

The Contribution of Consumer Co-operatives to British Adult Education

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Introduction

This paper examines, from a historical perspective, the contribution of consumer co-operatives to British adult education from around 1844, when the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers was established, to the present. Within this time-scale there appear to be three distinct periods, although continuities can be observed in each.

The first lasted from the middle years of the 19th century until the 1890s. During that time education in co-operatives was mainly concerned with basic literacy and numeracy, as well as the holding of lectures and discussion groups. These activities were largely conducted within co-operative societies' premises, particularly in their newsrooms and libraries.

From around the 1890s, when primary education became compulsory, responsibility for basic literacy and numeracy shifted to local authorities. This marks the beginning of the second period which lasted until approximately the Second World War. During this time considerable complementarity developed between co-operative educational provisions made by local societies and those at national level. The latter included the founding of the British Co-operative College in 1919. During this time the costs of co-operative education were largely met by the Movement. An important characteristic of this period was the heavy emphasis that was laid on the teaching of co-operative ideas, organisation and history, together with the development of co-operative managerial capabilities.

The third period began about the end of the Second World War and lasts until the present. During it there has been a reduced emphasis on distinctive co-operative education in favour of nationally recognised qualifications, particularly in staff and management training. This shift has been against a background of changing trading conditions. These have prompted

considerable rationalisation within British consumer Co-operation. Primary societies have amalgamated to become large regional businesses while the two wholesale societies have merged and changed functions. Such developments have inevitably led to changes in the organisation and content of co-operative education.

At the outset we could perhaps note the view expressed by Dr. Alex Laidlaw in the paper that he presented to the Congress of the International Co-operative Alliance in Moscow in 1980. The paper was entitled *Co-operatives in the Year 2000* and in it Laidlaw observed that co-operatives appear to experience three crises. The first concerned establishing their credibility, the second developing a managerial capacity, and the third overcoming the ideological crisis that might emerge from solutions to the second crisis.¹ Obviously each crisis requires a number of responses. It is likely, however, that they would include education and training but that the form and content of these would change with each crisis. For example, during the first crisis it is likely that emphasis would have to be placed on persuading people that co-operatives could work. Towards that end there would need to be a growing number of viable societies and, on the education front, engagement in informal education through literature and discussion or study groups. The second crisis, namely that of management, would require more formal education including the designing of syllabi, qualifications and classes aimed at assisting the supply and quality of co-operative managers. In Britain we are still learning what the third crisis involves. However, it appears to necessitate reiteration of basic co-operative values and thus, a renewed understanding of co-operative theories and ideas. In addition there appears to be a need to train co-operative members and managers in skills of leadership, innovation and adaptation.

Much of the history of the British Co-operative Movement tends to bear out Laidlaw's thesis. There also appears to be a marked correlation between it and the three periods of British co-operative education identified above.

British co-operative education from 1840s to 1890s

It is impossible to talk about British Co-operation, or its

educational and training provisions, without reference to the important and fundamental influences of Robert Owen and the Rochdale Pioneers. Robert Owen (1771-1858) is often referred to as the 'Father of Co-operation', although we should acknowledge that he also helped shape British socialism, trades unionism and education. All the Rochdale Pioneers were active Owenites and, like Owen, they placed considerable emphasis on education as a means of achieving a new moral order.

Owen was the theorist, the Rochdale Pioneers were practical men. Their influence was extended by a proliferation of contemporary co-operative newspapers and journals disseminating co-operative ideas, including those of Dr William King. Given the importance of the spread of ideas at this time it is perhaps not surprising that the Rochdale Pioneers developed the practice of meeting after work to read and debate the latest news. Even before they could establish an Education Committee, or allocate an educational grant, they bought newspapers for society members to read. Then, when the upper floors of their first store became vacant, the Pioneers created a newsroom and a library. In 1849 they elected their first Educational Committee and levied a charge of 2 (old) pence per month for use of the newsroom.

