, was invaluable for arranging meetings with government officials and in initiating contact with *Simbai* Glen Norah Co-operative Ltd. Mr. Hahlani was always a gracious host.

I am greatly appreciative to the women of *Simbai* for welcoming me with song and laughter, and for allowing me to briefly participate in their rich lives.

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MAP OF ZIMBABWE

INTRODUCTION

Post-independent African states created development schemes to assist in employment creation that would incorporate the majority of the unemployed population into its formal economy. In order to facilitate employment creation, ministries at the national level were established to explore employment opportunities, and cooperative development appeared to be an appropriate method for organizing a large group of people to participate in independently operated enterprises. Typically, individuals were unable to provide the necessary skills and/or capital to operate a small business; thus, the premise supporting cooperative development in Africa was based upon the fact that groups of workers could organize a cooperative enterprise by pooling together their labour, skills and capital when it would be virtually impossible for them to do so on an individual basis. In this respect, the use of grass roots cooperative development as an empowering mechanism for the unemployed strata of the population in the African context is difficult, so government and donor imposed bureaucracies arose to provide the means for developing a national development policy which incorporated cooperative development as one instrument for working toward employment creation.

This study will argue that the present cooperative movement in Africa is hindered, rather than strengthened, by ineffective cooperative ministries, which exist according to legislated functions and responsibilities. These structures were implemented to research and propose employment opportunities that would be best suited for organizing cooperative enterprises; however, the services that they have been mandated to perform have translated into imposing cooperative development projects upon cooperators, rather than permitting cooperators to

develop their own enterprises. Implicit in this argument is the control that cooperative ministries exercise over the decision making process in terms of determining the objectives of the cooperative and the means for achieving these objectives.

I undertook research at the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperative Development, of the Government of Zimbabwe (hereafter referred to as the “Ministry”), to understand the Ministry’s application of cooperative development in its national development policy. I also investigated a women-operated cooperative, *Simbai* Glen Norah Co-operative Society Ltd. (hereafter referred to as “*Simbai*”), to determine if the mandate of the Ministry had been translated into the successful operation of the cooperative. Primary field research was a necessary part of this study because theory does not check itself against the real world often enough and “(t)heoretical work without sound empirical referents is assuming common concrete experiences about which we can make general propositions and to which we can apply common concepts” (Stamp, 1989: 20).

Chapter two presents the method of study I applied for conducting primary field research in Zimbabwe. Interview methods, statistical data and other pertinent methodological applications will be discussed, which resulted in obtaining rich evidence for case studies on both the Ministry and the women-operated cooperative.

A literature review is presented in Chapter three which examines the use of cooperative development in African national development policy, and more particularly, the impact of national development policy on women’s effective

participation in women-operated cooperatives. Literature pertaining to women's participation in cooperative development in Zimbabwe is also discussed.

Chapter four provides the results of interviews I conducted with the Ministry to argue that the operational structures are in place but are not implemented effectively. The move toward decentralization in decision making and increased autonomy for cooperators is mandated; yet the Ministry continues to impose cooperative concepts on potential cooperators at the outset, but does not follow through with providing necessary training, financing or managerial skill development for the cooperators.

Chapter five examines the present tension between the expectations of the Ministry and the actual operating environment of *Simbai*. In this instance, the Ministry has not lived up to its mandate of providing cooperators with the necessary skills for moving the cooperative forward. Thus, the problems that these women confront have resulted in a deep mistrust of Ministry officials, and the preference for carrying out cooperative functions without the assistance of non-cooperative members.

Chapter six will conclude this discussion by presenting initiatives that cooperative ministries can undertake to effect decentralization of the cooperative movement, which will as a result foster increased autonomy within the movement itself.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

Primary field research was conducted from April 18, 1994 to June 10, 1994 in Zimbabwe in order to examine the Government of Zimbabwe's use of cooperative development in its national development scheme. The African country of Zimbabwe was selected for study because cooperative development has been implemented since independence in 1980 as an important employment tool by the government. The presence of a ministry, established to coordinate cooperative ventures, made Zimbabwe especially attractive for study considering the fact that the process for cooperative development is formalized by the national government. In this respect, I obtained supervisory sponsorship from the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation, and Cooperative Development, of the Government for Zimbabwe (hereafter referred to as the "Ministry"), which provided me with a supervisor, Mr. C. D. Hahlani, Senior Secretary, Research Section in Employment Creation.

A. Ministry Research Method

1. Interviews with Ministry Officials

Interviews with various Ministry officials in Harare, Zimbabwe were conducted on issues pertaining to policy, training, field operations and data review of registered cooperatives. The following interviews were held:

(a) Mr. C. D. Hahlani, Senior Secretary, Research Section in Employment Creation, provided supervisory support throughout the course of the entire project by introducing the appropriate Ministry officials who were interviewed, initiated contact with *Simbai* by providing transportation for the first meeting with the cooperative, and assisted wherever else possible.

(b) Mr. Chatiza, Deputy Secretary, Employment Creation, provided the *Policy Trust and Strategy Document* which outlines the overall mandate and responsibilities of the Ministry.

(c) Mr. Matanyaire, Director of Field Operations, provided understanding of the field extension services available to cooperatives, outlined the current cooperative movement in Zimbabwe vis-à-vis pre-independent Rhodesia, and discussed the benefits of engaging in the contemporary cooperative movement.

(d) Mrs. Florence Dangerambizi and Mrs. Pembre, Women in Development, provided information pertaining to the section's role in the Ministry and dissemination of information to the public, and differentiated between pre-cooperatives and cooperatives.

(e) Mr. William Ndinde and Mr. Herbert Batidzirai, Training Section, provided information on training offered to cooperatives through the start-up process, and assisted in the presentation of a film on silk production to the cooperative members at *Simbai*.

(f) Mr. Mike Mavengwa, Senior Secretary for the Registrar of Cooperatives, provided access to *Simbai*'s records held at the Ministry, and provided statistical information on cooperatives registered by year from 1956 to 1994.

2. Statistical Data Obtained from the Ministry

The Registrar provided a very useful document, entitled *Register of all Cooperatives in Zimbabwe as at 31st January 1992*, which assisted me in conceptualizing the role of women's employment in cooperative development. Of the

1,999 registered cooperatives (as at January 31, 1992), only 185 are wholly operated by women, or 9.25 percent of the total registered cooperatives in Zimbabwe. Women are primarily involved in traditional female employment tasks, with the bulk of cooperatives registered as "manufacturing" based enterprises. A breakdown of activities from strictly women-operated cooperatives is as follows:

Table 2.1

REGISTRAR OF ALL WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES IN ZIMBABWE
Breakdown by Activity (as at January 31, 1992)

Activity	Number of Cooperatives	
Manufacturing		
Sewing	89	
Sewing and Knitting	03	
Bakery	21	
Tailoring	02	
Handicraft	01	
Textiles	01	
Dressmaking	02	
Crocheting	01	
Arts and Crafts	01	
SUBTOTAL		122
Wholesale and Retail		
Retail	13	
Catering	05	
AMS	04	
Wholesalers	01	
Vendors	01	
Food Stall	01	
Stall Holders	01	
Hawkers and Vendors	08	
SUBTOTAL		34
Agriculture and Fish		
F.V.F. Produce	01	
CE Sewing and Handicraft	01	
Collective Farming	08	
Silk Production (<i>Simbai</i>)	02	
Agriculture	01	
Gardening	04	

Poultry	03	
Farming	01	
SUBTOTAL		21
Commercial, Social, Personal		
Home Industries	02	
Tie and Dye	01	
Herbal and Medicine	01	
SUBTOTAL		04
Mine and Quarry		
Mining	03	
SUBTOTAL		03
Real Estate and Financial		
Savings and Credit	01	
SUBTOTAL		01
TOTAL		185

Table 2.2

REGISTRAR OF ALL WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES IN ZIMBABWE
Operating Status of Women's Cooperatives (as at January 31, 1992)

Status	Number of Cooperatives
Located alive and active (LOA)	102
Cancelled (CAN)	63
Located alive but defunct (LABO)	16
Cooperative cannot be identified (DEAD)	03
Liquidated (LQ)	0
Unknown Code (CBL)	01
TOTAL	185

Of these 185 cooperatives, only 102 are in operation, while the remaining have been cancelled, located alive but defunct (cooperative is physically existing but there is no business activity taking place), or dead.

B. Selection of a Case Study Cooperative

I initially wanted to undertake a comparative study of three women-operated cooperatives, two rural, one urban; however, after several meetings with the Ministry it became apparent that a case study in the urban setting was more feasible. Prior to arriving in Harare, Zimbabwe, the Ministry had offered me access to any cooperatives of interest, including the necessary transportation and accommodation in the rural areas; however, upon my arrival the key elements for accessing rural cooperatives were reneged. These elements included no transportation into the rural areas, inefficient communication technology with the district officers and rural cooperatives, and lack of accommodation in the rural communities. Thus, I located a women-operated cooperative in the *Register of all Cooperatives in Zimbabwe*, which I decided to discuss with Mr. C. D. Hahlani and the Women in Development Section in the Ministry to determine its potential for study. I discovered this cooperative, *Simbai* Glen Norah Co-operative Society Ltd. (hereafter referred to as "*Simbai*") to be an exceptional cooperative for study because the work undertaken at the cooperative was breaking into a new venture in textile production in Zimbabwe that provided new employment opportunities to women; the cooperative had involvement with foreign donors; it was located outside Harare and transportation was available to access the cooperative; and it was initiated by the Ministry, thus demonstrating the cooperative's interaction with the Ministry in conducting its business. The Ministry provided transportation for my initial meeting with *Simbai*. This is not to say that the process of selecting a study group was not dependent on initiating contact with one cooperative as I made contact with several women-operated cooperatives before determining *Simbai* to be a suitable case study.

C. *Simbai* Research Method

1. Cooperative Property

Simbai is located on the south-west edge of Harare in the City of Glen Norah 'B'. This area is densely populated by low-income families who are typically first generation migrants from the rural areas. The City of Glen Norah is surrounded by large plots of land owned by the City and the populace makes use of the land for personal gardens because they do not have landholdings large enough at their personal residences. Most of the families residing in Glen Norah 'B' lease their homes from the City, so there is very little private ownership of property.

The cooperative is situated in the heart of Glen Norah 'B' on a 13 hectare plot of land. This property is accessed easily by one of the main roadways to the north and a residential roadway to the west. Housing lies adjacent to the property along the west, and to the east, a stream runs north along the length of the property. The east boundary is fringed by a steep hill with City housing situated upon the hill. The only structure on the property that is not operated by *Simbai* is a sewage pipeline, which runs through the centre of the plot. Approximately 70 percent of the land is devoted to maize cultivation, and 20 percent is set aside for gardening where vegetables such as, potatoes, tomatoes, rape and beans are grown. The members of *Simbai* have prepared two well holes for watering the garden. These vegetables and maize are grown for personal consumption by the cooperative members. The remaining ten percent of the land is used for growing mulberry trees, where an estimated 700 trees were planted initially, but due to drought and vandalism, approximately 20 percent of the trees survive. Most of the cooperative work is performed inside a permanent brick building, which contains five weaving looms (one large and four small), metal shelving, three reeling machines, three tables, six sewing machines (four manually operated and two electric) , and gardening equipment. The

cooperative building also has an outside running water tap and a bathroom with a tub and toilet.

2. Interview Setting

My attendance at *Simbai* took place for a month every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. A meeting time of 10:00 a.m. was established by the cooperators because they had family commitments until that time and the operation hours of the cooperative commenced at 10:00 a.m. The length of time spent at *Simbai* depended on the type of activities the cooperators were involved in on that particular day. Occasionally members had to locate transportation to go to the markets in Harare, so we would dissolve our discussion to accommodate their work schedule. Upon arriving in the morning, we would first meet as a whole group inside the cooperative building for a discussion, which generally lasted over two hours. The chairperson, Julia Kunzekwenyika, acted as translator because she was extremely fluent in English; however, all of the members could understand English but had difficulty expressing themselves fully, so they would reply in Shona and Julia would, to the best of her ability, provide a verbatim response. The chairperson was the key informant in the cooperative because of her ability to communicate effectively the ideas of the group. The chairperson also ensured that all members had equal opportunity to participate in the discussions, and the members did not appear to defer to the chairperson as they openly relayed their opinions. During these discussions members would be involved in knitting, crocheting, child care, maize preparing (drying and shucking). After lunch the cooperators would weave and garden, and in this instance they eagerly displayed their knowledge.

3. Group Interview Method

Group discussions offered the best understanding about the management and operation of *Simbai*. Topics for discussion were presented at the beginning of each

gathering, and the cooperators communicated their ideas in turn. Of the 11 cooperators of *Simbai*, eight members appeared regularly; two members were recently widowed and did not attend the cooperative during this study and the other cooperators were uncertain if these women would re-commence their work in the organization, and the remaining member acted as security outside the cooperative building. Of the eight members that frequented *Simbai*, two members typically came later in the day because of family commitments; thus, responses to a few questions were not obtained from these members.

Topics included the members' impetus for joining the cooperative; interaction with the Ministry with regard to training, funding and expenditures, and the cooperative property and building; production; marketing; domestic affairs; leadership and decision making; and internal relationships.

My presence in the cooperative was often viewed as a resource for the cooperators in terms of trying to assist the cooperative with securing markets. Because I was informed of the various challenges *Simbai* had to overcome, they often asked me to go to certain fairs in Harare to examine the products being sold for quality and design. I also obtained a film on silk production for screening by the members and I arranged for a visit by two Ministry training officials, with whom the cooperators appeared to be nervous and defensive about their activities. However, this gave them the opportunity to discuss their training needs with the officials, but I discerned that this discussion fell on deaf ears.

