

COOPERATIVE ORGANIZING: Empowering Administrative Workers

Case Studies of Successful Coops in Academic Units of the University of the Philippines

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"You can actually do better for yourself by being cooperative and altruistic than by selfishly refusing to cooperate with others. It's not that you do as well. You actually do better."

- Helena Cronin
London School of Economics

Introduction

As an academic institution, the College of Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD) recognizes the potential of women and men alike in social transformation through participation and empowerment. Its programs are designed to develop students into effective social practitioners so that they will be able to assist the workers, peasants, indigenous people, children, women and other marginalized sectors of the society.

Consistent with the mission of the college, the Research and Extension for Development Office (REDO), a non-teaching academic unit of CSWCD provides research, training, publication and extension services to various groups, such as, community leaders, social development practitioners, government employees, members of the academe, among others.

In line with this function, REDO also examines and supports initiatives for improving the welfare of the university office employees and field workers.

Given the below poverty line salary of many administrative workers and even low-level REPS employed by the University of the Philippines, organizing employees' cooperatives (coops) is one of the alternative ways to augment UP employees' incomes.

In the University of the Philippines, Diliman campus, there exist three sectors serving the studentry according to the position classification of employees namely:

Academic Teaching Sector or the Faculty	1,460
Academic Non-Teaching Sector or the Research, Extension and Professional Staff (REPS) (as of 2003)	499
Administrative Sector	1796

Source: A Study on the Functions of Research and Extension Staff and Perceptions and of REPS in UP Diliman (Tojos, 2004)

The largest and the most marginalized of all the sectors, the administrative workers, consist mainly of utility workers, drivers, clerks, mason, administrative officers, air condition technicians, student evaluation officers, among others. Their monthly salaries range from Php 6,050.00 – 18,830.00 with actual take home pay ranging from Php 200.00 to 1,000.00 per week. This could be attributed to a number of deductions from loans incurred to meet the educational expenses of their children, health care/ medical expenses, and importantly the daily subsistence needs of their families.

With this condition, the administrative staff of some of the academic units of the university organized themselves into cooperatives. The workers' cooperatives organized are businesses in which the workers are all equal owners and have democratic control of decisions. It is a closed-type or institutional based cooperative predominantly composed of employees of a particular college or unit of the university. Aside from its beneficial economic base that welds the workers together, it becomes a potential and an innovative way to serve the university constituents, as well.

To date, there are a number of existing college-based cooperatives in the university such as: (1) College of Business Administration; (2) School of Economics; (3) College of Education; (4) College of Home Economics; (5) College of Human Kinetics; (6) College of Mass Communication; (7) Col-

lege of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP); (8) College of Social Work and Community Development; and the (9) University Library.

Noteworthy to mention are the other cooperatives in the campus that benefit the university-wide constituents namely: UP Consumers' Cooperative, UP Credit Union Cooperative, and the UP Employees Housing Cooperative.

This study focuses on how cooperative organizing contributed to the empowerment of the REPS and administrative workers in two (2) unit-based cooperatives, namely: the U.P. College of Business Administration Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc. (UPCBA-MPCI) and the UP School of Economics Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc. (UPSEEMC). These two were chosen as they are some of the most successful cooperatives in the university because they have attained stable growth and are in the process of expansion and diversification. However, the good practices of those who are still in the infancy stage, or in the process of setting up or testing systems and procedures, organizational assessment, planning and strengthening were likewise gathered.

A Brief Background of Cooperatives in the Philippines

As part of the effort of the government to strengthen the development of cooperatives in all sectors of the economy, the 1987 Constitution mandated that "Congress shall create an agency to promote the viability of cooperatives as an instrument of social justice and economic development."¹ Subsequently, Republic Acts 6938 and 6939 were enacted by Congress on March 10, 1990 to ordain the Cooperative Code of the Philippines and create the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) respectively.

Cooperatives in the Philippines are defined as a duly registered associations of persons, with a common bond of interest, who have voluntarily joined together to achieve a lawful, common, social or economic end, making equitable contributions to the capital required and accepting a fair share of the risks and benefits of the undertaking in accordance with the universally accepted cooperatives principles.²

As provided in Article 23 of R.A. 6938, there are various types of cooperatives based on the primary functions or business activities engaged in by the cooperative. Among these are:

1. Credit cooperative – offers savings and mobilizes funds in order to grant loans for productive and providential purposes.
2. Consumers cooperative – provides or sells goods to consumer-members or non-members at reasonable prices.
3. Producers cooperative – engages in joint or collective production, whether agricultural or industrial.
4. Marketing cooperative – serves as intermediary of goods between production and end consumption.
5. Service cooperative – engages in providing its members basic services that are difficult for separate individuals to procure and/or engages in mobilizing the services or pooling the expertise of its members in order to provide services to other individuals, households, business outfits, etc.
6. Multipurpose cooperative – operates two or more types of business activities.