The enactment of the first Industrial and Provident Societies legislation in 1852 enabled the Pioneers to pass a rule under which they could allocate 2.5 per cent of their trading surplus to 'education'. This practice was copied by other consumer societies that were set up according to the Rochdale precepts.²

Although the Pioneers conducted a school for children between 1850 - 1855, their main interest was in adult education. In addition to their newsroom and library, they also held lectures on subjects such as political economy, mathematics and French. Classes in historical subjects also proved popular and led to another educational innovation, namely University Extension Classes. The first of these was held under the auspices of the Rochdale Pioneers. Of this it was later recorded:

It was at Rochdale that Professor Stuart invented 'The Class,' the period of conversational teaching, enlivened by brisk periods of 'heckling' which has ever since been an important feature of the University Extension System.³

The system grew and by the 1870s, Oxford, Cambridge and London Universities were providing university teachers for working class gatherings, including co-operatives.

As far as the British Co-operative Movement was concerned, its growth continued and by 1884 some 1,128 societies were in being with a combined membership of almost 700,000.⁴ Most of these co-operatives attached the same importance to education as Rochdale, electing Educational Committees and setting aside 2.5 per cent of their trading surplus for educational purposes. Like Rochdale, they also engaged in extensive informal education through support for co-operative journals and the newly established Co-operative Women's Guild, cultural activities, and the provision of reading rooms, and libraries.

More formal co-operative education was soon to develop. As the century neared its end co-operators began to query whether their education should not be more co-operative in content. It had been found that many societies were organising classes in 'scientific, technological, art, commercial and general subjects'⁵ subjects, which it was now felt, could be left to other providers. These included local authorities who, with primary education becoming compulsory, were now providing literacy and numeracy. In adult education other providers included the growing University Extension Movement and the Mechanics' Institutes. The latter had grown from the 1840s onwards, mainly in industrialised areas and with an emphasis on technical education. There were also Working Men's Institutes which provided less advanced lectures and entertainments⁶. Co-operators began to feel that they need not duplicate such provisions. At the same time there was a growing feeling that there should be an increased emphasis on training members and managers to manage the growing Co-operative Movement, besides propagating co-operative ideas among non-members. The result was a shift in direction.

This shift was also shaped by the growth in the number of societies and the creation of a co-operative infrastructure. In 1863 the Co-operative Wholesale Society was established to supply consumer co-operatives in England and Wales. Five years later the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society was formed to perform a similar function for Scottish societies. Both wholesales began by buying in bulk and distributing goods to their member-

societies but later moved into production and agriculture. In 1869 the Co-operative Union was established and comprised primary co-operatives and their two Wholesales. It became, in effect, the Movement's parliament, as well as the vehicle for encouraging, and later organising, more distinctive forms of co-operative education.

A move in this direction began when the Union invited Arnold Toynbee, then a tutor at Balliol College, Oxford, to address the 1882 Congress. His speech prompted the setting up of a Committee which was charged with making proposals and reporting back to the 1884 Congress. It then urged 'the development of some system of education in CO-OPERATION', which should be designed to give co-operative members a stronger grasp of the purposes and social ideals of co-operation. The Co-operative Union responded by creating a new Committee of its Central Board to promote co-operative education.

By 1887 the Co-operative Union was drawing up class syllabi and outline lessons in Co-operative Book-keeping and Auditing, and other co-operative subjects for use by local societies' education committees. Within a few more years it had also introduced correspondence courses, as well as having instituted its own examinations in co-operation and co-operative trading techniques.⁷

A parallel development was the creation of geographic sectional organisations within the Co-operative Union. These also undertook some educational work and thus provided an intermediary link between the Union and its local member-societies. In all these developments there was a growing emphasis on co-operative education both for members and managers. This shift of direction marks the beginning of the second period in British co-operative education which is in line with Laidlaw's second phase, namely the need to develop a managerial capacity.

British co-operative education from the 1890s to 1939

British co-operative education was not only affected by the growing size of the Movement but also by another important factor. At the Co-operative Union's Congress in Edinburgh in 1923 a notable visitor was Anders Orne, a leading Swedish co-operator. When talking with Will Watkins, then a Tutor at

the British Co-operative College, but Orne (later Director of the International Co-operative Alliance) asked, 'When did the British Co-operative Movement stop thinking?' Watkins replied, 'In 1895'.⁸

Besides illustrating the adage that 'brevity is the soul of wit', Watkins's reply reflected a turning point in British Co-operation. This had occurred in the last years of the 19th century when there was a culmination in the struggle between the proponents of consumer co-operation and those of producer co-operation. The former argued that, through their creation of second and third level co-operatives, retail societies could achieve such economies of scale that their membership and trade would go on increasing. The result would be a gradual transformation of large swathes of private enterprise into Co-operative social ownership. Against this the supporters of producer co-operation argued that such a system worked to the disadvantage of the producer co-operatives already existing in some trades and in agriculture. One of their strongest supporters, Edward Vansittart Neale (1810-1892) had been General Secretary of the Co-operative Union since 1872. He believed that the Union should bring together all types of co-operative and act as their agency in marrying the demands of retail societies with the supplies of producers' co-operatives.