4. Other Methods for Researching *Simbai*

Personal observations were useful for determining the operational dynamics of *Simbai*. The members independently undertook projects such as knitting and

crocheting, but silk cultivation, maize preparation, gardening and weaving were shared jointly. A member's expertise in certain skills was relied upon by the other cooperators, who learned skills from each other. Moreover, specialization in performing certain tasks was non-existent.

Photography was a useful tool for capturing the property layout and the production process of the cooperative. However, it was difficult to obtain technical photographs that exhibited the cooperative property without any cooperative members present in the photograph because they enjoyed being filmed so much.

D. Other Research Methods in Harare, Zimbabwe

1. Mrs. Aspacia Angelikis, the cooperative founder, was interviewed at her home in Harare, Zimbabwe. Mrs. Angelikis offered an in-depth look at the process of sericulture to better clarify the constraints in the training aspect of *Simbai*.

2. Literature was compiled from various organizations and libraries around Harare, Zimbabwe. Access was granted to the libraries at the University of Zimbabwe, the National Archives and the Ministry's Makombe Complex Library (Mr. S. Nyahwa, Librarian). Further, research was conducted at the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS).

The International Cooperative Alliance, under the auspice of the International Labour Organization, outlines cooperative development principles and are utilized as an internationally recognized analytical tool for determining the successful application of these principles in developing countries. These principles are outlined in the *Main Provisions of the Co-operatives (Developing Countries) Recommendations, 1966*, and are included as Appendix A.

CHAPTER III: APPLICATION OF COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Post-independent African states have promoted the development of cooperative enterprises as a tool for achieving national development policy rather than as a means for stimulating sustainable economic prosperity for the participating cooperators. Thus, the concept of self-help has been lost and replaced with a dependency on the state by cooperatives. The literature on cooperative development within the African context reiterates the necessity for lessening the direct involvement of the state so that the cooperative movement can emerge as a people-directed, or grassroots, endeavour. However, this chapter will focus on the African states' application of cooperative development within national development policy. A recent historical presentation of cooperative development within post-independent African states will establish the foundation for situating this model of economic development within national development policy. The benefits of cooperative development on national development policy will be examined. From the viewpoint of the cooperatives, internal and external constraints will be presented when cooperatives are bound too closely to the macro-economic goals of African states. Within the context of African women's participation in cooperative development, employable skills have not been fostered beyond traditional female based labour. The problems women confront in terms of growth and development of their own cooperative enterprises are somewhat distinct from the problems that male-operated, or mixed cooperatives face. These aspects that hinder women-operated cooperatives will be discussed. Further, suggestions for improving African women's participation in cooperative

development will demonstrate that these women continue to be held back because of their perceived inferior cultural, economic and political status and that the removal of these barriers depends on placing greater respect on the contributions women can have in cooperative development.

A. Helping Others to Help Themselves

The concept of helping others to help themselves is widely promoted by foreign aid donors and development policymakers as an effective method for African development. Inherent in this concept is the notion that donors can provide inputs into projects or programmes where the implementors require better understanding, through academic or technical knowledge. In the case of many African cooperatives, governments are responsible for locating and providing donor inputs to assist in the development of cooperatives. According to Münkner, *helping others to help themselves* means:

- to work systematically towards enabling the recipients of such aid to become self-reliant partners rather than to remain beneficiaries of outside assistance,
- to help to create framework conditions within which the policy-makers, planners and administrators of the countries concerned, and better still the population of the respective countries, can design their own models of development, rather than depend on the transfer of models and ideologies from abroad (Münkner, 1988: 187).

B. History of Cooperative Development in Post-Independent African States

In contrast to the ideology held by development planners, newly emerging African states viewed cooperative development as a means to foster "agricultural development and socio-political change" (Braverman, 1991: 7). Cooperative ministries or authorities were formalized to "encourage and even establish rural cooperatives", which were to "help small and poor farmers without radically changing the distribution of economic power, (and to) harness traditional societies with a long history of cooperation for purposes of rural development"

(Braverman, 1991: 8). Whereas cooperative development during the colonial period focused upon establishing "improved marketing services and higher crop prices" for cash crop producers (Braverman, 1991: 7), cooperatives in the post-independent era were viewed by many African governments as a vehicle for "marketing export crops in order to have effective control over production" (Braverman, 1991: 8). Examples of these large-scale cooperatives were operating in Senegal's groundnut production, in Mali's cotton industry and in Kenya's coffee plantations.

Many new African states also applied cooperative development as a holistic social, economic and political dogma, as in the case of Tanzania under *ujamaa* and Benin under *Groupement Villageois*. This form of cooperative development implemented agrarian reform and established land settlement programmes or villagization (Braverman, 1991: 8).

A distinction between government implementation of cooperative development exists between francophone and anglophone African states; nevertheless, the outcome of government involvement is parallel. Francophone African states "often mandated cooperatives to carry out various policies and programs", thus "(i)nstead of being member-directed bodies, coops have ... become indirect arms of external organizations such as lending institutions or extension services" (Braverman, 1991: 9). Anglophone African cooperative ministries adopted the registrar system wherein intervention in cooperative development was rationalized because members were "ill-informed and illiterate ...(and) must be protected from abuses and mismanagement" (Braverman, 1991: 9). The perception that "intervention was still necessary because most members had limited educational status and technical and managerial experience" (United

Nations, 1992: 14) continues to uphold the persistence of government involvement in cooperative development and hinders cooperators from establishing their own self-help projects (Braverman, 1991: 9). The activities of cooperatives are predetermined by governments leaving little room for "negotiation or discussion among prospective members" (Braverman, 1991: 9). Thus, the degree of government involvement in cooperative development has rendered cooperatives with "widespread dependence upon government initiatives, directives and support" resulting in the inability "to escape from attitudes of dependency" (United Nations, 1992: 14).

C. Three Major Types of Cooperative Organizations

1. *Large-scale marketing cooperatives* were first introduced by European colonial governments in Africa as a method for marketing primary commodities produced by European landholders so that "the interests of the large-scale European or better-off farmers rather than the peasants" were protected (Thordarson, 1990: 10). In this respect, "(t)he emphasis was placed on marketing in view of the need for improved transportation and storage systems" (Thordarson, 1990: 10). Large-scale marketing cooperatives continue to operate in many African countries, such as Senegal (groundnuts), Kenya (coffee), and Zimbabwe (tobacco), and accordingly dominate "the processing and/or marketing of many commodities" in a similar fashion to the operation of wheat pools in Canada (Thordarson, 1990: 10, 11). The continued presence of this type of cooperative enterprise in Africa is linked more closely to "national development needs than to those of the poorest segments of the population" because they do not address "the major socio-economic problems in rural areas, such as marginalization of small farmers and landless labourers" (Thordarson, 1990, 11).

2. *Multi-purpose cooperatives* were initiated by many African governments, after independence from European colonization, as “a means of indigenous, non-exploitive control of their resources” (Thordarson, 1990: 11). These organizations are mostly initiated by cooperative officers employed by national government departments, which develop “(n)ational systems of village-level cooperatives, linked to provincial and national federations” (Thordarson, 1990: 11). The functions of this type of cooperative organization are diverse in that they are established “to provide short- and medium-term credit to farmers, supply agricultural inputs, process crops, and organize storage and marketing facilities” (Thordarson, 1990: 11).

Multi-purpose cooperatives were also used by governments, such as Algeria and Tanzania, “as a way to combat capitalism and contribute to a planned economy” (Thordarson, 1990: 11). Further, in Egypt and Ethiopia “governments instituted land reform and other social changes, with membership in a cooperative made obligatory for those wishing to obtain these benefits” (Thordarson, 1990: 11). These organizations were viewed by the members themselves as government entities, thus few were initiated without government involvement (Thordarson, 1990: 11).

3. The third type of cooperative is the *grass-roots cooperative*, which developed in the 1970s in response to “the mixed developmental benefits produced by both the large-scale marketing cooperatives and the government-initiated multi-purpose cooperatives” (Thordarson, 1990: 11, 12). The emphasis of this form of cooperation is placed upon self-help “at the local level, administered and controlled by the members whose interests they were created to serve”, and is “designed to provide the poor with improved services and bargaining power”

(Thordarson, 1990: 12). Single-sector activities are focused upon that require basic management skills to manage the operation of the cooperative. Activities pursued are generally for the benefit of the community and include credit unions, "food production, simple processing, artisanal production, consumer shops, fisheries, housing and services" (Thordarson, 1990: 12).

Many groups and associations operating do not incorporate in order to avoid government control, thus rendering them the status of *pre-cooperatives* (Thordarson, 1990: 12). *Pre-cooperatives* are generally managed by the less-advantaged strata, wherein these "enterprises operate on cooperative principles but (do) not meet requirements for formal registration" (United Nations, 1992: 9). It is difficult to "transform them into full and effective cooperatives because their members lack adequate education and organizational, accounting and technical experience" (United Nations, 1992: 9). In this respect,

(a)n important difference exists between a spontaneous expression of interest in cooperation arising from everyday conditions on the one hand, and on the other hand, imposed structures, not entirely compatible with local behavioural norms and not necessarily serving the immediate economic interests of individuals and communities (United Nations, 1992: 9).

However, whether they are known as grass-roots cooperatives or *pre-cooperatives* they all "operate at the local level and concern themselves with small-scale activities," and accordingly assist in linking the informal sector with the mainstream economy (Thordarson, 1990: 12, 13). Women are important contributors to grass-roots cooperatives and *pre-cooperatives* because they are "often excluded from membership in agricultural marketing cooperatives (due to) the legislative requirement in some countries that members own land" (Thordarson, 1990: 12).

D. Cooperative Development and its Benefits to National Development Policy

Theoretically, cooperative development contributes positively to national development policy. These contributions include: income-earning potential, permanence, new services, skill development, democracy, market competition, and expanded services.

1. People organize themselves together to create new services; thus generating revenue for members who otherwise would not have income-earning opportunity without their membership scale (Thordarson, 1990: 13). Cooperative development "also provide(s) an institutional means for channelling government or development resources to target groups" (Thordarson, 1990: 13).
2. A second benefit of cooperative development to national development policy is permanence. "As community-controlled, self-help organizations, cooperatives ideally can go on providing local services long after external assistance has ended" (Thordarson, 1990: 13). These cooperatives are usually commercially-based entities, which "can potentially generate sufficient revenues to ensure continuity and growth" (Thordarson, 1990: 13).
3. New services may be organized by cooperative formation, which assists in promoting national development. Grass-roots cooperatives, which are generally single-sector activities, provide new services within a community because the members' lack of access to services inspires them to organize to meet their needs. Credit unions in rural areas accommodate members' access to financial resources while expanding their saving potential. Women also benefit from increased

opportunities to participate formally in income-generating activities (Thordarson, 1990: 13).

4. Cooperative development motivates members to acquire new skills in order to effectively manage and operate the cooperative (Thordarson, 1990: 13). As part of many national development policies, governments provide basic accounting and leadership training for newly organizing cooperatives, which in turn "help(s) to build human resources and open(s) new avenues for both employees and members" (Thordarson, 1990: 13).

5. Democratic principles, in terms of planning, decision making and implementation (Thordarson, 1990: 14), are also fostered through cooperative development, which has contributed significantly to the perception that cooperatives are *schools for democracy* (United Nations, 1992: 9). Often a member's experience in a cooperative "may be the individual's only contact with [formalized] democratic methods" (Thordarson, 1990: 14), while informal sharing and reciprocity occur at the kin and clan levels. Hence, cooperative development is occasionally seen as detrimental to national development policy, especially by authoritarian governments (Thordarson, 1990: 14).

6. National development policy is enhanced by cooperatives introducing "competition into monopolistic or oligopolistic markets, providing alternatives to intermediaries, moneylenders, private companies, or the state sector" (Thordarson, 1990: 14). With increased market competition, members ideally "benefit through lower costs, higher returns, or increased quality and accessibility of goods and services" (Thordarson, 1990: 14).

7. Cooperative members benefit from “returns of the cooperative business over and above their direct participation in income generating activities” (Thordarson, 1990: 14). This means that as the cooperative expands so do the revenues earned from “ancillary or vertically-integrated activities” (Thordarson, 1990: 14). These revenues are then shared among the members.

E. Lack of Linkage of Cooperative Development to National Development Policy

Attempts by most African governments to introduce cooperative organization as a model of development “and to convince the population to accept this model as ‘theirs’ have failed to bring about the self-sustained development of autonomous cooperative movements” (Münkner, 1988: 190). In a statement by President Senghor of Senegal in 1976, he claimed that

(c)ertainly, we have trained men technically, rendering them more productive, in fact, more conscious of their needs but not more cultured in the sense of being conscious of their capabilities in all areas of development. They were taught to work but not to do without supervision. In short, they were not taught to extricate themselves from their role of recipients of assistance in order to meaningfully play their role as co-operators taking into their hands their own destiny (Münkner, 1988: 190).

Instead of researching the reasons for the failure of government initiated cooperative development in Africa, “many development planners blame the concept of cooperation as being unsuitable for solving the problems of African development” and avoid granting any assistance to this movement in general (Münkner, 1988: 190). In this respect, it is necessary to examine why cooperative development has not flourished when it has been directed by national development policy.

For the most part, African governments, occasionally aided by foreign donors, created cooperatives "on a large scale without much preparation, by offering short-term incentives, e.g. access to loans in cash or in kind which otherwise would not be available" and "(i)n some countries administrative and political pressure was used to impose a model of cooperation on peasants, by creating monopolies for the supply of inputs and the marketing of produce or by making membership compulsory" (Münkner, 1988: 190, 191). Within this context, the priority of national development was the foremost directive for these governments rather than focusing on the "interests of the individual members" (Münkner, 1988: 191). Governments conceived cooperatives as instruments for "carrying out plans made by Government officials, financed with government funds and accordingly government controlled" (Münkner, 1988: 191). Members were called upon to cooperate and were perceived as "unable to organize themselves without guidance, outside assistance, supervision and control" (Münkner, 1988: 191). Further, cooperative models were predetermined wherein model bylaws became the overriding legislation and members were not to deviate from these guidelines, thus limiting incentive for members' active participation due to the heavy hand of government intervention and control (Münkner, 1988: 191).

