International Cooperative Alliance

Personnel
Policy
Development

Methods and Techniques for Employee Participation

An Introduction

By
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ICA Regional Office
East, Central and Southern Africa

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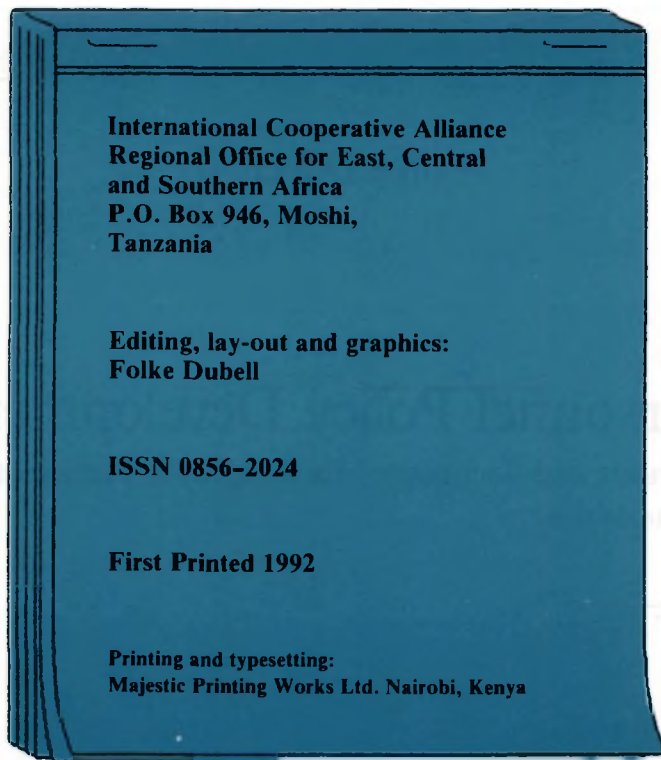
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Foreword

For many years *participation* has been a key word in development. Beneficiaries are not supposed to be passive recipients but active participants in the development process. This is a good strategy for a wide range of human activities. In this book, we have applied this strategy to one such human activity: employee participation in the development and application of modern personnel policies.

Participation as a development concept is probably accepted by a majority of people engaged in development work. The problem we are all facing is a classical one: to go from theory to practice. This book aims precisely at facilitating that process. It provides "tools," methods and techniques for employees enabling them to take active part in developing and applying modern personnel policies in cooperative organisations. Thus, this book is primarily about 'a method for employee participation' and not a textbook on personnel policies.

Right through this book I address the reader "you". Who are "you"? "You" are first of all employees of a cooperative organisation, e.g. a federation, a national apex organisation, a union, a large society, a bank, an insurance company etc. "You" can be an individual, a group of employees, a working party or a personnel policy committee (PPC). However, once the PPC has been formed "you" always refers to this committee.

As far as I know this is the first book published on this topic for cooperatives in the region. During my years at the ICA Regional Office I have not come across any systematic employee participation in this field. We therefore seem to have very little documented experience from this topic in the region. Thus, this book is a first attempt in this field and you will probably soon discover that it does not answer all your questions. We are, however, determined to improve it and we would therefore ask you to write to the ICA Regional Office and give your comments so that future editions can incorporate your views and experiences.

In 1990, the ICA Regional Office published "Modern Personnel Policies—A Model for Cooperative Organisations." It was edited by Bernard Kadasia and myself. Due to his commitment as acting Regional Director, Bernard Kadasia has not been able to take part in the writing of this book. He has, however, read the manuscript and given me many valuable comments and views for which I am very thankful.

Folke Dubell

Introduction
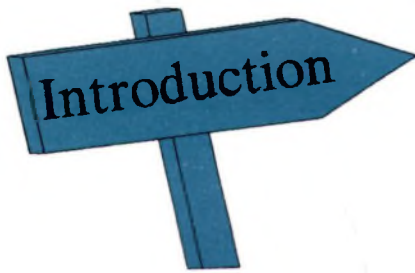
The ICA Regional Office, Moshi, published in 1990 a manual "Modern Personnel Policies—A Model for Cooperative Organisations". It addressed itself to the managements of cooperative organisations and its purpose was to bring about a modernization of the personnel policies of cooperative organisations. We believed and still maintain that the introduction of modern personnel policies is a major means by which cooperative organisations can attract and retain qualified people.

However, personnel policies are not only a matter for the management. In the not too old days it was a unique domain for the management (and still is in some organisations). The management decided on all matters related to the personnel and there was practically no consultation at all. Nowadays it is no longer possible nor desirable to keep the personnel out of such an important activity as personnel policies which is of direct interest and concern to them. In fact, the personnel demand (and rightly so) to be able to take part in the formulation of the personnel policies.

It is in recognition of this demand that this book has been written. Its purpose is to help the personnel to participate actively in formulating, promoting and applying modern personnel policies. It sets out to do so by, first, giving a background to what modern personnel policies are. Then by presenting a comprehensive approach consisting of seven distinct steps and supporting methods and techniques. The method is practical and well established and many of you are already familiar with it from other areas of work, e.g. project work. You may not recognise it straight away as you may have seen it presented differently before. For example, other key words may have been used to identify the various steps. It is, however, basically the same method that many projects use.