The main reason why Neale's arguments failed, along with those of the supporters of producer co-operation, was the growing success of the Co-operative Wholesale Society which had quickly become the major competitor to existing producer co-operatives. In 1874 J.T.W. Mitchell (1828-1895) had become the Chairman of the CWS and thus Neale's main protagonist. Their bitter dispute has been well documented in the book by Philip N. Backstrom, *Victorian Socialism and Co-operation*.⁹

The obvious success of the CWS contributed significantly to the triumph of the consumer theory of co-operation which had also gained intellectual support from a number of eminent thinkers, including Beatrice Webb and Prof Charles Gide. The latter went so far as to argue that consumer co-operation could form the basis of a new economic system capable of superseding capitalism by competition rather than by expropriation and the heavy costs of purchase and compensation.¹⁰ Gide was also one of the earliest economists to argue the importance of consumers

within modern economies. He believed that consumer co-operatives could enhance their economic power, particularly where their societies created wholesales and entered production. Gide's views held considerable sway not only in Britain but in the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA). Between the two World Wars the ICA spent much time in trying to bring national co-operative wholesale societies together into an International Co-operative Wholesale Society, but was unsuccessful.¹¹

The significance of the success of the consumer theory of co-operation was that it set the course of British consumer co-operation for the next seventy years. It also set the course of British co-operative education which it affected in two main ways. First, the vindication of consumer co-operation encouraged greater propaganda about the Rochdale Principles on which it was based. Secondly, as we have already seen, the accelerating growth of the consumer Co-operative Movement necessitated the increased training of officials and managers. The Co-operative Union helped to meet both needs. During the inter-war years it had both Propaganda and Education Departments. It also played a prominent role in the setting up of the Co-operative College.

The idea for a Co-operative College dated back to Robert Owen. It had also been raised at many Congresses from 1870 onwards. In 1914 a conference of national co-operative organisations, including the Co-operative Union, the two wholesales, and the Co-operative Productive Federation, proposed the founding of a college. The First World War delayed this and no progress could be made until the 1919 Co-operative Congress approved a resolution calling for the College to be set up.¹² In its early years the College was housed in the headquarters of the Co-operative Union at Holyoake House in Manchester. Classes were held there and students, financed by scholarships from local societies and the two wholesales, had access to the Union's extensive co-operative library. From 1924 hostel accommodation was provided for students.

The setting up of the Co-operative College completed co-operative education provisions at national level. Complementing them at local level was a growing educational network based on individual consumer societies. In 1919 these numbered 1,357 with a combined membership of 4,131,000. By 1939, and the outbreak of the Second World War, co-operative

membership had more than doubled to 8,643,000 although the number of societies had dropped to 1,077.¹³ The majority of these had Education Committees which were responsible for organising staff and member education, conducting member relations through magazines and cultural activities, and administering an educational grant determined by society rules and a members' vote.

The strength of local provisions can be illustrated by those made by the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society (RACS) which had been established in 1868. By the late 1920s the Society had over 200,000 members. In his book, *With Light of Knowledge - A Hundred Years of Education in the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society 1877-1977*, John Attfield wrote:

In the 1928-9 session almost three thousand students attended education classes under the auspices of the RACS. In 1932 it was estimated that fifteen thousand people had been through the various classes during the previous ten years; in 1930 the membership of the 250 auxiliary bodies* associated with the RACS Education Department numbered 7,500, and it increased in subsequent years.¹⁴

* Co-operative Womens, Mens and Mixed Guilds

From this it can be seen that RACS co-operative education was deeply rooted in the community. These roots were strengthened by other activities. RACS members had been prominent in the establishment of the Woodcraft Folk, and the Education Committee also supported other co-operative youth groups, choirs and orchestras. Moreover, the circulation of the Committee's monthly journal, *Comradeship*, reached 20,000 during the inter-war years.