1. Internal Constraints on Effective Cooperative Development

Due to the overwhelming involvement of government ministries on cooperative development, few reasons exist which encourage active participation among members. Some members may join in order to access services while others may have been compelled to join; nevertheless, these members will feel less responsible about the successful operation of the organization and are unlikely to work as effectively as those members with a vested interest in the cooperative

(Braverman, 1991: 20). Further, members “share contribution and liability ... are usually purely nominal, so that members do not have to commit themselves and thus have [limited] stake in the cooperative” (Münkner, 1988: 191).

Structural issues about the cooperative requiring reconciliation of “long-term institutional objectives with short-term individual concerns” may result in undercapitalization. Members predominantly prefer redistributing surplus over increasing capital because members want to see an immediate return for their labour (Braverman, 1991: 21). Further, “(t)he basic structural problem with cooperative arrangements results from the discrepancy between individual costs of actions and individual benefits” (Braverman, 1991: 21). While members bear the full costs of their productive activity and the full benefit of borrowed credit, they “usually receive only a share of the aggregate benefits or costs” (Braverman, 1991: 21). Because of this discrepancy, free-rider problems may arise where individuals may work less but benefit equally from surplus redistribution.

Cooperative rules are not often understood or known by members because of language barriers, illiteracy, or complicated procedures that are foreign to the members’ values; hence, member control over cooperative office-holders is hindered and management is assumed by members “whom are elected, appointed or seconded from government staff in undemocratic ways” (Münkner, 1988: 191). Operating under the registrar system, government officials, who were unfamiliar with cooperative bylaws, were given the responsibility of establishing societies as quickly as possible, so that successful cooperative promotion was measured by statistics (Braverman, 1991: 10). Because organizations were set up quickly, information pertaining to the effective operation of cooperatives could not be disseminated properly to the members and training was inadequate.

Accordingly, "management positions often remained in the hands of government-designated personnel" (Braverman, 1991: 10). Moreover, "(c)ontrol exercised by government officials is usually ineffective because it does not reach the societies due to lack of qualified staff or due to lack of transport" (Münkner, 1988: 191). Corruption is evident due to powerful vested interests in particularly large-scale cooperatives, "and government officers teaming up with influential leaders for their own benefits" (Münkner, 1988: 191). Potential income earnings by members "is either siphoned off by high prices for inputs and low prices for produce, by embezzlement and corrupt practices which go undetected or unpunished, or remain low because of losses due to lack of storage facilities, transport or capacity for processing" (Münkner, 1988: 191). This is not to say that cooperative departments are the only source of corruption within cooperative development. "Inadequate management and accounting have undercut ... cooperatives ... (d)espite increased training of managers, bookkeepers, and accountants--often donor financed" (Braverman, 1991: 24). This has resulted in disappointing operating procedures and standards, and dishonest practices (Braverman, 1991: 24). It is evident that cooperatives are state-controlled development tools, which are "first and foremost instruments for planned development as seen from the macro-economic level" and that "cooperative development means investing in institution building, providing channels for the supply of inputs and the marketing of products in a way that serves the national interest best or that helps to implement the government's political programme" (Münkner, 1988: 192).

2. External Constraints on Effective Cooperative Development

Pressure on effective cooperative development also comes from sources external to the cooperative entity. Because most bilateral and multilateral development aid is administered through government channels, the entrenchment of government control is sustained over cooperative development. Funding from donors has, in many cases, enabled cooperative departments to deliver promotional services and activities, when “the bulk of these services should more properly have been disseminated by second- or third-tier support structures of the coop movement itself” (Braverman, 1991: 11). Both donors and governments viewed centralized official structures as the most effective channels for absorbing funds instead of decentralized cooperative organizations. “In addition, many donors shared the government belief that cooperative activities had to be externally regulated, at least until the movement was mature enough to control itself,” and that democratization would eventually result (Braverman, 1991: 11).

For efficiency sake, foreign donors concentrated cooperative development training at the cooperative department level because education levels attained in the rural areas were limited. Thus, “(t)he theory was that a structure built at the top would animate the local level and build cooperatives” (Braverman, 1991: 11). However, the support base for government and donor cooperative initiatives was lacking because local awareness was not developed (Braverman, 1991: 11, 12). “Rural coops were generally seen as an instrument to promote development and alleviate poverty; external assistance often failed to recognize the need to strengthen the movement itself and to build structures at all levels” (Braverman, 1991: 12).

Cooperatives, in particular in the rural areas, operate under extremely difficult conditions because many operate in regions "where members are poor and produce little surplus" (Braverman, 1991: 14). According to principles legislated by many African governments for cooperative operation, the goal of the cooperative is to earn profits for its members and for continued success of the cooperative. Even though success is an expectation, "rural cooperatives face high operating costs, low margins, low turnovers, narrow inventory stocks, fluctuating seasonal demand and trading patterns, and weak infrastructure" (Braverman, 1991: 14).

The agricultural sector has been weakened by government control over establishing low prices for the production of cash crops. In this respect, the deterioration in the terms of trade has resulted in many farmers migrating to urban areas, thereby dissolving their cooperative activities in the rural areas (Braverman, 1991: 16).

Cooperatives established for extending investment and producer credit rely heavily on "funds made available by governments or donors for onlending to members" because "easy access to external sources has left such cooperatives with little reason to mobilize their own resources and thus evolve into strong organizations" (Braverman, 1991: 17). Further, borrower repayment is low because in an effort to provide funds to as many borrowers as possible, the lender will make decisions regarding repayment targets that are unrealistic and not directed by the cooperative management (Braverman, 1991: 17). Thus, expansion of the management and financial capacity is limited, which often results in "an overburdening of management and a lack of financial discipline" (Braverman, 1991: 17). Operating costs were also difficult to regain, due to the

obligation of providing credit at low interest rates, “so a part of operating expenses ... had to be covered by donors or government” (Braverman, 1991: 17). The continued reliance on external funds provided these cooperatives with little motivation to enforce loan agreements, spurring low recovery rates (Braverman, 1991: 17). Moreover, because credit was available, rural producers participated in cooperatives to access funds “rather than to participate in a self-help organization” (Braverman, 1991: 17).

F. Women’s Participation in the Cooperative Movement in Africa

Until recently, cooperative development was “promoted by many feminists and progressive funding agencies as the ideal type of project for” African women, which permitted income-generation and consciousness-raising through collective work (Mayoux, 1989: 1). Organizing women for economic activity is achieved two ways: “one, women initiating action from a base of knowledge and power, and the other, externally generated action by organizations and agencies for women on their behalf” (Davison, 1991: 1). Women’s entry into the formal economy has been based on income-generating activities that are not directed at finding solutions to larger economic, political, or social problems (Muchena, 1987: 68). These projects and other economic activities are treated as short-term solutions to problems confronted by women and are generally peripheral to mainstream national development policy (Mwaniki, 1986: 210). Overall, “there is a general lack of male support for efforts to effect change in women’s economic activity”, which translates into the near exclusion to recognize women’s contribution in national development policy (Mwaniki, 1986: 210). In this respect, “(w)omen are caught in the contradictions of institutions that both protect them and oppress them” (Mwaniki, 1986: 210, 211).

Women's participation in income-generating activities is based upon a project approach to development. The activities that they engage in are piecemeal, which are perceived to be in isolation from local and national development schemes (Muchena, 1987: 69). Further, women operate their activities with a "small-scale or income-generating mentality" that does not permit them to contribute meaningfully to their families' economic change (Muchena, 1987: 69). "Perhaps because women lack the education, financial resources and experience", small-scale projects are promoted by foreign donors and governments alike (Muchena, 1987: 69). One problem with these projects is the fact that not much income can be generated from them, making the projects' sustainability difficult. Further, an overcrowding effect occurs because women are restricted to particular occupations wherein they compete among themselves for few jobs and for markets, thus decreasing the earning potential of the project (Drakakis-Smith, 1984: 1280).

The low level of involvement of women in business can be attributed to two factors. Women lack confidence in themselves and they are reluctant to venture into new areas and activities; and they lack awareness about services available that support small enterprise development and opportunities to establish new businesses (Davison, 1991: 5). Women generally have an interest to participate in income-generating activities, however training skills are essential to develop confidence in their abilities (Davison, 1991: 5). Further, women can develop confidence in themselves when they participate collectively, as individual members can share their resources and learn new skills from each other.

Although women's participation in cooperative development is indispensable, the reward for their labour is often minimal. Cooperatives operate

on the principle of equitable distribution of surplus but this principle has "turned into a system of superexploitation at the household level in the sense that women who are the most active agents at the production level are the least beneficiaries when cooperatives pay dividends" (Adagala, 1988: 44). Cooperatives are supposed to be "organized in the interest of the whole community", yet women's lack of access to land provides a major constraint toward cooperatives that are organized based on land ownership (Adagala, 1988: 45). Cooperatives are "based upon voluntary and mutual self-help", yet many women are forced by their families to input labour without any direct benefit (Adagala, 1988: 45). Cooperative development is based upon the premise that the participation of the less advantaged strata of society in collective activities will contribute toward their self-realisation and reliance. However, women's contribution to cooperative activity has resulted in an increased workload due to entrenched patriarchal values regarding the gender division of labour (Adagala, 1988: 45).

G. Problems Confronting Women in Cooperative Development

Numerous internal and external constraints prevent women from developing a viable cooperative enterprise.

1. Internal Constraints

(a) Women's active participation in cooperative development has been restrained by an increase in domestic and agricultural responsibilities due to male migration to urban centres, and cash cropping and wage labour. "The assumption of these responsibilities results in poor attendance at group activities, which further inhibits members from meeting regularly to raise money and work on their projects" (Mwaniki, 1986: 220). Food shortages and droughts also

impede participation, because women must spend an increased amount of time and energy searching for water and food (Mwaniki, 1986: 221).

(b) Poor organization and weak leadership within the cooperative is another constraint to effective participation. Group members may perceive the leadership as not having control over the cooperative's operation and resources, which leads to internal battles for leadership and "allegations of misappropriation of group funds" (Mwaniki, 1986: 221).

(c) Women's participation in cooperative activities is not generally supported by their husbands. This lack of support translates into quashing women's enthusiasm for their work, which affects "their contributions and commitment to the group" (Mwaniki, 1986: 221). Many husbands also refuse to allow their wives to join cooperatives for fear of the women gaining independence and self-confidence. "Many women are careful not to be away from their families too often, so as not to provoke the wrath of their husbands" (Mwaniki, 1986: 221).

(d) Criticism from women in the community toward the women participating in cooperative development can undermine the morale of the cooperative group. "Some women still think that joining a group is a waste of time and energy and criticise group members as being lazy and irresponsible" (Mwaniki, 1986: 221).

(e) Finally, women are not informed adequately about the necessity for conducting feasibility studies to determine the potential viability of their projects. Because of this shortcoming, "group members (do) not have the vaguest idea of

the amount of capital required to put their planned projects into operation” (Mwaniki, 1986: 221, 222).

2. External Constraints

(a) Women's participation in cooperative development is hindered by a lack of capital for project generation. Typically, women are not aware of external sources of funding from donors, and their perception of government involvement in their activities is not favourable. When a group does locate funding from government “(i)n order to receive government financial assistance a group is often required to show physical evidence that its income-generating project is in progress but needs some assistance to facilitate its completion” (Mwaniki, 1986: 223).

(b) The lack of employment opportunities for women results in a high degree of competition with other women over the few opportunities that exist (Mwaniki, 1986: 224), and women do not generally have the necessary support from social and governmental bodies for skill development in non-traditional female employment sectors.

(c) Women's access to markets is constrained by the lack of adequate transportation infrastructure for distributing their production to business centres. Further, the general lack of markets for women to sell their goods is a concern because “these markets are flooded with similar products made by other groups and individual entrepreneurs” (Mwaniki, 1986: 224).

(d) Women's subordination with respect to their inadequate access to capital, heavy workload, lack of skill training and education, and inferior legal

status prevents them from effectively developing a viable cooperative organization (Mwaniki, 1986: 224).

II. Suggestions for Strengthening Participation of African Women in Cooperative Development

- 1. A shift in conceptualizing women's work as isolated projects to acknowledging women's contribution in cooperative development can occur through "coordination at the local and national levels with other agencies involved in economic development in agriculture and industry" (Mayoux, 1989: 12).**
- 2. Women must widen the range of skills that they possess. This requires increased "awareness and scope for diversification by women, and by development agencies" who can assist governments in creating databases "on alternative skills and training in market research and product identification" (Mayoux, 1989: 12).**
- 3. Commercial viability in project design must be stressed so that more attention is given to "marketing and the commercial aspects of cooperative activity" (Mayoux, 1989: 12, 13).**
- 4. Development of infrastructure within the community is essential, such as access to clean water supplies and fuel sources. This development can decrease the work burden in domestic activities for women and enhance greater active participation in cooperative activities.**

5. Cooperative development needs to be more participatory among the members instead of the members attempting to function within externally imposed structures.
6. Cooperative development needs to address women's "unequal access to land and property, the gender division of labour and unequal remuneration" (Mayoux, 1989: 5). Women's necessity for income-generation must be taken seriously so that national development policy can address the economic needs of women as opposed to their social requirements (Mayoux, 1989: 5).
7. Training, marketing and credit support structures must be extended to "increase the range of activities open to women in cooperatives" (Mayoux, 1989: 5).
8. Greater collaboration, instead of competition and duplication, must be promoted by government and donor agencies about women's involvement in cooperative development. Access to information regarding research on women's collective experiences must be attainable by women in order to develop greater understanding for their own implementation purposes.