RA 6938 also provides that in terms of membership, cooperatives can be categorized into primary, secondary and tertiary cooperatives. In a primary cooperative, membership is on individual capacity who may come from several regions or provinces or from regional or national institutions. Secondary and tertiary cooperatives are those whose members are cooperatives and therefore juridical persons, not individuals.

In a study conducted by Jorge V. Sibal, entitled *Organizing Employee Cooperatives and Enterprises: A New Mechanism in Employee Benefits Management*³ he cited that "an employee cooperative is the most popular form of an employee enterprise." It belongs to the category of institutional cooperatives where membership is open to employees or members of the institution.

The organization of institutional cooperatives can be traced back in 1957 upon the enactment of the Philippine Non-agricultural Credit Act (RA No. 2023). Non-agricultural coops in electricity, banking, transportation and institutions (offices and factories) were first recognized.⁴

While employee or workers cooperative was cited by Sibal to be the most popular form of an employee enterprise, he likewise named other forms of employee enterprises such as the (1) employee savings and loan associations (ESLAs) or informal "*paluwagan*" which are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas; (2) consumers' cooperatives which operate the employees' canteen or stores; (3) cooperative financing and other quasi-banking operations for the group purchases of appliances, equipment, motor vehicles, etc. (4) cooperative housing, and (5) cooperative health and medical insurance.

In a labor conference in 1992, the participants who were composed of representatives from the member affiliates of the Labor Caucus on Alternative Development (LCAD), drafted "vision" documents which the government administration may refer to see how collected wisdom of organized labor can offer solutions to the country's nagging problems such as debt, mass poverty, labor empowerment, democracy, among others. One of the guiding principles it has cited towards the realization of their crafted constitutional vision was the general empowerment of the workers, that is, "Unions must be encouraged to put up cooperatives whenever conditions are favorable. This is another venue for them to practice collective decision-making for their mutual benefit."⁵

Organizing institutional cooperatives can be very rewarding to the employees because they can enjoy the privileges of cooperatives like (1) exemptions from all taxes in national, city, provincial or barangays within 10 years after registration with the CDA or prior to attaining accumulated reserves of Php10 million; (2) the free use of available space for coops organized among government employees; and (3) the entitlement to loans, credit lines, rediscounting, etc. with the Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Philippine National Bank and other government and private financial institutions (Article 63, R.A. 6938).⁶

Further, according to Sibal⁷, institutional coops have higher chances of success because of the following factors:

1. Members know each other.
2. Institutional coops are usually assisted by management in many forms like check offs in salary deductions for collection of dues, savings and payment of loans, subsidized education and training, donation to capital build-up or counter part funds, free use of space, equipment and facilities, etc.
3. These coops may be assisted by NGOs, government agencies and other entities like the employees' unions.

In the University of the Philippines, a study entitled "The Perceived Benefits of UP Diliman Employees-Cooperative Members" was conducted by Silapan-Todas (2004) to gauge the capability of coop management in generating benefits for its members, thus, a major source of their satisfaction.

It came out with the following major findings:

1. Coop management must be improved in order for cooperative to succeed.
2. Membership participation in terms of amount of dividend and significance of lower prices of goods and/or interest rates on the satisfaction of members (factors for economic betterment of members) must be important input in coop's policies.
3. Activities/programs of coops should teach members the principles and values of cooperatives and in assessing their needs and problems.
4. Majority of the employee-members were satisfied with the benefits they were receiving as members of the coops and their expectations were generally satisfied.

Objectives and Methodology

This study examined the development and management of the workers' cooperatives in the College of Business Administration and School of Economics, and how it empowered its administrative staff, with the view of possible replication in other units and/or adoption of their good practices by struggling college-based cooperatives.