In their book *Consumers' Co-operation in Great Britain*, A.M. Carr-Saunders, P. Sargant Florence and R. Peers estimated that in 1936 British consumer societies collectively spent over £250,000 on education.¹⁵ Their book is important because it provides an interesting overview of the co-operative position in the inter-war years, as well as an illuminating critique of its educational work. For example, the authors suggested that co-operative

education expenditure could be broken down as follows:

	per cent
Social activities and entertainments	26
Hire of rooms	24
Propaganda	20
Literature	10
Administration, salaries, and expenses	11
Formal	9

They believed that the small figure for formal education was misleading because it did not take into account the fact that local Co-operative Education Committees urged co-operative members to use local authority education provisions as these were paid for out of public funds. Co-operative members were also encouraged to take classes in general subjects organised by the Workers' Education Association (WEA) and the National Council of Labour Colleges (NCLC), and these would often be run in conjunction with local Co-operative Education Committees.

However, purely co-operative education was an internal responsibility. One of the merits of the book by Carr-Saunders, Florence and Peers, was that its chapter on Education was based on the survey of ten societies. This revealed that nine of these co-operatives arranged classes in co-operative subjects where the syllabus was drawn up by the Co-operative Union and where the teachers held the Union's certificate. However, the survey revealed that attendance at these courses was often small and a surprising omission was that:

Not one of these societies has arranged a course designed to give members a knowledge of their duties and opportunities as consumers in an organization which they control themselves.

As far as employees' technical education was concerned, the authors found that in every case the Co-operative Union syllabus was used, with a few additional classes on technical subjects being arranged through Local Education Authorities.

Interestingly, between 5 and 25 per cent of employees attended technical classes although the 'average was much nearer the former than the latter figure'. The survey also revealed the popularity of co-operative education amongst young people in the inter-war years. Each of the ten societies surveyed was shown to have arranged classes for young people which were based on a Co-operative Union Syllabus and Examination. One society held as many as 95 of these courses in one year. Their duration of 20 weeks demanded commitment by the young people but their attendance was free if their parents were co-operative members. It is interesting to note that, in contrast with adult classes, attendance at these classes was good. Local provisions were complemented at national level by the provision of syllabi, production of literature and the conduct of examinations. Moreover, the Co-operative Union conducted correspondence courses for students who could not get to local classes. Eventually, responsibility for these was passed to the Co-operative College once that was in being.

Carr-Saunders, Florence and Peers were academics. While this lends credibility and authority to their research, it may have coloured the way in which they saw the Co-operative College. They were critical of it in a number of respects. For example they found that it was financially inadequately equipped to deal with the large volume of work placed upon it, including 'a very large volume of teaching by correspondence.' Despite this, they found its teaching of technical subjects to be good. They thought that this was due to the fact that the Movement had a considerable pool of practical expertise on which to draw to illustrate its teaching. In addition, students benefited from coming from local societies where they had close practical contact with the subjects they studied.

However, the College was thought to be less good in its handling of its social studies courses. One reason was believed to be the fact that only one of the five teachers involved had had a full university training. Another reason was that too little use was made of the assistance that could have been provided by the nearby University of Manchester. A further criticism of the College was that it was too little engaged in research.¹⁶ Many of these criticisms appear to have been taken to heart when the College moved to a new location after the Second World War.

However, the problem of inadequate funding remained.

During the period 1890 to 1939, the main characteristics of British co-operative education were its concentration on purely co-operative subjects, a national spread, a complementarity between national and local provisions, and a high degree of internal funding. The Second World War was to lead to economic and social changes which affected the British consumer Co-operative Movement and the adult education it provided. Moreover, further changes would be brought about by a post-war retailing revolution.

British co-operative education from 1945 to the present

Post-war Great Britain experienced changes in and between classes. One consequence was a greater fluidity in class loyalties which would have implications for an avowedly working class movement such as the Co-operative Movement.

The spread of car ownership also enabled the population to become more physically mobile. This further changed shopping patterns that had already been altered by war damage with housing and shops often in new patterns and locations. Rising costs in the 1950s also encouraged changes in types of shops, as well as in their relations with producers, suppliers and wholesales. Eventually large chains of superstores emerged which created the kind of competition that retail co-operatives had never faced before. The cumulative effect of all these changes was bound to alter the form and nature of co-operative education. We can see this most clearly if we focus on the Co-operative College and local Co-operative Education Committees.