I. Womens' Historical Contribution to Cooperative Development in Zimbabwe

Traditional cooperation in Zimbabwe, known as *nhimbe* or *ilima*, has existed in the practice of harvesting, ploughing, grass cutting and roof thatching in rural homes, thus rendering the concept of cooperation as part of Zimbabwe's historical past (Chitsiga, 1988: 75). Prior to 1980, women's interaction in formalized cooperative development in Zimbabwe was maintained through

participation in mixed-sex cooperatives in "agricultural marketing and supply cooperatives where they formed 30% of the membership" (Chitsiga, 1988: 75). Within these organizations, women were primarily engaged in tilling the land and subsistence farming; however, "(t)he agricultural produce would be marketed to grain marketing boards under the husband's name which ultimately meant that she had little or no control over the income earned" (Chitsiga, 1988: 75). After independence, the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs (department prior to the present Ministry) promoted pre-cooperative women's groups that included "small-scale, local level groups which engage(d) in income-generating activities such as breadmaking, school uniform production, small livestock husbandry, craftwork, etc." (Chinemana, 1987: 2). Inclusion of women in cooperative development after the independence struggle in Zimbabwe was also perceived as a means for achieving social transformation within the socialist context. This idea was expounded by President Robert Mugabe in 1987, wherein the President declared:

Under social formation [sic] men cannot oppress women, neither can one individual oppress another, because a man must work in a collective or co-operative side by side with the woman and both receive payment for their equal labour (Chinemana, 1987: 3).

Moreover, the idea of inclusion was also supported by the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs in November, 1982 where the Minister of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. E. J. M. Zvobgo, claimed that the government's interest in promoting equality among women and men was not only driven by women's participation in the independence war, but was also motivated by selfishness for including women in the "chain of national development", because if women remained "behind and weak", then Zimbabwe's development efforts would be hindered (Qunta, 1987: 131).

The strategy of the present Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperative Development (formed in 1992) centers around the inclusion of women in cooperative development in the sectors of the economy that are conducive to women's participation. These activities are evidenced in the statistical information provided in the Methodology section, which supports the claim that "(s)o far the co-operative movement is banking on the backward, unequal patriarchal customs, laws, institutions and attitudes for its success" (Adagala, 1988: 46). Cooperative development requires a complete reformulation to "take into consideration its invisible but most active labourers i.e. women" (Adagala, 1988: 46). Women's participation in decision-making in mixed-cooperatives is virtually non-existent, even though they "comprise approximately 75 percent of the total rural population" and their labour input for the cooperative is significant (Chimedza, 1987: 142-3). Moreover, the Ministry's present orientation that "women need nothing more than welfare improvement, lacks a clear perspective on gender and its links to social and economic oppression" (Wilkinson, 1991: 113). This is evidenced by the Ministry's continued restriction for promoting women's "traditional domestic roles" in cooperative development schemes, which only serves to entangle women "into the existing structures which marginalize them especially as economic producers" (Wilkinson, 1991: 113). The continuance of women's domestic roles into the public sphere was supported by the Ministry's belief that these undertakings would "allow the participant the time and flexibility required for simultaneous childcare and income generating work" (Seidman, 1984: 434).

According to Christine Sylvester, Zimbabwe can be characterized by "contestation and consent to many series of power relations that can be called

regimes" (Sylvester, 1995: 182). These regimes, defined below, intersect independently and collectively,

with an historically variegated gender regime that interweaves elements of indigenous "tradition" with colonial messages about the proper place of African and white women in Southern Rhodesia, adding more recent efforts to define the status of "women" in the new Zimbabwe (Sylvester, 1995: 183).

Sylvester highlights the term "women", beginning with the understanding that "women" are "female-bodied persons who have specific and fixed tasks related to childbearing and rearing, nurturance, and support for persons called men (Sylvester, 1995: 183). The conceptualization of "women" is heightened within each regime as follows.

The *Regime of Promise* is founded upon the failed but glorified dream of a producer-run society propelled by the principles of the Marxist-Leninist ruling party (ZANU-PF) which were applied for the first eight years after independence in Zimbabwe. Within this regime, "women" should rid of their association with the private sphere so as to resume activities identified with production in the public domain. However, the Regime of Promise continued to promote "women" "as 'mothers' and 'family'-bound creatures first and foremost, saying that women have the decisive role 'in maintaining the *family* as the basic social unit of our society'" (Sylvester, 1995: 185).

The *Regime of Strength* highlights the notion that "some people are indispensable to the well-being of the country and others are more easily ignored or even demonized" (Sylvester, 1995: 185). Hierarchical and patriarchal relations are maintained by everyone participating contentedly within "an externally-defined place". "Cooperatives must conform to rigid, outer-directed rules. They must be 'association[s] of free and equal individuals for social and economic

gain,' wherein 'everyone receives equal pay for equal work and all decisions are made by all members of the cooperative'" (Sylvester, 1995: 186).

The third regime, the *Regime of Pragmatism*, utilizes pluralist politics to balance political, social and economic discord in Zimbabwe. This regime is "gender blind" as it "neither encourages nor discourages the existence of self-negotiated 'women'" (Sylvester, 1995: 187). As an official at the Ministry of Community and Cooperative Development and Women's Affairs commented, "All this emphasis on women ... seems too much. I don't approve of separate activities for women. They can always just join the men." But when asked if the men can just join the women, no comment was forthcoming (Sylvester, 1995: 188).

The *Regime of Eligibility* is driven by aid agencies that provide resources for rural development projects according to their own pronounced "path to authentic development". This regime molds the rural population into modernity, "train[s] them for economic viability, and encapsulate[s] them in a development process not of their own making" (Sylvester, 1995: 188). Further, some local organizations are suspicious of cooperatives formed by "women" because they perceive this collective action by "women" as being feminism, thus, causing divisiveness.

The *Regime of Gender* is the final regime commented on by Sylvester, which perpetuates the stereotypical gender division of labour. Moreover, this regime "continues to be openly advocated in the sense that many people defend 'traditional' gender distinctions as a true way of identifying all people and their

social places" (Sylvester, 1995: 189). Sylvester claims that each of these five regimes overlap, making it difficult to determine a *Regime of Truth*.

Cooperative development is situated within the Regime of Strength because "authorities can view participation as a way of getting subordinates to help them achieve their purposes" (Goulet, 1989: 166). However, empowerment, or the ability to challenge the existing societal support structures which subordinate women (Wilkinson, 1991: i), "may not be realized if women do not have the means to counter the male dominated bias controlling policy making and implementation" (Stamp, 1989: 55).

J. Conclusion

The goal of cooperative development is to contribute to sustainable rural development and to provide positive economic benefits for its members (Gyllström, 1988: 38). "Many African governments have already recognized the need to let coops develop into an autonomous movement and have made a serious commitment to this end" (Braverman, 1991: 30). A commitment has been made by ministers of cooperative affairs and representatives from the movement in East, Central and Southern Africa, to establish a regional coordinating committee, working under the auspices of the International Cooperative Alliance, for the purpose of coordinating policies that would develop autonomy for cooperatives. The mandate of this committee is to develop a fully autonomous cooperative movement by 1995 (Braverman, 1991: 30).

CHAPTER IV: CASE STUDY OF THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL AFFAIRS, EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE

The Rhodesian government promoted large-scale commercial farming by Europeans; however, in 1956 the Agricultural Marketing and Supply Cooperative was formed to incorporate African interests in the rural areas (Mayoux, 1988: 75). This cooperative was useful in the sense that cost sharing developed among black producers because input supply was less expensive when shared among members and individual marketing was expensive. Many blacks viewed the incorporation of this cooperative as a means for the government to “wash its hands of the black community” and “for the black community to fend for itself when all kinds of packages existed for the (European) farmers” (Mr. Matanyaire interview). Until 1980, the Agricultural Marketing and Supply Cooperative was the only cooperative open to black membership.

After independence from Britain in 1980, the majority of the population in Zimbabwe was not directly involved in formal sector employment; thus a government strategy was devised to improve employment opportunities. This was achieved by implementing a two-pronged approach. The government had to be involved in the economic affairs of the country, and foreign donors were necessary to support economic development. Because donors are more apt to assist groups than individuals, expansion of the cooperative movement was necessary. The aim of the movement was to address local development needs and to bring the majority of the population into the economic activities of the

country. The first cooperative development department was located in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement; then in 1986 the Ministry of Cooperative Development was formed (Chinemana, 1987: 3). A further government restructuring in 1992 conjoined Cooperative Development with the Ministry of National Affairs and Employment Creation (Sylvester, 1995: 184). Thus, a national development policy was initiated which incorporated cooperative development as a strategy for achieving this policy.

A. Mandate of Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperative Development, Government of Zimbabwe

The primary responsibility of the Ministry is to research and formulate solutions for the problems of unemployment in Zimbabwe. Policy governing the Ministry's activities, located in the *Policy Thrust and Strategy Document*, explicitly contains the necessity for "strengthening women, youth and co-operative projects in all sectors of the economy" and for "facilitating debate on national issues" (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1994: 1). Accordingly, the mission statement of the Ministry encapsulates this mandate in the following tenet:

To identify national issues which are of significance to the nation for debate; facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for the promotion of employment generation through small to medium enterprises in all sectors of the economy, to promote the viability of the co-operative movement and to create an atmosphere conducive to training for employment by suitable partners in development (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1994: 2).

Accomplishment of this policy objective is conducted by the Ministry with the development of "an appreciation of the underlying constraints inhibiting or opportunities promotive of employment creation at the macro level" in order to develop programmes for the target group (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*,

1994: 2). The target group includes: councillors, members of Parliament, non-governmental organizations, Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce, farmers organizations, war veterans associations, traditional structures (headmen, chiefs, etc.), women's organizations, youth organizations, church organizations and cooperative organizations (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1994: 6). Debate on programme development includes input from the target group but only "to bring to light hidden talents and opportunities that could assist Government in developing policies and other national instruments" (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1994: 6).

Increased involvement in the decision making process and project implementation by potential entrepreneurs is promoted by the Ministry as an agent for facilitating debate on cooperative development. However, inclusion in the debate does not automatically translate into autonomy over their respective enterprises. The Ministry has devolved decision-making authority to the provincial and district levels, but has not granted complete authority to the cooperators themselves (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1994: 3). The impetus for decentralizing decision making to this level is for increased effective implementation of the Ministry's policy and operational strategies by provincial and district staff, who "will be able to set local targets, allocate resources and supervise staff" (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1994: 4). Thus, the Ministry views provincial and district level autonomy as imperative to the "responsive and effective ... delivery of services towards entrepreneurship development" (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1994: 3).

Programme development strategies for the Ministry's involvement in cooperative development are contained in the *Cooperative Societies Act*, No. 6, 1990, which states:

3. In performing the functions conferred upon them by this Act, the Minister, the Registrar and other officers shall have regard to the need to attain the following objects--

- (a) to encourage the formation of societies in all sectors of the economy and to promote their efficiency;
- (b) to carry out educational and training programmes for officers, members and staff of societies wherever possible;
- (c) to raise the level of general and technical knowledge of officers, members and staff of societies, through the supply of information and educational materials to them;
- (d) to encourage and assist in the proper utilization, accounting and management of the funds of societies;
- (e) to monitor the activities of societies (Government of Zimbabwe, *Act*, 1990: 52).

The conduct of these strategies are performed by various sections within the Ministry and will be discussed in greater detail.

B. The Operation of the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperative Development

For operational purposes, the Ministry is divided into three management areas: National Affairs, Employment Creation, and Cooperatives and Community Development. This section will demarcate the responsibilities of each managing area.

1. Decentralization and empowerment are the main tenets of the National Affairs section, which are promoted through dialogue between the Ministry and potential entrepreneurs. The National Affairs section defines the administrative

structures at provincial and district levels to effect decentralization within employment generation and facilitates in providing channels of communication for the purpose of “inducing popular participation in developmental activities” (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1990: 5). These tenets are operationalized by:

- (a) providing a forum for debating national issues;
- (b) presenting the views and actions of the Ministry in an accurate manner to the media;
- (c) disseminating the views of professional organizations, such as CZL, ZCTU, ZNCC, EMCOZ, CFU, etc., to the Ministry and community through continuous dialogue, for the purpose of problem solving;
- (d) liaising between the President (Robert Mugabe) and national organizations so that these organizations may discuss areas of concern;
- (e) facilitating visits by the President to developmental projects;
- (f) analyzing government policy which inhibits development at the local and national levels; and
- (g) organizing a forum for the presentation of papers (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1990: 5).

Thus, National Affairs has an organizing and administrative mandate which facilitates the macro-development and implementation of the Ministry’s policy.

2. Employment Creation is responsible for researching potential income generating projects through analysis of government-wide policies, and public and private sector initiatives, and identifying solutions for resolving employment creation constraints. These functions are carried out by:

- (a) establishing a data bank on economic sectors that will foster potential for employment creation, labour-intensive growth for

increased investment opportunity, capital-intensive growth for creation of economies of scale and increased product demand, and foreign currency generation;

- (b) identifying government economic policies that are biased toward employment generation, including informal sector, growth points, urban and cooperative biases, in order to develop programmes for the target group;
- (c) examining bank policies for contribution to rural and urban employment generation;
- (d) identifying new investment areas for employment generation and the sector-based skills required for Ministry staff to implement projects;
- (e) identifying those sectors operating below full capacity and providing solutions for operation improvement; and
- (f) documenting organizations (government ministries, NGOs, voluntary organizations, churches, etc.) that impact positively on employment generation (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1990: 6, 7).

One aspect of the research function performed by Employment Creation is to investigate avenues for strengthening sectors where cooperative development activities can flourish.

3. The Community Development and Cooperatives section (hereafter referred to as "Cooperatives") is responsible for transforming employment generating projects into registered cooperative organizations established for surplus. Because this section formed the primary focus for this case study of the Ministry, presentation of its operationalization will be more comprehensive.