Specifically, this study:

1. looked into the history and management of two successful co-operatives existing in the academic units of the university namely the (1) U.P. College of Business Administration Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc. (UPCBA-MPCI) and the (2) UP School of Economics Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperatives, Inc. (UPSEEMCI);
2. cross-examined their operation vis-a-vis their workloads and how the cooperatives help augment their need for livelihood and income generation;
3. determined the good practices of these two cooperatives and those that are existing in other academic units that led to the empowerment of its members towards possible replication in other units of the university.

A combination of data collection techniques was used for the case studies.

1. Review of records and materials particularly Annual Reports, Articles of Cooperation, Statements of Financial Condition, Minutes of Meetings and other pertinent documents;
2. Key Informants Interview using semi-structured questionnaires with the officers or members of the Board of Directors of the cooperatives;
3. Roundtable discussion with representatives of other college-based cooperatives.

Case Profile 1

**U.P. College of Business Administration Multi-Purpose
Cooperative, Inc.
(UPCBA-MPCI)**

In 1990, a group of faculty members of the College of Business Administration donated a considerable amount of Php 38,137.17 to serve as seed capital for any business venture

that the administrative staff would like to put up in order to augment their income. From here, it was suggested by a staff that they go into the establishment of a cooperative to formalize their endeavor.

Spearheaded by its Administrative Officer then, Teresita Gaza, and the staff of U.P. Business Research Foundation, the cooperative was formally registered to the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) on February 5, 1991 as the U.P. College of Business Administration Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc. (UPCBA-MPCI). The Articles of Cooperation of the UPCBA-MPCI states that it was organized to increase their income and purchasing power, pool their resources by encouraging savings, and provide loans for provident and productive purposes, among others.

The members contributed Php50.00 each for their initial capital build up (CBU) to add to the donated fund of the faculty. The combined fund was used to purchase a photocopying machine.

During the first five years of operation, the cooperative thrived on volunteer efforts of its members in the area of setting up the business, coming up with systems and procedures, book keeping, accounting and other tasks.

To date, the cooperative has a total of 26 members. With this number of members, the basic organizational structure includes the General Assembly, the Board Members, Credit Committee, Inventory Committee and the Election Committee. The Board of Directors (BOD) is composed of five members (four females and one male) who meet monthly for their regular meeting. Owing to the flexibility of the basic organizational structure as prescribed by the Cooperative Code of the Philippines (RA 6938), a member of the BOD, Ms. Marlin Santiago, was appointed as the General Manager for Operations of the coop's business.

The success and sustainability of this cooperative was attributed to the entrepreneurial and managerial skills of the BOD chairperson cum manager of the cooperative. Prudent lending

policies or adherence to basic management policies such as credit limit, 50% repayment scheme before renewal of loan, and capability to pay based on take home pay are being implemented. On the other hand, the manager would attribute their success to the attitude of the members who comply with their obligations to pay, thus, having a very low delinquency rate for the lending services.

The General Assembly (GA) is held every year during the month of April. A 100% attendance is achieved because of the raffle prizes given to all the members present. The prizes range from television sets and other appliances to cash prizes not less than Php 1,100.00. This affair is being conducted after office hours and is graced by the presence of a number of university officials. A budget of Php 50,000.00 to Php 60,000.00 is allotted for the occasion that pervades in a festive mood. It also becomes a venue for fostering closer relationship among the workers/members.

In 2005, the coop distributed the Patronage Refund amounting to Php 327,351.82 among the members based on their capital share. Cash gifts of Php 5,000.00 per member and Christmas packs worth Php 1,500.00 were also given to the members. In addition, a death benefit of Php 20,000.00 is also provided to the family of a demised cooperative member.

The cooperative's business activities include: 1) photocopying services; 2) lending; 3) snack store; 4) school supplies; and 5) consigned books. In order to operate the business efficiently, the cooperative hired three full time staff who are paid regular wages and salaries. They are also provided with benefits such as Social Security System (SSS), Employees Compensation Commission (ECC), Philhealth and PAG-IBIG contributions.

As of 2005, the coop's current developments are: Cash in Bank of Php 558,554.61; Short Time Deposit of Php 1,003,226.67; Loan Receivables of Php 996,775.37; and Merchandise Inventory of Php 81,062.58; Total Property and Equipment of Php 2,593,021.47; and Net Surplus of Php 409,189.78.

Future plans of the coop include opening its membership to the faculty of the college as associate members. At present the cooperative has 26 members only. Initially, it started with 35 members. The diminishing number is due to the death or retirement of some workers/members who have not been replaced.