At the beginning of the period the Co-operative College moved from Manchester to Stanford Hall in Loughborough where its intake of students eventually rose from the annual average of 35 in Manchester to around 120. These were divided into four main areas: Co-operative Management; Co-operative Secretarial; Social, Economic and Political Studies; and Overseas Co-operation. This transformation is well described in the *Journal of Co-operative Studies*,¹⁷ which contained a special feature on '50 Years at Stanford Hall, the Co-operative College 1946-96.'

The findings of Carr-Saunders, Florence and Peers appeared to be taken to heart by the College's new Principal, Dr R.L.

Marshall who also became the Chief Education Officer to the Co-operative Union in 1946. Links grew with local Universities. Those with Nottingham University involved the development of an Extra-Mural Diploma in Politics, Economics and Social Studies which replaced the earlier internal Diploma. The new Diploma had strong co-operative content and perhaps I could make a personal grateful acknowledgement that it was this Diploma that set me on the path to my own co-operative career. Links also developed with Loughborough University and centred on the development of courses, both Diploma and Certificate, for overseas co-operative students.

Carr-Saunders, Florence and Peers believed that the College should engage in research. Under Dr Marshall research at the College was encouraged. One form this took was the publication of a series of College Papers on aspects of co-operative management, principles, and history.¹⁸ Another form was the setting up of the Society for Co-operative Studies in 1969: This body aimed to bring together co-operative practitioners and academics, to encourage co-operative research and to produce a periodic journal.

Another area in which Carr-Saunders, Florence and Peers noted deficiencies was consumer education. This also was developed at the College after the war and took a number of forms. These included the appointment of specialist officers and, in conjunction with local Co-operative Education Committees, the organisation of an Annual Consumer Project. Each year three topics of current consumer interest would be studied by local society members for which discussion guides would be produced by the Member Education Section of the Co-operative Union's Education Department based at the College. At the end of the study a national conference would be held and the findings of this, and its recommendations, would be passed on to other consumer bodies of Government Departments. Other developments at the College arose from changes in society rather than from the findings of Carr-Saunders, Sargant and Peers. One was a new need to recruit management students from universities. Before the war potential co-operative managers were invariably drawn from local societies. After the war, though, the young people who might previously have joined co-operative societies on leaving school and then found their way to the

College, benefited from the post-war expansion of the universities. It therefore became clear that Co-operative recruitment needed to include graduates. One response was the College's Management Training Scheme for graduates which was introduced in the 1970s and, with variations, has been in operation ever since.

It was not only courses that changed in the post-war period. Funding of co-operative education also changed. This was less noticeable in the immediate post-war decades at local levels where society education committees continued to be funded by their co-operatives. It became apparent more quickly, however, at the Co-operative College. Dr R.L. Marshall, in his *Journal of Co-operative Studies* paper, noted that :

The general principle of our funding was that we earned what we could from fees and from grants (in particular from the national Ministry of Education and the government's overseas aid programme) and the Union made up the difference between that and our expenditure. In addition there was a special fund contributed by local societies especially for experimental projects ...

Generally speaking the proportion of the College's funding coming from external sources, and including now the European Community, has grown, while that from the Co-operative Union, and local co-operative societies, has declined. Problems of funding became so acute in the early 1990s that there was a danger that the College would have to be moved elsewhere and Stanford Hall sold. The situation has now eased somewhat.

Funding for co-operative education as a whole has been affected by the massive rationalisation which has occurred in the British Co-operative Movement during the final third of the 20th century. This was prompted by the need for the Movement to adapt to a greatly changed retail sector, and has taken the form of massive mergers. These have led to the predominance of two retailing groups, the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and Co-operative Retail Services, together with several large regional societies in Scotland and in the English Midlands and North. One consequence of the emergence of such large societies has

been that it has become more economic for them to provide in-house education, particularly staff training. This has impacted on the Co-operative College and contributed to its deteriorating financial position. Moreover, the rationalisation of primary societies took place against a background of changes in the Co-operative Wholesale Society. That moved away from its earlier functions and now conducts its purchasing and distributive functions through a buying group which it formed with a number of retail societies. The CWS also sold off its productive units and has now moved into direct retailing: In the last two decades a number of earlier independent retail societies, including the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, have merged with it and now constitute CWS branches.