Guidelines directing the commercialization of cooperatives in the Cooperatives section include:

- (a) promoting new ventures in all sectors of the economy;
- (b) strengthening existing ventures through extension of financial assistance and technical skills, which includes organization, administration, marketing, finance and production;
- (c) training business skills to cooperators and Ministry staff;
- (d) identifying cooperative sectors that use local materials for sustainable availability;
- (e) identifying cooperative sectors that can penetrate export markets;
- (f) establishing links between and amongst the informal sector and developing financial support guidelines;
- (g) developing a registrar for investment;
- (h) identifying companies with the potential of subcontracting to small-scale sectors;
- (i) reviewing *Cooperative Societies Act*, No. 6, 1990 to remove inhibiting development and expansion provisions;
- (j) establishing a cooperative bank for sustainable investment, development and support; and
- (k) improving productivity by mobilizing marketing, design, and quality control of resources (Government of Zimbabwe, *Policy*, 1990: 8, 9).

Delegation and implementation of these functions within the Cooperatives section is the responsibility of Field Operations and Training.

(a) Field Operations - Mr. Matanyaire, Deputy Secretary of Field Operations, provided an understanding of the work undertaken by the division. The primary function of this division is to accommodate cooperative and

community development projects with production and financial management skills. These extension services are offered on an on-going basis to community development projects in order to increase cooperative development registration. Field Operations does not incorporate accounting, marketing or legal aspects of cooperative development into its mandate.

Extension services are provided with the assistance of trained staff at the village, ward, district and provincial levels. Dissemination of information about cooperative development is conducted by *extension assistants*, who are community members at the village level trained in a general purpose role for promoting community development projects, such as health, sanitation, and community issues. A *ward supervisor* is responsible for program development for a total number of villages, which constitutes a ward, and is tied directly to the Ministry. At the district level, the *Assistant Secretary* plays a distinct role in training ward supervisors and extension assistants in production and financial management, which information is disseminated to the cooperators via the ward supervisors and extension assistants. The district level is divided into Community Development and Cooperatives wherein an assistant secretary is assigned to each area. An *Under Secretary* operates at the provincial level, whose jurisdiction includes project planners, auditors, general extension workers, and employment promotion. Finally, the *Deputy Secretary for Field Operations* is located at the Ministry and is responsible for preparing monthly reports, and interfacing with other divisions for action and information.

Table 4.1

Field Operations - Decentralization for Information Dissemination

Deputy Secretary	Ministry
Under Secretary	Province
Assistant Secretary	District
Ward Supervisors	Ward
Extension Assistants	Village

(b) Training Section - Mr. William Ndinde and Mr. Herbert Batidzirai provided information regarding the role of the Training Section within the Ministry. The Training Section is responsible for coordinating the training functions of the Ministry through staff development programmes and cooperative training sessions. Staff related programmes include:

- management and administration;
- technical development;
- entrepreneurship development;
- cooperative development;
- business management;
- gender awareness; and
- job related skills.

Training provided to cooperatives includes:

- business management;
- production;
- marketing;
- financial management;
- buying and selling; and
- budgeting.

Training workshops are organized by the Training Section, at the Ministry, whose staff is educated at Laflora College in the United Kingdom. The emphasis for training has shifted from technical skill development to improving cooperators' management skills because numerous cooperatives failed due to inadequate management. Moreover, improved management skills are necessary since the Community and Cooperative Fund shifted its funding policy from giving grants to extending loans to cooperatives, which has induced cooperators to acquire an element of responsibility in financial management. The Community and Cooperative Fund, however, offers grants to community development projects (*pre-cooperatives*) to enable the community to commence a project that is used to meet its social and economic requirements, which incorporates non-income generating and income generating projects. In theory, these projects will eventually need to formalize their status to be able to contract as business entities, hence the necessity for formal cooperative registration.

(c) Office of the Registrar - Mr. Mike Mavenyengwa, Senior Secretary for the Registrar of Cooperatives, provided information pertaining to the duties of the Registrar, which are also contained throughout the *Cooperative Societies Act*, No. 6, 1990. The Registrar controls cooperative registration procedures wherein cooperatives must meet certain requirements for registration, as noted in the *Cooperative Societies Act*, No. 6, 1990. The basic requirements include the stipulation that the cooperative must consist of at least ten members, pre-registration training must have been undertaken prior to registration, and bylaws must be registered with the Registrar. This Act provides the basis for controlling the operations of cooperatives, from which bylaws are developed for each cooperative and registered with the Registrar's Office in order to be effective. Model bylaws exist for predominant cooperative activities to avoid confusion by

cooperators in bylaw development. Bylaws represent a starting point for resolving specific operational concerns and cannot be altered; however, cooperative members have license to pass binding resolutions, which are enforceable by law.

In addition to bylaw registration, the Registrar is also responsible for maintaining statistical information pertaining to cooperative activities in Zimbabwe. Periodically, this data is compiled and published in the *Register of all Cooperatives in Zimbabwe*, wherein information is recorded regarding the name of the cooperative enterprise, number of members, location of cooperative, type of work undertaken, and the status of the cooperative. As at January 31, 1992, 1,999 cooperatives have been registered, and of this total there are 185 registered women-operated cooperatives.

C. Women in Development

Mrs. Pembre, in the Women in Development section of the Ministry, provided information on the role of the section for promoting women's affairs in Zimbabwe. This section, which has only six staff members at the Ministry, is responsible for promoting and coordinating women's organizations in Zimbabwe and liaising between women's organizations and government. Data from women's organizations are collected and analyzed to discover new methods for improving the status of women and information is disseminated to the community through coordinators. Women in development offices are located within the Ministry and at the provincial level.

Table 4.2

Women in Development - Information Dissemination Flow**Ministry****Provinces****Work Coordinators****Village Coordinators****NGOs**

Officers from the Women in Development section attend meetings in other ministries which are pertinent to women's affairs, such as health and HIV/AIDS. They also receive input through workshops established in local communities on policies being reviewed by other ministries and national/international conferences. These workshops also serve to inform women of any changes to laws and policies affecting their status.

Involvement in project development focuses on small-scale projects and not on cooperative development for women. Women in Development will develop programs in conjunction with other ministries but are not given the mandate of overseeing them. The section is primarily engaged in providing social and development information for projects and in directing women to appropriate Ministry services when women are seeking information on starting up a project.

The Women in Development declared in their first draft *Zimbabwe National Report for Fourth World [sic] for the Conference on Women, Beijing*, that "(t)here is no women specific policy for promoting the economic advancement of women. There is no effective government programme to create employment" (Muchena, 1994: 28). However, women's participation in cooperative development has been strongly supported by government policy as a

solution to the problems of unemployment (Chinemara, 1987: 3). In reality women's economic advancement in Zimbabwe has been hindered by the continued promotion of placing women in traditional small-scale, highly competitive enterprises, which do not develop the potential for learning new skills that would enhance women's employability in other fields of work. Women's participation in cooperative development portrays this continuance for establishing traditional female-based enterprises, often to ensure the support of the Ministry and their families.

D. Conclusion

Cooperative development in Zimbabwe was first perceived as an institution for the illiterate and very poor at the onset of the movement in 1980; yet, today it is viewed as an efficient business organization. This is evident in the requirement for registering these organizations according to legislated principles which stipulate organizational structure, shareholder entry fees and dividends, access to loans, and the fact that the cooperative movement is no longer limited to the less advantaged strata of society. The Ministry is attempting to devolve decision making responsibilities to staff working in the field to present the image that cooperative development is initiated by the grass roots. Devolution is also promoted in accordance with the work being undertaken in the African regional coordinating committee, but the goal of attaining an autonomous cooperative movement in Zimbabwe by 1995 is not likely until the Ministry removes itself from imposing cooperative projects upon potential cooperators. Autonomy within the movement can only arise when the cooperators have complete control over the management and operation of their enterprise. In theory, the formalized mandate of the Ministry, as presented in this chapter, is sound for developing cooperators' abilities to manage and operate an autonomous business entity;

however, in practice, the Ministry continues to uphold its supreme authority over the management and activities pursued by cooperatives. Chapter 5 presents a working example of a women-operated cooperative in Zimbabwe that was initiated with much government involvement but has not profited due to unfilled promises made by the Ministry to the cooperative and the lack of autonomy the women have had regarding their specific needs for effectively operating the cooperative.

CHAPTER V: APPEARANCE AND REALITY: A CASE STUDY OF *SIMBAI GLEN NORAH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.*

This chapter will present the findings from primary research I conducted between April 18, 1994 to June 10, 1994 regarding a women-operated cooperative located in a suburb of Harare, Zimbabwe. This cooperative was initiated with government support and funding for a group of women to develop skills in sericulture, which is a silk-producing textile-based industry that cultivates raw silk from silk worms (*Bombyx mori*) and feed only on mulberry leaves. The raw silk is then reeled into thread for fabric. The emphasis of this discussion will argue that the women of this cooperative are restricted by inadequate support by the Ministry and a constrained managing environment that influences their decision making ability.

A. History of *Simbai Glen Norah Co-operative Society Ltd.*

In 1985 Mrs. Aspacia Angelikis, a Greek resident in Zimbabwe, approached President Robert Mugabe's sister, Mrs. Chedoka, about establishing sericulture in Zimbabwe. Mrs. Angelikis had in her possession silk worm eggs from Greece and was interested in organizing a cooperative to manufacture silk. A feasibility study on sericulture production in Zimbabwe was conducted by the Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX) and it was determined that the successful production of silk was possible given the strict growing conditions for mulberry trees (silkworm feed). Thus, the project was initiated as a pilot project to analyze the potential of sericulture in Zimbabwe. (Refer to Appendix B for further explanation regarding the Sericulture process).

Several suburb communities around Harare were investigated with a view to locating the best growing conditions for mulberry trees. The community of Glen Norah 'B' was found to be suitable, and accordingly, Mrs. Angelikis and the City of Glen Norah 'B' commenced a membership campaign that encouraged women in the surrounding communities to attend meetings on the establishment of a sericulture cooperative. The impetus for involving women in the cooperative mainly centered on providing employment to women, who form the greatest number of unemployed in Zimbabwe. Improvement in women's standard of living and skill development in sericulture were further expectations of this cooperative. The cooperative would also bring to the economy much needed foreign currency earnings once production was extended to the export sector. It may appear to be quite revolutionary to include women in this venture because the new skills that the women would be vested with are highly technical, but a textile-based industry is typical of women's traditional stereotypical work.

The initial membership totalled 47 women, who were trained by Mrs. Angelikis in silk worm production. This training included mulberry cultivation (land preparation, planting, and harvesting), silkworm rearing (feeding and hygiene), cocoon production (mountages, gathering), and silk reeling (equipment use, quality control, and backwinding). However, training was not provided for the stages beyond the reeling process that would educate the cooperators in manufacturing the reeled silk into fabric for garment production because Mrs. Angelikis was not educated in any processes beyond the reeling stage. This inability to transform the raw silk into a marketable product has hindered the success of the cooperative.

A project management team was established to initiate the activities of the cooperative as follows:

Table 5.1

Composition: Project Management Team

The composition of this management team highlights the limited participation of the *Simbai* cooperators. The project was essentially initiated by the highest authority, with the support of President Robert Mugabe's sister, and left no allowance for input in the decision making process by the women who would be doing most of the work. In other words, *Simbai* represents a cooperative entity that is imposed upon a group of women in a community where favourable conditions exist for developing sericulture support mechanisms. The cooperative project was initiated by the management team but operation and survival of the cooperative's activities were handed over to the cooperators, who were required to register the cooperative as their own business enterprise.

Simbai was registered as a cooperative enterprise on July 14, 1988, after the members undertook pre-registration training from the Ministry. This training included sessions on cooperative operation, bookkeeping, and leadership. The members prepared the project proposal and bylaws and independently applied for

formal registration with the Registrar's Office. *Simbai* was chosen as the name of the cooperative, which means "strong" in Shona.

Land allocation for the cooperative was a difficult process. On September 7, 1988 a plot of land was unanimously agreed to by councillors of the City of Glen Norah 'B', District of Women's League, Ministry, and *Simbai* members; however, on November 15, 1988 it was discovered that the land was earmarked for a secondary school. On June 8, 1990 a 13 hectare plot of land was allocated to the cooperative by the City.

Cooperative building construction was hindered by increased costs for the project during the construction phase. In this respect, the building cost an additional Z\$25,000 over and above the original cost of Z\$62,000 (Z\$1 = \$5 Cdn approximately). By June, 1994, construction had not been completed (work commenced May 31, 1991), and the doors and windows did not have the specified finishing work, the bathroom sink had not been installed, and the Ministry still held the keys to the building. *Simbai* reported these construction shortcomings to the Ministry, but the Ministry did not respond.

The original mandate of *Simbai* is to cultivate and manufacture raw silk into silk fabric. The original aims of *Simbai* were to:

- (a) promote the economic interests of its members
- (b) engage in the production of silk
- (c) engage in crocheting, knitting and sewing jerseys
- (d) engage in selling jerseys on a co-operative basis
- (e) engage in selling of silk on a co-operative basis
- (f) engage in spinning for the purpose of producing silk
- (g) provide gainful employment to the members (Bylaws, 1988: 1).

However, because the cooperators are only able to produce reeled silk due to a lack of training in furthering the process to silk fabric, the cooperative has had to

incorporate other activities to ensure the survivability of the organization and some return for the cooperators' labour. And, since 1988, weaving of wool rugs, gardening and maize production has been added to provide the cooperators with additional benefits of membership. The resulting production in foodstuff ensures some self-sufficiency for their families, and cooperators are not completely reliant on their husbands for money to purchase food for consumption.