Case Profile 2
UP School of Economics Employees Multi-Purpose
Cooperative, Inc.
(UPSEEMC)

The organizing of the UP School of Economics Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc. (UPSEEMC) started when the wave of cooperative formation was at its height in 1993. Some business-minded staff of the School of Economics made an oral and informal survey of those who were interested to join.

The UPSEEMC obtained its confirmation of registration with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) on September 14, 1994 after several months of preparation. It was meant to add extra income for the staff. Collection of the initial contributions was easily facilitated by way of deducting it from their weekly salaries which was on cash payment then. Each member paid an initial contribution of Php 1,000.00.

The cooperative started with a photocopying business venture. Members who can share more that the initial contribution were asked to give additional shares to enable them to purchase a photocopying machine. Then, it ventured into a mini-snack store, lending business, school supplies, book binding and books consignment.

For the lending scheme, it has diversified loan packages such as: (1) petty cash loan of Php 5,000 at 4% interest payable in 5 months and renewable after four payments, (2) multi-purpose loan amounting to Php 5,000.00 to 20,000.00 at 10% interest payable in two years, renewable after 25% repayment. Other loans that may be granted include emergency, educational purposes and appliance loan.

Currently, the coop has 64 members composed of 33 regular members and 31 associate members. The regular members are administrative staff and REPS. Associate members are those who can exercise their rights and avail of all the privileges of the members but cannot vote or seek any elective position. They consist of regular members who have been delinquent in the payment of their accounts, resigned or retired from the university and friends or relatives recommended by good standing members. They also plan to open the associate membership to the faculty.

The UPSEEMC have organized the basic managerial bodies such as the General Assembly (GA), Board of Directors, Credit Committee, Audit/Inventory Committee, Election Committee, and the Education and Training Committee. In their 5-year strategic plan in 2004, the coop intended to expand their operations outside of the college so as to generate more profit. They formed the Business Committee to look into how they can expand and diversify its business operations.

The formation of the Business Committee was brought about by the declining income from the photocopying services due to the prevalent use of internet services by the students for their reading requirements. Also, there is limited opportunity for expanding their services in the School of Economics as they are not allowed to sell commodities that are being sold in the canteen operated by a private concessionaire.

To sustain the active participation and motivation of the members, activities like "Lakbay Aral" or trips to successful cooperatives in Batangas and Bulacan have been conducted instead of outing in beaches or resorts. General assemblies are held regularly. Educational inputs and testimonies of successful enterprises are the main features in the GA. Speakers from the CDA and other business institutions are invited on this occasion.

The cooperative also enjoys the support of the college. They are provided free of charge, three (3) spaces within the college for the two photocopying machines and the snack store.

Although BOD meetings are conducted during lunch breaks, they are also permitted to conduct emergency meeting during office hours.

As of 2005, the coops current developments are: Total Assets of Php 1,835,619.00; Total Share Capital of Php 660,500.00; Loan Receivables of Php 1,812,950.00; Total Deposit Liabilities of Php 170,856.45; and Total Net Surplus of Php 210,349.88.

At this point, UPSEEMC felt the need to do networking in terms of exchanging information and resources with other coops. They have generously assisted the cooperative in the College of Mass Communication in marketing film tickets. In fact, the BOD is processing the coop's affiliation with the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO). NATCCO is one of the biggest and strongest national federations of cooperatives in the country in terms of geographical reach, membership, financial capacity, and array of services. They hope to learn from other cooperatives' experiences and avail of their products and services.

Framework for Analyzing the Empowering Process of Workers' Cooperatives

As Jorge Sibal puts it, cooperatives and other labor enterprises are among the major pillars of the people empowerment movement. This movement, which is now known as the civil society movement, aspires for a strong pro-people mixed economic society where the state, private and civil society sectors are cooperatively harnessed in the development efforts of the society.⁸

Further, it was noted by Virginia Teodosio that cooperatives have offered the context for a participatory and empowering culture of direction, action and resources. She said that participation is about the dispersion of power to ordinary people, so that they may have some sort of control over their lives and their environment.⁹

As a working definition for this study, **empowerment** refers to the process by which people, organizations or groups who are powerless (a) become

aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context; (b) develop skill and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives; (c) exercise this right without infringing upon the rights of others; and (d) support the empowerment of others in the community.¹⁰

The study uses the Rowlands Framework for empowerment vis-à-vis Bill Gessner's Cooperative Empowerment Stream. (<http://www.cooperativegrocer.coop>)

Rowland framework states that, to be empowered, there must be:

<i>power from within</i>	Self-respect and self-acceptance, which extends to respect for and acceptance of others as equal.
<i>power to</i>	Creative and enabling relationships, creates new possibilities and actions without domination, the essence of the individual aspect of empowerment
<i>power over</i>	A relationship of domination and subordination
<i>power with</i>	Organized action, united by a common purpose or common understanding, involves a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals.