One consequence of these changes has been the undermining of the earlier consumer theory of co-operation which provided an important framework for co-operative education. It has not proved to be the vehicle for long term co-operative advance that it was once believed to be. Consequently, British co-operators have had to start thinking again. In Britain in the last 25 years there has been a growing recognition that Co-operative Principles can, and should be applied to other areas of economic and social activity. As far as the consumer Movement is concerned, its need to create ever larger units in order to survive has brought about the third crisis that Laidlaw identified, namely that of ideology.

This can be seen in a number of ways. One has been the weakening of the link between members and the capitalisation of their societies. Earlier reliance on members' share capital had been one means of encouraging member loyalty and participation. That has now changed but at a time when loyalty was already being weakened by the decline in the traditional form of dividend.

Another feature of the ideological crisis has been the decline in co-operative democracy. Concentration on larger, but fewer, stores has meant the closing of smaller shops. There can now be considerable distances between co-operative stores which means that there is no longer the subliminal effect of propinquity. Consequently, members' identification with societies has suffered, and there is also a frequent mismatch between the areas in which co-operative activists live and the sites of co-operative stores. Members can also feel far removed from a regional society's

headquarters and their ability, or wish, to influence their co-operative has been further reduced by the decrease in the number of elected places at Board level. If a regional society comprises 30 earlier and smaller societies, the factor in the reduction of the number of Directors is 30. Larger societies have also demanded greater management expertise on the part of Directors.

Problems of modern co-operative democracy have evoked educational responses. Some twenty years ago these took the form of lay leadership courses. Then, growing concerns about Co-operative governance led in 1987 to the setting up of the Institute of Co-operative Directors. This has become the means of training board members first through a Certificate programme and later through a more advanced Fellowship Certificate course. The Central Executive of the Co-operative Union is the governing body of the ICD although the Co-operative College has been responsible for carrying out the training conducted under it.

Assault on mutuality - implications for adult education

Despite its massive rationalisation the British Co-operative Movement could not prevent a hostile bid being made for the Co-operative Wholesale Society in early 1997. Events surrounding this have been well documented in the *Journal of Co-operative Studies*.¹⁹ Before this attack, Co-operators had been aghast at the number of British Building Societies abandoning their mutual status and becoming investor, rather than member organisations. Such conversions had necessarily involved the agreement of members. The possibility that similar appeals might be made to co-operative members has sharpened focus on the question of co-operative membership.

One response has been the strengthening of societies' rules. Another has been recognition of the need to improve relations with members. An example of both has been given by the Oxford, Swindon and Gloucester Society which has also been described in a recent *Journal of Co-operative Studies*.²⁰ A purely educational response has been the placing of greater emphasis on co-operative values. Graham Melmoth, previously the President of the International Co-operative Alliance, was recently appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. One of

his first moves was to arrange courses on Co-operative Values for CWS officials and managers. The Co-operative College conducts these courses.

Another response has been in the field of research. British consumer societies may be under pressure but they still have many good features which tend to be disregarded in these difficult times. The Society for Co-operative Studies therefore thought it time to 'Reassert the Co-operative Advantage'. It is trying to do this through a research project which it is currently implementing. This includes a survey aimed at identifying the good co-operative practices that go to make up the Co-operative Advantage. The research project is being funded by a number of British retail societies, and its findings should be published in the summer of 1999.

Conclusion

During its long history the British consumer Co-operative Movement has made important contributions to adult education. Because co-operatives have been mass membership organisations, they have had a considerable reach into communities. This has meant that their adult education could be both informal and formal. The informal has been illustrated by co-operative auxiliaries, literature and cultural events. Formal provisions have included the national awards developed by the Co-operative Union, and other educational bodies, through classes and correspondence courses. More recently formal co-operative provisions have included consumer education, lay leadership courses, those for co-operative directors, and the recent courses on Co-operative Values.

The current ideological crisis is now highlighting other educational needs. These include the need for co-operative members and managers to understand the economic, political and social environment in which their co-operatives function. They also need to appreciate that their environment continually changes and to be better equipped at anticipating the form and effect of changes. There is then the need to decide what the co-operative response to future changes could or should be. Within that, it is necessary to develop, through education and training, the abilities to adapt and reinvent co-operatives, as well

as to develop co-operative leadership.

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