B. Relationship of Donors with *Simbai*

Several foreign donors were involved in assisting *Simbai* with funding and training. Mrs. Angelikis arranged for a Z\$100,000 capital injection from the European Economic Community (EEC) at the onset of the project. Funding was expended on capital items, which included the construction of a cooperative building. The Ministry defined the capital items and managed the purchases without the involvement of *Simbai*. The following table represents the forecasted purchasing administration of the grant from the EEC:

Table 5.2

Overview Table of Projected Costs and Budget for Capital Items
as at 21/11/88 (in Zimbabwean dollars)

Capital Item	Project Cost
Security Fence	9,972.42
Building (materials plus erection)	70,000.00
Furnaces	2,000.00
Large Boilers	(n/a)
Contract ploughing	235.00
Refrigerator	2,271.54
Spinning Wheels	2,000.00
Weaving Looms (2)	6,740.00
Sewing Machines	1,400.00

Shelves/Boxes	2,500.00
Plan Drawing	250.00
Soil Testing	15.00
Cudders (10 pairs)	NIL
Septic Tanks, soak aways and water main connection	1,500.00
EEC Grant	98,873.96
(EEC Microprojects Programme)	1,126.04
TOTAL	100,000.00

(source: *Simbai* file review held at The Office of the Registrar)

It should be understood that this list of forecasted equipment purchases does not reflect the actual purchases made and equipment held at *Simbai*. Purchases for *Simbai* made by the Ministry did not take into account the cooperative's lack of utility services to the cooperative building; a refrigerator, stove, and two of six sewing machines required electricity to operate, yet, the cooperative building was not fitted with electricity. The members believed that purchasing was to be done on a step-by-step basis that would take into account the cooperative's needs as they arose. Instead the Ministry quickly expended the entire EEC loan without member input into how the money should be spent. Had the members been consulted, inoperable equipment would not have been purchased.

The members view the Ministry's control over spending as corrupt because the Ministry often over quoted on the cost of furniture and kept the difference. The cooperators approached the Ministry about the money being spent because it contradicted the quotations the cooperative was given, but the Ministry only replied by commenting on the cleverness of the women and not on providing evidence for the missing funds. The women were also interested in providing input into the design of the cooperative building, and again the

Ministry declined the cooperators' involvement. These experiences with the Ministry has resulted in a breakdown in communication between the cooperative and the Ministry because the women are now fearful to address their concerns in case the Ministry threatens to close the cooperative.

The Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), a non-governmental organization from India working in Zimbabwe to establish sustainable employment and income-generating opportunities for resource-poor rural women, was commissioned by the Ministry to provide training to *Simbai* that would permit the manufacture of raw silk (after reeling) into fabric for garment production. On June 8, 1990, the Ministry assumed a coordinating and administrative role between *Simbai* and ITDG and allocated a training allowance of Z\$6,000. Numerous meetings were held between the Ministry and ITDG, with no *Simbai* members present, to discuss the training needs of the cooperators. These meetings acknowledged that the project was dangerously close to collapse and that a viable implementation framework was necessary. The Ministry assumed the additional role of independent manager to oversee the construction of a cooperative building and land preparation for planting mulberry trees. Thus, under the direction of the Ministry, who did not adequately understand the training needs of *Simbai*, Mrs. Propasheka, from ITDG, was directed to spend six weeks training the cooperators in silk reeling, a process already understood by the members; however, as of June 10, 1994, training had not been provided to *Simbai* that would permit the production of actual silk fabric from the reeled silk. Hence, the cooperators are not equipped with the necessary technical skills that would permit them to complete the objectives of the cooperative. In a memorandum by the Registrar in the *Simbai* file held at the Office of the Registrar dated January 24, 1992, it is noted that:

Simbai has literally struggled to get the project off the ground despite pledges of support from various wellwishers, including interested donors such as the Delegation of European Communities and the Intermediate Technology Development Group.

Skill development for knitting and weaving of wool products were introduced to *Simbai* through a visitor to Zimbabwe from Germany. No record at the Ministry exists of the visitor's interaction with the cooperative; however, the cooperators refer to her as "Maria". Skills imparted by Maria have provided the women with the continuous operation of *Simbai* because knitting and weaving represent the most profitable aspects of the cooperative.

C. Membership of *Simbai*

Reasons for joining *Simbai* pertain to the need for helping the cooperators' families and themselves. Members complained about having nothing to do prior to joining the cooperative and they thought that economic benefit would arise from their participation. Further, the idea of operating a small business appealed to many of the members. At the start of the project some members thought that an immediate economic return for their labour would occur because the project received special status from high ranking government officials. The government told them that the cooperative would do something to help them by creating jobs. (Refer to Appendix C for personal information on each member of *Simbai*).

At the time of registration on July 14, 1988, membership in *Simbai* totalled 47 women. However, by June 8, 1990 membership had declined to 19 members, and by September, 1990 only 12 members participated in the cooperative's activities. When my research was completed in 1994, the total membership was

11 people, including nine women and two men. The inclusion of men in the cooperative was necessitated for securing the safety of the cooperative property and its members, and the requirement that all registered cooperatives maintain a membership of ten members. This high level of attrition was due to several factors. Some former members did not see the necessity of disturbing their family or lives with the extra responsibility of cooperative work; some quit because the cooperative was not providing them with gainful employment; those with a good education sought better jobs; while others had the ambition of planning their own cooperative venture.

Cooperative members brought a variety of skills to *Simbai*, which included soap making, handicraft work, leadership, dressmaking, sewing, tie and dye, and cookery. Skills that were not present among the members, such as maize cultivation, were self-taught through trial and error. Because the women are working together as a group, they appear to have gained confidence from each other. This confidence is translated into their enthusiasm for attempting new enterprising skills.

Educational attainment among the members influences the function each member will perform in the cooperative. However, because the women are aware of each member's education background and ability level, task assignment is not necessarily based on education, but on the member's capability and the spirit of cooperation. The majority of the members are literate.

Table 5.3

Education Attainment of *Simbai* Members

Cooperator	Education Level
Julia Kunzekwenyika	"O" levels written but not on good subjects, literate
Calicaroline Muyambao	Grade 7
Aquillina Guyo	Standard 6 (9 years), literate
Angeline Kaseke	Grade 3, illiterate, has sons write for her
Tapiwa Madziyiire	"O" levels, passed three exams
Emma Madziyiire	"O" levels, passed three exams

(Six of 11 members present during discussion)

Although the members reside in close proximity to *Simbai*, none of the members had previous relationships with each other. Four of the 11 members were originally from the rural area of Chivi in Masvingo province, but again they had no previous interaction. Strong relationships within the group has resulted since joining the cooperative. The members refer to each other as "sisters", and Aquillina Guyo is known as the "grandmother" while Julia Kunzekwenyika is known as the "mother". The following table outlines the members responses to the question of the value of participating in *Simbai*:

Table 5.4

Members' Verbatim Responses to Relationships within *Simbai*

Tapiwa	Aquillina has my grandmother's totem, Julia and I talk to each other at church about the cooperative, and here we talk alot about church
Janet	First time at cooperative and not know each other. Talked and found out where from, work together and learn from and about each other

Enara	Begin to work together and become friends, ask where they live and go places together, give ideas and solve problems, make friendships strong especially for solving problems
Aquillina	Share totem with Tapiwa. Form informal family relationship, strong friendship, if have a problem go talk to others for ideas
Julia	Friends doing work together, know each others problems, moods and try to help, begin to talk strong about own problems, policy that no one can share with others what is said at meetings

(Five of 11 members present during discussion)

Socialization among the members of *Simbai* has permitted the cooperative to function as a support group where ideas and problems are openly expressed, and members attempt to offer solutions. One entire meeting during my research project was devoted to the discussion of domestic abuse, wherein the male members were excluded from this session to allow for free discussion by the women on this subject. Each woman expressed her own family situation, but the reality was they all share a common bond in being victims of their husbands' heavy hand. Overall, the women discussed the fact that their husbands drank too much alcohol and return home angry and force intimacy on their wives. The women did not initially understand the purpose of contraceptives when they were first introduced to Zimbabwe, but when they did educate themselves, their husbands were against its use. Thus, the women who have many children feel they have too many, and they now use contraceptives without their husbands' knowledge. The women also complained about the fact that their husbands verbally and physically abuse them in front of their children, and fear a loss of respect from their children. Some women would like to divorce their husbands but fear losing their children because they do not have enough money to support the family. In Zimbabwe, if the divorce is initiated by the wife and she obtains custody of the children, the husband is not obligated to pay child support, so

women often remain in their marriages because of financial consideration. The women's involvement in *Simbai* is also a source of contention with their husbands, who feel their wives are wasting their time at the cooperative. The women, on the other hand, explained the sense of freedom they have when they are at the cooperative, but they must ensure that they return home early enough to complete their household responsibilities and to take care of their children. The result of this open forum resulted in a discussion about women's legal rights in Zimbabwe, and in a comparison to the situation in Canada regarding divorce and family violence.

Involvement in the cooperative has resulted in the women undertaking a triple burden in their daily lives and activities. Entrenched patriarchy has retained the responsibility of household work for women, so participation in *Simbai* has exponentially increased the workload for these women. The following table presents the usual daily routine of each member present during the discussion (seven of 11 members present):

Table 5.5

Simbai Members' Daily Activities

Julia	<p>4:00 a.m. - wake-up to buy tomatoes at market, cook porridge for children and get them prepared for school, laundry, clean house</p> <p>10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - cooperative work (refer to Table 5.6)</p> <p>3:00 p.m. - prepare for children coming home from school, knit in spare time, spread tomatoes on roadside to sell to 8:00 p.m., knit while selling tomatoes, go to bed at 10:00 p.m.</p> <p>Tired because work all day, can't buy bread so have to make porridge, time to rest is at Church</p>
Aquillina	<p>4:00 a.m. - wake-up and prepares food for sister's daughter, cleans house, go to market for maize</p> <p>10:30 a.m. - cooperative work</p> <p>After cooperative work, roast maize for selling, pay Z\$5.85 per week for a stall to sell maize</p>

- Angeline** 3:45 a.m. - bathes, older children makes porridge for school, buys tomatoes at market
10:00 a.m. - cooperative work
3:00 p.m. - sell tomatoes to about 9:30 p.m. at City Council stall (Z\$10 per month)
10:30 - knits for cooperative and makes sadza (porridge) for herself
- Enara** 4:30 a.m. - bathes, buys vegetables at market, prepares child for school, but she goes without eating until lunch
Comes to cooperative late every day because sells at City Council stall (Z\$3.50 per week), leaves child at stall to sell while she works at cooperative
Child cooks sadza while she sells at stall, 10:30 p.m. bed
- Janet** 4:00 a.m. - market for vegetables, prepares children porridge and readies them for school, sell vegetables from home so not have to pay for stall
10:00 a.m. - cooperative work
3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. - sell vegetables
Knit, prepare sadza, 10:30 p.m. bed
- Emma** 4:00 a.m. - bathe, market for vegetables (tomatoes, onion, pumpkins, potatoes, carrots, groundnuts), prepare porridge for child, clean yard, sweep room, prepare own breakfast
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - cooperative work
3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. - sell vegetables
Prepare supper, 10:30 p.m. bed
- Tapiwa (Male)** Life hard
4:00 a.m. check around yard for burglaries during the night, visit commercial farms to buy articles that wife sells, enquire for cheaper vegetables at commercial farms, when have lots here to sell do not go to farms
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - cooperative work, dig hard in the garden
3:00 p.m. - exchange with wife to go to market
8:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. - sell vegetables, takes over wife's stall, wait for men coming out of beer garden to buy vegetables
12:00 midnight returns home and reads newspaper for about 45 minutes
12:45 a.m. - secures cooperative premises, water garden at night because City Council watches how much water they use

Participation in *Simbai* has fostered a collective confidence among its members, who individually would not have had the confidence to learn new skills, such as gardening, weaving and knitting.

D. Leadership and Decision Making within *Simbai*

1. *Leadership* within *Simbai* is determined by voting among the members for the positions of chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary/treasurer. Because most of the members have been working together for the past nine years, they are familiar with each others abilities; however, they have certain qualities that they look for when selecting leaders. A leader must be honest, literate, capable of showing to the members that she can do something for them, approachable, kind, and willing to lead the cooperative. Positions presently held are:

Chairperson - Julia

Vice-Chairperson - Janet

Secretary/Treasurer - Esnathi (husband recently passed away and has not attended cooperative since January, 1994)

Duties of the chairperson involve setting up cooperative meetings, which occur at the end of the month, and conducting these meetings in a fair manner to allow all members to express their concerns. The chairperson is also responsible for delegating work to the members and ensuring members receive payment for their work. Members who are quicker at knitting, weaving and crocheting will have more items to sell at fairs held in Harare; hence, members who produce more items will earn more money. Agriculture produce (maize, vegetables) is shared equally among the members, even if one family is smaller/larger than another. Often members will sell their surplus produce at their market stalls to earn more money. The chairperson defines the work schedule (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6

Work Schedule of *Simbai*

Simbai operates from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday morning as follows: (Thursday is reserved for attendance at church)

Monday	Knitting
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday	Weaving

Gardening (weeding, watering, harvesting) is completed on a daily basis
 Maize sowing and harvesting - all members participate during the season
 Silk worm season - all members participate in feeding the worms

Interaction between the cooperative and the Ministry is carried out by the chairperson, who informs the Ministry of any changes in membership or management requirements. *Simbai* is somewhat confused about the type of relationship they can foster with the Ministry. When the cooperative received the loan from the EEC, the members thought that it was unconstitutional to directly communicate with the donor; thus, they had absolutely no input into the decisions affecting the expenditure of the loan. This perception, according to the members, was instilled by the Ministry and has resulted in a general fear of involving the Ministry in any of the cooperative's affairs. Finally, the chairperson liaises with other women's associations to develop potential markets for their production.