Source: Rowlands 1997 building on Kaber 1994 and Nelson and Wright 1996

Empowerment processes are experienced within three dimensions: personal relational and collective. In this model, *power from within* or the development of self-confidence and a sense of self, is a personal experience. The *power to* – make decisions, and the ability to negotiate and influence the course of a relationship, are relational processes. When the workers work together to achieve a common purpose (*power with*), they demonstrate collective empowerment.¹¹

As suggested by Gessner, a model for empowerment within cooperatives focuses initially and primarily on the role of members. While empowerment flows through the whole organization — board, management, staff, customers — it originates with and returns to the members.¹² The empowering process in cooperatives is founded on building and sustaining the vital connection between members and their cooperative.

To start or operate a business alone is an intimidating idea for those who are not very enterprising. But the task seems less intimidating when shared among a group working cooperatively. So when a group of people coming

together to form a cooperative, it is a self-help and an empowering action that cannot be lost sight of as the organization matures. Moreover, the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws endow the organization with legal power. The model explains this as the **power to** increase in skills, abilities including earning an income, access to markets and networks.

A sole proprietor of a business is a very secluded role. But being a member of a cooperatively owned business rewards one with the mutual support inherent in running a business with fellow-owner members. Thus, the **power over** that changes in power relations within households, communities and at a macro-level is truly exhibited on how the coop is being managed by its members. It is very remarkable, in both cases, that most of the board of directors consist of women members. The policy on inviting other sectors for associate membership only is one of the empowering acts of the members.

Community is highly valued and desired in a setting like the University of the Philippines. Cooperatives create community. Gaining the support of the university officials in this endeavor (providing space, allowing activities to be conducted on official time, giving donations or grants, etc), this is **power with** – organization of the powerless to enhance individual abilities and/or ability to challenge and change power relations.

As a synthesis, Gessner notes that, this model of cooperative empowerment features a system that can promote leadership development, a shared vision, delegation of authority, accountability, support, mentoring, sustainability, and growth. These qualities are inherent in the cooperative model and are enhanced when we develop and emphasize the empowering process.

Findings and Conclusion

The study shows that cooperative organizing can be a tool in empowering the administrative workers in the University of the Philippines. As Rene Ofreneo stated that... "empowerment is a long and tedious process. It often starts in the concientization of workers on their situation in the workplace. Further, as unions and workers get united on a common agenda and act on the basis of such agenda, the empowerment process is also deepened and broadened."¹³

History and Management

It can be gleaned from the two cases that they were in existence for more than a decade (UPCBAMPCI -16 years and UPSEEMC- 13 years). The reasons for organizing themselves were brought about by their need to explore other sources of income aside from the salary they are getting from the university which could hardly meet their needs. Members who are business minded or enterprising usually spearheaded the formation of the cooperative. Thus, the motivation to start the endeavor could be attributed to the *power within* of the organizers who set the tone to orchestrate the formation of the cooperative.

As provided in the Cooperative Code of the Philippines (RA 6938), Philippine cooperatives follow a basic organizational structure. Its basic managerial bodies should include: General Assembly, Board of Directors, Supervisory Committee (for Operations), Audit and Inventory Committee, Elections and Membership Committee, Executive Committee, other committees, hired managers and supervisors.

Given the limited number of members for both of the cases, at least the important managerial bodies are in place like the GA, BOD and some committees. As Sibal puts it, "while coop follows a basic organizational structure, managing it is not however very rigid like a straight jacket." Some degree of flexibility can be observed in the management structure. Note that in both cases, BOD members perform tasks in the operation of the coop. Volunteers come in as they progress in business. And at this point, they have achieved or reached a self-reliant stage wherein they hired staff to man the business on a full time basis with the accompanying wage and non-wage benefits.

For both cases, female members get the top positions in the board of directors, thus, females are no longer confined to secretary's or treasurer's post only. It also shows the presence of professional management since they are being able to comply with the CDA annual requirements. This could also be seen in the viability and success of both cases.