The Secretary/Treasurer is responsible for the minutes and financial records of the cooperative. At each meeting she reports the financial position of *Simbai* to the members. Records are maintained for inventory purchased and sold, and an annual harvest record is kept to reflect the sale of vegetables and maize. Repair ledgers are also updated for tools and machinery. Unfortunately, I was unable to examine any of these records as they were held by one of the members

who had recently become widowed and did not attend the cooperative during my research. The fact that these records were not maintained by another member indicates that they are not maintained according to appropriate bookkeeping standards.

Leadership skills are not disseminated to the cooperators. However, the cooperative relies heavily on internal training for new work areas. In gardening the women experimented with increasing their harvesting periods for maize from two harvests to three each year by planting maize during different times of the year on designated plots of land. This experiment was not successful because they planted during the winter, but they decided to plant maize earlier in the spring to harvest earlier and, thus be able to sell the maize before other producers. Another experiment was conducted to cultivate larger, healthier silk worm cocoons to increase their silk output by feeding the worms at night. This experiment was successful.

Membership enhancement has been difficult for *Simbai*, and it has been nearly impossible to keep current members interested in remaining with the cooperative. Promotion of the cooperative within the community is not a directive of the cooperative; thus, an increase in membership occurs when the cooperative is approached by potential cooperators expressing an interest to join when they have heard about *Simbai* during informal discussions with community members or *Simbai* cooperators. Security for the cooperative became an important issue for the cooperative and services were offered by two of the cooperators' husbands.

2. *Decision making* follows democratic principles and the types of decisions made reflect the operation of the cooperative. The cooperative will discuss whether to enter into a new venture (weaving) or to participate at a particular fair to market their products. Access to markets is the greatest concern for *Simbai* because the cooperative often does not have enough money to pay for stalls at fairs, transportation is inadequate, and the cooperative location is far from business centers. However, Zimbabwe has an existing market for silk thread at the Glen View Embroidery Training Centre. Glen View is a Ministry-operated cooperative that trains women in embroidery techniques, incorporating hand and machine skills into its training programme. Silk thread used at this cooperative is imported from China. *Simbai* could be supplying Glen View with its reeled and dyed thread, thus resulting in vertical integration. Unfortunately, *Simbai* has not approached Glen View for marketing purposes even though the cooperators are aware of the work undertaken at Glen View.

The Ministry provides a constraint on how decisions are made because the members have not been imparted with enough knowledge concerning silk worm cultivation. After nine years of harvesting cocoons, production ceased in 1994 because the worms became diseased. *Simbai* requested that the Ministry arrange for a specialist to come and examine the worms, but the Ministry did not act in time to save the harvest. The members do not understand the reason for the inaction, but they now claim that the Ministry is against them and feel that they have no one else to assist them to develop new silk worm harvests.

The impact of the community on *Simbai's* decision making ability is manifested by the necessity of including two male members in the cooperative. Since the cooperative annexed the 13 hectare plot of land in Glen Norah 'B',

members have been continually confronted by angry community members. Because Glen Norah 'B' is a high density community with small household properties, the land was previously used communally by the community for managing their personal gardens. When *Simbai* established ownership of the cooperative property, the community was forced off the property, thus initiating negative feelings from the community members toward the cooperators. Until 1994, the community had continually harrassed the cooperators with verbal threats, stone throwing and vandalism. The negative reaction of the community was so bad that the cooperative had to erect a wire fence around the property to protect their gardens and mulberry saplings; however, the community responded by tearing down the fence and uprooting many of the saplings. Hence, two male members joined the cooperative to provide security; one lives within the cooperative building and the other lives on the property. Community members view *Simbai* as a government-led project that grants the cooperators special status through their participation in the cooperative. The cooperators would like to inform the community members about the benefits of joining the cooperative but have not done so because they are now ostracised by the community for occupying the land.

E. Future Success of *Simbai*

The remaining members are committed to developing *Simbai* into a viable, sustainable cooperative, as they recognize the strength of group activities when resources are limited individually. The perception among cooperators is that the Ministry hinders further progress of the cooperative and that increased autonomy must be assumed by the members for controlling funding expenditures and the direction of activities pursued within the cooperative. The members also believe that *Simbai* should have been initiated as a grass roots project in order to

incrementally expand and progress the cooperative's activities. However, members feel they have suffered long enough without being involved in an organization, and are determined to continue participating in *Simbai*.

Unfortunately, the future of silk production is uncertain at *Simbai*, but the other activities performed will ensure the continued existence of the cooperative. The women participating in this cooperative have gained more for themselves than just producing an item for sale. These women have a forum to air their problems and concerns regarding their personal lives and support is offered among a group of women who share similar life circumstances. Further, an atmosphere of empowerment was prevalent at all meetings with these women, as they displayed conviction for their feelings and thoughts regarding any subject matter. The relationship these women enjoy with one another is perhaps the most important impetus for their continuing to develop *Simbai* into a viable cooperative.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION - SOLUTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

A. Future Success of Cooperative Development in National Development Policy

As cooperative development is today a permanent policy in most African national development plans, it is necessary to examine methods for improving the effectiveness of this form of organizing. At the outset it must be reiterated that African governments have not adequately introduced cooperative development into national development policy, thus decentralization on administrative, political and economic levels must be sought. The first step toward decentralization is to convince cooperative "members and managers that they have the ability to run activities on their own; there is no need to depend on outsiders" (Braverman, 1991: 20). In terms of self-help promotion:

- Self-help can only develop among individuals who are aware of their ability to improve their own position--which is felt as being unsatisfactory--by their own effort, individuals have to be willing to act jointly with others who have the same or similar problems, in order to achieve their common objectives.

- Self-help implies self-determination of goals, active participation in planning, execution and evaluation of self-help activities (Münkner, 1988: 193, 194).

Accordingly, "(c)operatives can only develop as strong organizations if there is a political environment conducive to local initiatives and if government is willing to accept cooperatives as genuinely independent actors" (Braverman, 1991: 29). For decentralization to be effective, a clearly defined role for government vis-à-vis cooperative development must be sought, which seeks to provide cooperative members with assistance to help themselves (Braverman, 1991: 29).

The withdrawal of public agencies from performing certain functions has benefitted cooperatives, especially "those established spontaneously without governmental involvement (because) they have been best able to adapt to new circumstances and to seize new opportunities" (United Nations, 1992: 8). Dismantling government structures that are established to perform certain functions but are not actually providing the services they have been mandated to perform, is perhaps the greatest problem affecting effective cooperative development in Africa (United Nations, 1992: 10).

The planning stage of cooperative development is important for ensuring that the cooperative will serve the needs of its members so that it is not projected upon the members, who may not participate as effectively if ownership is perceived to be held elsewhere. The target group must collaborate with the government department to discuss "their specific needs during the planning stage of the project and setting the goals to be achieved by the project" (Münkner, 1988: 195).

Just as the planning stage requires member input, so must members be involved in the planning of financial contributions and the allocation of these funds. Typically funds are sought and allocated by the government department and the cooperative must rely "on a political decision by the respective government to release certain funds or on a request for outside funding" (Münkner, 1988: 196). The cooperative, as beneficiary of the funds, plays a passive participant role in that the use of funds are restricted by rigid budget rules and "can only be used for the purposes for which they were released" (Münkner, 1988: 196). Flexible plans can be used to accommodate membership participation in funding allocation, which "give the field staff executing the

projects or programmes a greater margin of discretion in the use of funds" (Münkner, 1988: 196). Since members have been involved from the planning stage, it is likely that they will have a thorough understanding of the project and will be better informed regarding their operating requirements.

"Helping to build up self-help organizations does not mean building up such organizations for the target group, but rather to help the target group to build up such organizations by itself" (Münkner, 1988: 197). In this respect, human resource development takes time in order to acquire the necessary knowledge, leadership skills, professional skills and local institutions. Self-help is directed more at learning by doing, and with this in mind, project staff providing training and assistance must accept their "role as ... advisor(s) who can warn against decisions that may have detrimental effects but cannot prevent people from doing what they decide" (Münkner, 1988: 198).

In short, the role of government in cooperative development "should lie in creating an enabling environment and infrastructural support", which includes "clear legislation that defines the rights and duties of cooperative members, their liability, legal personality, and relationship to the government, external auditors, and others" (Braverman, 1991: 29). In collaboration with cooperative members, government may also assist in preparing flexible by-laws, protect cooperatives "against unfair practices and (ensure) that they are given access to profitable business activities" (Braverman, 1991: 29). Institution building and human resource development can also be developed with the assistance of government, by providing training and education; however, "(t)he goal of assistance in human resource development must be to help groups generate their own leadership" (Braverman, 1991: 29). Financial assistance may be sought by the government

for the cooperative, but this assistance should enhance already existing funds. "Finally, the government can play a catalytic role by encouraging the establishment of cooperative federations and unions that must eventually be able to take over advisory, supervisory, and educational responsibilities from the authorities" (Braverman, 1991: 29).

B. Empowerment and *Simbai* Glen Norah Co-operative Society Ltd.

As discussed, *Simbai* represents a cooperative enterprise that was established to provide employment opportunities to unemployed women, while learning new skills and management abilities. In this instance, the cooperators have gained entrepreneurial qualities that would not otherwise have been acquired if they had not participated in *Simbai*. Involvement in the cooperative has also been a consciousness-raising experience for the cooperators, which has come about from working together and sharing similar personal concerns about their families and the community. Because of their enhanced awareness regarding women in Zimbabwean society, the cooperators have educated themselves about the status of women in Zimbabwe, divorce law and child custody legislation; any further action, however, will be unlikely due to their lack of financial resources.

While confidence about the cooperators' abilities to effect greater success for *Simbai* appears to be high, they are fearful of stepping outside the safety of the group to seek advice or assistance from women's groups or non-governmental organizations. Even approaching the Ministry for assistance is a source of stress because the Ministry is held above the cooperators as the one force that could cease operation at *Simbai* at a moment's notice. In addition to the lack of support from the Ministry, the cooperators do not enjoy support from

their families and the surrounding community. Thus, the benefits for continual participation in *Simbai* must be on a personal level since the cooperators receive minimal economic gain from their efforts. The women of *Simbai* appear to feel competent and useful about the work they undertake at the cooperative, which has translated into a degree of empowerment regarding their self-worth within the collective and about their ability to contribute to their families' well-being.

On a personal level, the women of *Simbai* taught me about the importance of community, and since my brief involvement with them, I have discovered my significance within my own community.

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1. MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE CO-OPERATIVES (DEVELOPING COUNTRIES) RECOMMENDATION, 1966

I SCOPE

1. This Recommendation applies to all categories of co-operatives, including consumer co-operatives, land improvement co-operatives, agricultural productive and processing co-operatives, rural supply co-operatives, agricultural marketing co-operatives, fishery co-operatives, service co-operatives, handicrafts co-operatives, workers' productive co-operatives, labour contracting co-operatives, co-operative thrift and credit societies and banks, housing co-operatives, transport co-operatives, insurance co-operatives and health co-operatives.

II OBJECTIVES OF POLICY CONCERNING CO-OPERATIVES

2. The establishment and growth of co-operatives should be regarded as one of the important instruments for economic, social and cultural development as well as human advancement in developing countries.

3. In particular, co-operatives should be established and developed as a means of—

- (a) improving the economic, social and cultural situation of persons of limited resources and opportunities as well as encouraging their spirit of initiative;
- (b) increasing personal and national capital resources by the encouragement of thrift, by eliminating usury and by the sound use of credit;
- (c) contributing to the economy an increased measure of democratic control of economic activity and of equitable distribution of surplus;
- (d) increasing national income, export revenues and employment by a fuller utilisation of resources, for instance in the implementation of systems of agrarian reform and of land settlement aimed at bringing fresh areas into productive use and in the development of modern industries, preferably scattered, processing local raw materials;
- (e) improving social conditions, and supplementing social services in such fields as housing and, where appropriate, health, education and communications;
- (f) helping to raise the level of general and technical knowledge of their members.

4. Governments of developing countries should formulate and carry out a policy under which co-operatives receive aid and encouragement, of an economic, financial, technical, legislative or other character, without effect on their independence.

5. (1) In elaborating such a policy, regard should be had to economic and social conditions, to available resources and to the role which co-operatives can play in the development of the country concerned.

(2) The policy should be integrated in development plans in so far as this is consistent with the essential features of co-operatives.

6. The policy should be kept under review and adapted to changes in social and economic needs and to technological progress.

7. Existing co-operatives should be associated with the formulation and, where possible, application of the policy.

8. The co-operative movement should be encouraged to seek the collaboration in the formulation and, where appropriate, application of the policy, of organisations with common objectives.

9. (1) The governments concerned should associate co-operatives on the same basis as other undertakings with the formulation of national economic plans and other general economic measures, at least whenever such plans and measures are liable to affect their activities. Co-operatives should also be associated with the application of such plans and measures in so far as this is consistent with their essential characteristics.

(2) For the purposes provided for in Paragraph 7 and Paragraph 9, subparagraph (1), of this Recommendation, federations of co-operatives should be empowered to represent their member societies at the local, regional and national levels.

III METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY CONCERNING CO-OPERATIVES

A LEGISLATION

10. All appropriate measures, including the consultation of existing co-operatives, should be taken—

- (a) to detect and eliminate provisions contained in laws and regulations which may have the effect of unduly restricting the development of co-operatives through discrimination, for instance in regard to taxation or the allocation of licences and quotas, or through failure to take account of the special character of co-operatives or of the particular rules of operation of co-operatives;
- (b) to avoid the inclusion of such provisions in future laws and regulations;
- (c) to adapt fiscal laws and regulations to the special conditions of co-operatives.

11. There should be laws or regulations specifically concerned with the establishment and functioning of co-operatives, and with the protection of their right to operate on not less than equal terms with other forms of enterprise. These laws or regulations should preferably be applicable to all categories of co-operatives.

12. (1) Such laws and regulations should in any case include provisions on the following matters:

- (a) a definition or description of a co-operative bringing out its essential characteristics, namely that it is an association of persons who have voluntarily joined together to achieve a common end through the formation of a democratically controlled organisation, making equitable contributions to the capital required and accepting a fair share of the risks and benefits of the undertaking in which the members actively participate;
- (b) a description of the objects of a co-operative, and procedures for its establishment and registration, the amendment of its statutes, and its dissolution;
- (c) the conditions of membership, such as the maximum amount of each share and, where appropriate, the proportion of the share due at the moment of subscription and the time allowed for full payment, as well as the rights and duties of members, which would be laid down in greater detail in the by-laws of co-operatives;
- (d) methods of administration, management and internal audit, and procedures for the establishment and functioning of competent organs;
- (e) the protection of the name "co-operative";
- (f) machinery for the external audit and guidance of co-operatives and for the enforcement of the laws and regulations.

(2) The procedures provided for in such laws or regulations, in particular the procedures for registration, should be as simple and practical as possible, so as not to hinder the creation and development of co-operatives.

13. Laws and regulations concerning co-operatives should authorise co-operatives to federate

B EDUCATION AND TRAINING

14. Measures should be taken to disseminate a knowledge of the principles, methods, possibilities and limitations of co-operatives as widely as possible among the peoples of developing countries

15. Appropriate instruction on the subject should be given not only in co-operative schools, colleges and other specialised centres but also in educational institutions such as—

- (a) universities and centres of higher education;
- (b) teachers' training colleges;
- (c) agricultural schools and other vocational educational establishments and workers' education centres;
- (d) secondary schools;
- (e) primary schools.

16. (1) With a view to promoting practical experience in co-operative principles and methods, the formation and operation of student co-operatives in schools and colleges should be encouraged.

(2) Similarly, workers' organisations and craftsmen's associations should be encouraged and helped in the implementation of plans for the promotion of co-operatives.

17. Steps should be taken, in the first place at the local level, to familiarise the adult population with the principles, methods and possibilities of co-operatives.

18. Full use should be made of such media of instruction as text-books, lectures, seminars, study and discussion groups, mobile instructors, guided tours of co-operative undertakings, the press, films, radio and television and other media of mass communication. These should be adapted to the particular conditions of each country.

19 (1) Provision should be made both for appropriate technical training and for training in co-operative principles and methods of persons who will be—and, where necessary, of persons who are—office-bearers or members of the staffs of co-operatives, as well as of their advisers and publicists.

(2) Where existing facilities are inadequate, specialised colleges or schools should be established to provide such training, which should be given by specialised teachers or leaders of the co-operative movement with teaching materials adapted to the requirements of the country; if such specialised institutions cannot be established, special courses on co-operation should be given either by correspondence or in such establishments as schools of accountancy, schools of administration and schools of commerce.

(3) The use of special programmes of practical training should be one of the means of contributing to the education and basic and further training of members of co-operatives; these programmes should take into account local cultural conditions, and the need to disseminate literacy and knowledge of elementary arithmetic.

C. AID TO CO-OPERATIVES

Financial Aid

20. (1) Where necessary, financial aid from outside should be given to co-operatives when they initiate their activities or encounter financial obstacles to growth or transformation.

(2) Such aid should not entail any obligations contrary to the independence or interests of co-operatives, and should be designed to encourage rather than replace the initiative and effort of the members of co-operatives.

21. (1) Such aid should take the form of loans or credit guarantees.

(2) Grants and reductions in or exemptions from taxes may also be provided, in particular, to help finance—

- (a) publicity, promotional and educational campaigns;
- (b) certain clearly defined tasks in the public interest.

22. Where such aid cannot be provided by the co-operative movement, it should preferably be given by the State or other public bodies, although it may, if necessary, come from private institutions. Such aid should be co-ordinated so as to avoid overlapping and dispersal of resources.

23. (1) Grants and tax exemptions or reductions should be subject to conditions prescribed by national laws or regulations and relating in particular to the use to be made of the aid and the amount thereof; the conditions of loans and credit guarantees may be determined in each case.

(2) The competent authority should ensure that the use of financial aid and, in the case of a loan, its repayment, are adequately supervised.

24. (1) Financial aid from public or semi-public sources should be channelled through a national co-operative bank or, failing that, another central co-operative institution capable of assuming responsibility for its use and, where appropriate, repayment; pending the establishment of such institutions the aid may be given directly to individual co-operatives.

(2) Subject to the provisions of Paragraph 20, subparagraph (2), of this Recommendation, financial aid from private institutions may be given directly to individual co-operatives.

Administrative Aid

25. While it is essential that the management and administration of a co-operative be, from the outset, the responsibility of the members and persons elected by them, the competent authority should, in appropriate cases and normally for an initial period only—

- (a) assist the co-operative in obtaining and remunerating competent staff;
- (b) place at the disposal of the co-operative persons competent to give guidance and advice.

26. (1) Generally, co-operatives should be able to obtain guidance and advice, which respect their autonomy and the responsibilities of their members, their organs and their staff, on matters relating to management and administration, as well as on technical matters.

(2) Such guidance and advice should preferably be given by a federation of co-operatives or by the competent authority.

D SUPERVISION AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

27 (1) Co-operatives should be subject to a form of supervision designed to ensure that they carry on their activities in conformity with the objects for which they were established and in accordance with the law

(2) Supervision should preferably be the responsibility of a federation of co-operatives or of the competent authority.

28. Auditing of the accounts of co-operatives affiliated to a federation of co-operatives should be the responsibility of that federation; pending the establishment of such a federation, or where a federation is unable to provide this service, the competent authority or a qualified independent body should assume the task.

29. The measures referred to in Paragraphs 27 and 28 of this Recommendation should be so planned and carried out as to—

- (a) ensure good management and administration of co-operatives;
- (b) protect third parties;
- (c) provide an opportunity of completing the education and training of the office-bearers and members of the staff of co-operatives through practice and through critical examination of mistakes.

30. (1) The functions of promoting co-operatives, providing for education concerning co-operatives and for the training of office-bearers and members of the staff of co-operatives, and giving aid in their organisation and functioning, should preferably be performed by one central body so as to ensure coherent action.

(2) The performance of these functions should preferably be the responsibility of a federation of co-operatives, pending the establishment of such a body the competent authority or, where appropriate, other qualified bodies, should assume the task.

31 (1) The functions referred to in Paragraph 30 of this Recommendation should, wherever possible, be discharged as full-time work.

(2) They should be performed by persons who have received training specifically directed towards the exercise of such functions; such training should be provided by specialised institutions or, wherever suitable, through specialised courses in schools and colleges referred to in Paragraph 19 of this Recommendation.

32 The competent authority should collect and publish at least once a year a report and statistics relating to the operations and growth of co-operatives in the national economy

33 Where the services of federations of co-operatives or of other existing institutions cannot adequately meet the need for research, exchanges of experience and publications, special institutions, serving the entire country or several regions, should, if possible, be established.

IV INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

34 (1) Members should, to the greatest extent possible, collaborate in providing aid and encouragement to co-operatives in developing countries.

(2) Such collaboration should be envisaged—

- (a) between developing countries,
- (b) between countries of a particular region, especially within the framework of regional organisations, where such exist; and
- (c) between countries with an old-established co-operative movement and developing countries.

(3) As appropriate, the help of national co-operative organisations should be enlisted for such collaboration, and use should be made, particularly with a view to the co-ordination of international effort, of international co-operative organisations and other interested international bodies

(4) The collaboration should extend to such measures as—

- (a) the increased provision of technical assistance to the co-operative movement of developing countries, wherever possible in the form of co-ordinated programmes involving different agencies, both inter-governmental and non-governmental;
- (b) the preparation and supply of information, textbooks, audio-visual aids and analogous material to assist in the drafting of legislation, in instruction on co-operation and in the training of office-bearers and qualified staffs of co-operatives;
- (c) the exchange of qualified personnel,
- (d) the grant of fellowships;
- (e) the organisation of international seminars and discussion groups;
- (f) the inter-co-operative exchange of goods and services,
- (g) the initiation of systematic research into the structure, working methods and problems of co-operative movements in developing countries.

V SPECIAL PROVISIONS CONCERNING THE ROLE OF CO-OPERATIVES IN DEALING WITH PARTICULAR PROBLEMS

35 It should be recognised that co-operatives may, in certain circumstances, have a special role to play in dealing with particular problems of developing countries.

Silk

SERICULTURE (GROWTH AND PRODUCTION)

Silk is produced by the larvae of several moths, but the *Bombyx mori* is the only one raised under controlled conditions. These larvae live on mulberry leaves only, and each tiny larva consumes an extremely large number of leaves. Raising these insects is a skilled occupation and requires countless hours of labor. The present-day industry is carefully controlled in relation to disease prevention, and modern silk "factories" are as clean and frequently as sterile as hospital operating rooms.

The life cycle of the female *Bombyx mori* is relatively brief. Furthermore, the domestication over the ages has resulted in a moth that does not fly. The cycle has been exploited further, so there is an orderly sequence in raising the worm that makes it possible to have a continuous industry. When it is not possible to have worms at the correct stages for continuous production, the cocoon can be held in storage until needed for reeling. The female *Bombyx mori* lays between 400 and 700 eggs. Each egg is about the size of a pinhead, and each has a small dot on one end that is soft and permits the larva to hatch easily. The eggs are carefully screened and tested to ensure freedom from disease. They can be kept for long periods of time in cold storage without damage. When a supply of fresh, young mulberry leaves is ready, the eggs are warmed slightly, and three to seven days later the worm hatches and begins to feed on the tender leaves. The new larvae are about 1/4 inch long. Although the larvae of the *Bombyx mori* are called silkworms, they are technically caterpillars.

During the growth cycle of the larva, it moults (sheds its outer skin) four times. Each time it grows a new skin to fit its larger size. After the fourth moulting, it eats for about ten days, making a total eating period of about twenty-five to thirty-five days. It is approximately three inches long and from 1/4 to 1/2 inch in diameter.

The larva attaches itself to a specially constructed straw frame, rears its head, and begins to spew the silk liquid, which hardens on contact with air. The larva spins by moving its head in a figure-eight motion and constructs the cocoon from the outside in (Fig. 5.7). As it spins, the larva decreases in size, and upon completion of the cocoon it changes into the dormant chrysalis. Except for those used for breeding, the cocoons are subjected to heat, which kills the chrysalis. These cocoons can then be stored until they are unreeled in preparation for yarn manufacturing.

The silkworm extrudes the liquid fiber from two tiny orifices or spinnerettes in its head. As the liquid emerges into the air, it solidifies into silk filaments (Fig. 5.8). The fibers, coated with a gummy substance called *sericin*, are extruded by two glands in close proximity to the cocoon as it is formed.

In addition to the sericulture of *Bombyx mori*, several other moths produce larvae that spin cocoons composed of usable silk fiber. Probably the most important in this group are the moths responsible for tussah silk. These larvae feed on oak leaves and grow wild.

PROCESSING

Silk filaments are unwound from the cocoons in a manufacturing plant called a *filature*. Several cocoons are placed in hot water to soften the gum, and the surfaces are brushed lightly to find the ends of the filaments. These ends are collected, threaded through a guide, and wound onto a wheel called a reel; hence the process is called *reeling*.

Reeling requires skillful operators (Fig. 5.9). The fibers are narrower at the beginnings and ends, and experienced workers can join cocoons so the diameter of reeled yarn remains constant. Only uniform reeled silk will sell for premium prices.

As the fibers are combined and pulled onto the reel, twist can be inserted to hold the filaments together. This is called *throwing*, and the reeling yarn is *thrown yarn*. Fibers may be thrown in a separate operation but the operation remains basically identical.

Sericin, the gum that holds the filaments together, remains on the fibers during reeling and throwing, and is removed by the process called *degumming*. Frequently it is left on through the fabric construction processes. Before finishing, the gum is removed by boiling the fabric in soap and water. If stiffness is desired in the completed fabric, some of the *sericin* may be replaced, but this is seldom desirable as the presence of the *sericin* increases the tendency for silk to water-spot.

Short lengths of silk fiber may be spun into yarns using the same type of spinning techniques used for cotton or wool (See Chapter 16). The short fibers, called *staple silk* or *waste silk*, are obtained from the outer and inner edges of the cocoon, from broken cocoons, or from cutting of filament silk into short lengths. These are then processed into yarn using standard yarn-making operations.

SIMBAI GLEN NORAH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.
Simbai Members' Information Sheet

Name	Year Joined Cooperative	Role in Cooperative	Age	Personal Status	Reason for Joining Cooperative
Julia Kunzekwenyika	1985 1988 1989-1994	Member Secretary Chair	39	Married 2 boys 3 girls	Nothing to do Nothing to bring to family/husband Nowhere person No money, have to help husband, family, children and self
Enara Nyatara	1985	Member	39	Married 6 boys 3 girls	I was very poor and if joined coop. could get something to support family, still waiting
Janet Mukucha	1985 1989	Member Vice-chair	45	Married 2 boys 2 girls	To get money, something to help herself
Aquillina Guyo	1985	Member	40	Divorced 1 girl 1 boy (died)	Thought would get something Just sitting at home
Calicaroline Muyambao (Wife)	1991	Member	29	Married 1 boy 1 girl	To help husband

Thinas Muyambao (Husband)	1991	Security	45	Married 3 boys 3 girls	As a man preferred to join Aim was to help with security
Emma Madziyiye (Wife)	1993	Member	27	Married 1 girl	To help self and husband
Tapiwa Madziyiye (Husband)	1993	Security	29	Married 1 girl	Only women coop. but joined to get something to support family, still waiting
Angeline Kaseke	1985 1989	Member Petty Cashier	39	Married 6 boys	Because of hard life I was facing, aim was if joined could get something to help in her life To help husband with school fees and everything

END

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