With the management structure of the cases, there is great evidence that their experience in the coops promotes leadership development, delegation of authority, accountability, support, mentoring and growth. The regular monitoring of CDA and application of cooperative values and principles are opportunities for empowerment which are to be further developed in cooperatives.

Operation vs. Workload

The cases showed that the support of the college or unit administration is crucial to the successful operations of the cooperatives. In the two case studies, the officials of the colleges are supportive of the endeavor of the workers. The support consists of permission granted to the coop to conduct some of their activities on official time as long as these do not interfere with the normal operations of the college.

In addition, paid staff are hired for the day-to-day operation of some of the businesses of the coop. Such activities include manning the store and operating the photocopying machines, among others.

In the case of UPSEEMCI, hired staffs are wives, relatives or friends of regular members. This facilitates accountability and fosters pride in ownership since they are allowed to become associate members of the cooperative.

As shown in the cases, the members gain economic benefits. These come in the form of the patronage refund, accessibility and availability of financial resources during emergency family situations, cash gifts and death benefits, among others. With these benefits, the members are motivated to explore other possible business ventures for the cooperative to increase its earnings while they fulfill their roles as good standing members in terms of the repayment schemes of their loans. Moreover, this exhibits the power to transcend their self-interest and focus on the interest of the whole organization.

Good Practices

A roundtable discussion to elicit the good practices not only of the two case cooperatives but also several other cooperatives existing in the different academic units of the university was conducted on May 10, 2006. This was done also to validate the findings of the two case studies regarding the factors that contributed to the successful operation of cooperatives in the university. The roundtable discussion surfaced the following:

Units	Good Practices
College of Business Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Entrepreneurial and managerial skill of the BOD chairperson cum Manager of the cooperative ☐ Cooperation of members in complying to their obligations to pay, thus, a very low delinquency rate ☐ Prudent lending policies or adherence to basic management policies such as credit limit, 50% repayment scheme before renewal of loan
School of Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Diversified loan packages for the differing needs of the members ☐ High sense of volunteerism among leaders, thus, having a working BOD instead of hiring additional staff ☐ Entrepreneurial drive of leaders, continuously explore for possible expansion of business activities. ☐ Educational activity (i.e. coop hopping, continuing coop education) instead of a Rest and Recreation activity for admin staff ☐ Affiliate membership open to friends and relatives of the members and are priority choices for staff needed, depending on the operation
College of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Supportive relationship between and among members and faculty of the college ☐ Commitment to continue the cooperative ☐ Volunteerism of the members
College of Home Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Supportive relationship between and among members and faculty of the college ☐ Members are organized and attend training seminars in their college ☐ Members are motivated to develop their entrepreneurial skills ☐ The cooperative serves as a venue in promoting products, services and skills of its members
College of Human Kinetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Regular monitoring by the CDA ☐ Cohesion of the members to continue the operation of the cooperative despite the many problems they encountered
College of Mass Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Supportive relationship of the faculty administration to the endeavor of the rank and file staff ☐ Maximizing the resources and connections (Use of theatre facilities at a discounted price) ☐ Volunteerism of the members
College of Social Sciences & Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Membership is not exclusive to administrative staff but to REPS as well ☐ Diversified strategies and services (chair rentals, school supplies, bags, tupperwares, gift items, pieces of furniture, footwear, etc.) ☐ Supportive relationship among the students, college officials and members.

College of Social Work & Community Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Management of canteen operation by retired coop members. <input type="checkbox"/> The continuous effort of the members to sustain the operation of the cooperative.
University Library	<input type="checkbox"/> Supportive relationship from the University Librarian and management <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment of devoted members to pursue the cooperative <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteerism of the members

Conclusion

Looking at cooperative organizing as an empowering move for administrative workers is critical in their role as university constituents. To surpass the infancy stage of cooperative formation, from setting and testing of systems and procedures, organizational assessment, and planning to strengthening of the cooperative was not easy for successful cooperatives. To be able to reach the stage of expansion and diversification for the two cases entailed great deal of patience, understanding, service orientation and painstaking commitment to really succeed in this endeavor.

Gessner's empowerment stream can aptly be observed that the empowering process in cooperatives is founded on building and sustaining the vital connection between the members and their cooperative. The empowerment stream further clarified and enhanced roles within the cooperative, including members, board, management, and staff. Effective performance of roles are important since they contribute to empowerment and inspire success.

The success of the two cases maybe attributed to their (a) adherence to the process and principles of cooperative; (b) transparency as exhibited in the accessibility of their records; and (c) complying to the requirements of the CDA in terms of the activities to be conducted and documents to be submitted.

It can be concluded then that the cases studied have an empowering management that is primarily concerned with empowering the membership. The spirit of volunteerism among the members, the working board, and the high rate of attendance of members in general assemblies, among others are evidences of how the empowerment stream flows within the organization.

If management and staff are adequately empowered to do their jobs, roles and job descriptions are clear, responsibility is encouraged, authority is agreed upon, teamwork is present, frustrations are lessened and morale is lifted, these will all result to good service to the faculty, staff and students of the university.

With the survival and viability of the coop cases despite the number of limitations, essentially it has become an additional source of income or mechanism to respond to pressing financial needs. Thus, cooperatives is a potential tool to augment the workers' income in the university.

Recommendations

Just like any other business enterprise, a number of factors contributed to the success of cooperatives and how it can empower its members, particularly the administrative staff of the university.

The following recommendations may be of help to those who intend to replicate the cases studied;

1. The members of the cooperative should be committed and actively participate in managing the cooperative.

While empowerment flows through the whole organization — board, management, staff, customers — it originates with and returns to the members. The empowering process in cooperatives is founded on building and sustaining the vital connection between members and their cooperative. This was done through regular meetings, transparency in the financial status of the cooperatives, and clear policies including penalties for delinquent members.

Membership expansion to include faculty members and other non-administrative staff, even as associate members only, may be considered. Operation will still be managed by regular members with increased market reach.

2. In the University, the support of the college or unit officials is a crucial condition for setting up and for the successful operation of

the cooperatives. The support given may take the form of donations by the faculty and staff, provision of space, patronizing the cooperative's products and services, allowance for the conduct of some coop-related activities during office hours without prejudice to their job performance as university employees.

3. The businesses set up by the cooperatives should start out of the needs and initiatives of the members and likewise in line with the needs of their clientele, students and other employees of the university. Hence, canteens, photocopying services, school supplies, etc. have proven to be financially viable as investments.
4. The cooperatives should be creative in adapting to the various means of expanding their capital while maintaining their control over the operations and management of their cooperatives. A continuing education on cooperative management is therefore deemed important.
5. In order for the cooperative to really progress, there must be good records keeping, efficient accounting and auditing system for a transparent management. There should be a management development program and management compensation package.
6. Continuous and adequate capital build-up and savings program should be observed. Thus, membership should not only be exclusive to administrative staff. Instead, other constituents in the college may be invited even as associate members.

Prospects

With the existence of other college-based cooperatives in the university, it would be remarkable to also help these struggling cooperatives move up from their present condition and become successful as the two cases. The formation of a federation of cooperatives within the university can be an area for study. It is worthwhile to determine how such can be a potential means to empower the coops, gain the support of the university wide constituents and eventually augment the income of the workers.

Endnotes

- ¹ 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, Article 12, Section 15.
- ² "The Cooperative Code of the Philippines Republic Act 6938 of 1990 Congress of the Philippines." at <http://www.gov.ph/laws>
- ³ Jorge V. Sibal, "The Self-managed Enterprises and the Vision of a Mixed Economy," paper read at the PEDF Seminar-Workshop on Issues in Community Enterprise Management, August 16-18, 1991, Pansol, Laguna sponsored by People's Enterprise Development Council.
- ⁴ Jorge V. Sibal "A Century of the Philippine Cooperative Movement" at <http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/info/abroad/sibal.html>
- ⁵ Rene E. Ofreneo (ed). "Labor's Vision of Development." Quezon City: Karrel, Inc. 1992.
- ⁶ See Note 2 above.
- ⁷ See Note 3 above.
- ⁸ See Note 3 above.
- ⁹ Mona Liza J. Silapan-Todas, "A Study on Perceived Benefits and Satisfaction of UP Diliman Employees – Cooperative Members" (Thesis).
- ¹⁰ E. McWhirter, (1991). *Empowerment in Counseling*. "Journal of Counseling and Development."
- ¹¹ Jo Rowlands (1997). "Questioning Empowerment : Working with Women in Honduras." Oxford [England] : Oxfam ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J. : Humanities Press International [distributor].
- ¹² Bill Gessner, "The Co-op Empowerment Stream: From Members to Community and Around Again" at <http://www.cooperativegrocer.coop>
- ¹³ See Note 5 above.

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