Some of the steps have been treated in more detail than others, for example, the step "Prepare yourselves" and the part dealing with theories on human nature. I believe this is justified. A thorough understanding of your cooperative organisation as well as of such "theories" that have shaped our views of man/woman is necessary before you can start working out your own policies.

The ICA Regional Office is confident that the Member Organisations and other cooperatives in the region will respond positively to the ideas behind this book. Furthermore, we also count on them to facilitate the implementation of these ideas by actively supporting and encouraging the employees to take part in the whole process.

1. Personnel Policy

Personnel policy as a distinct and separate management area is not very old. In many countries in Europe, for example, it only developed after the second world war, in the 1950s. At that time there was a lack of people on the labour market and many of them had no qualifications at all. So there was competition among organisations and companies to attract qualified people. They used many various tricks, like, for example, paid summer holidays, generous start up capital, subsidized or even free housing, and other similar benefits.

After the war there was a tremendous growth in the economy. What the war had destroyed had to be built up again. Organisations and companies spent more and more time on trying to recruit people. Soon personnel specialists appeared to handle recruitment and other personnel matters on a full time basis. From there on the step to fully fledged personnel departments was not very long.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the personnel departments had found their feet and the first comprehensive personnel policies surfaced. Many private consultancy firms and organisations specialised in personnel matters had appeared on the market providing services both to the private (incl. cooperatives) and public sector. Today, practically all organisations and companies in Europe have adopted modern personnel policies.

What are personnel policies?
To begin with personnel policies are often presented in a separate document. This document is an official document stating how an organisation (in our case, of course, a cooperative organisation) shall handle personnel matters. The policies shall regulate relations between the organisation and the employees—and between the employees themselves. Furthermore, they shall express the goals of the Human Resource Department (HRD) or Personnel Administration and provide guide-lines for how it shall achieve these goals. Finally, the guide-lines shall be of such quality that they assist the management to treat all employees in a consistent and equal manner.

A "policy" is a general statement or principle that states what is to be done. "Guide-lines", on the other hand, are like directives or instructions; they say how to do things. Policies and guide-lines are normally based on values (what the management thinks is good or bad) prevailing in the organisation. They are traditionally decided upon by the top management. However, nowadays a personnel policy worth its name can be looked upon as a sort of contract between the cooperative organisation and its employees. A contract involves at least two partners. In this case the management of a cooperative organisation and the employees.

What is the difference between personnel policy and personnel administration?
There is a clear link between personnel policies and personnel administration. Personnel administration is the implementation, the application of the personnel policies. The operational unit responsible to put the policies into effect is the personnel department.

What is 'modern'?
Above we have used the terms "personnel administration" and "personnel department". These terms are very common. But many organisations today say "human resource management" or "HRM" for short when referring to "personnel administration". The "personnel department" has become "human resource department" and its activities are referred to as "human resource development".

Why all these changes? What is behind them? Are they, perhaps, just cosmetics? Yes, unfortunately, to many organisations they are nothing but cosmetics as their attitudes towards and understanding of the employees have not changed. But to many other organisations the above changes in terminology reflect a fundamental and sincere change in attitudes. These organisations do no longer only "administer" their personnel, but they see them as their most important "resource"—a resource that can be further "developed". To "administer" is static, to "develop" is a progressive and dynamic process. Sometimes the personnel is referred to as the "human capital" of the organisation in contrast to the physical or real capital built into machines, equipment etc. An organisation can (and should) invest in the human capital, too, by undertaking human resource development activities like cooperative education and training; job rotation and enrichment; promote participation in decision-making; improve the work environment etc.

When these attitudes are reflected in the personnel policies, the overall organisation policies, plans and official documents and practised in the every-day life of the organisation, then it is justifiable to talk about human resource development in a modern sense.

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Who are the "owners" of the Personnel Policies?

"Owners" here means the ones who are finally responsible for the personnel policies. Is it the organisation or the personnel? It is, of course, the organisation that holds the final responsibility for the quality of the policies and for their effective implementation. The personnel, however, is the most important "interest group". Personnel policies are one of the steering machanisms available to the management for directing the organisation. Thus, personnel policies constitute an important tool in the management's "tool kit".

The figure to the right breaks down the "owners" at various levels. Thus, at the first level, to clarify the purpose of the personnel policies or to prepare a policy statement would ideally be done by the members at an annual general meeting, but it is probably more likely that the management does it, and the Board takes the final decision.

Many more people are involved at the second level, i.e. establishing the objectives of the personnel policies, the values on which they are based, and the working out of guide-lines for implementation.

At the third level we come closer to the actual implemen-

PERSONNEL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1 PURPOSE — Members, Board of Directors and Management

2 OBJECTIVES — Board of Directors, Personnel Policy Committee, Management, Human Resource Managers

3 ACTIVITIES — Management, Departmental and Section Heads, Personnel Policy Committee, and Individuals

4 OPERATIONAL AIDS — HRD-managers or Personnel Administrators and the Personnel Policy Committee

tation. The role of the management including the various heads of department and sections is here particularly important.

The fourth level, i.e. working out rules and routines, perhaps a handbook, forms and special instructions etc is best done by the technical personnel in the personnel department in consultation with the PPC.
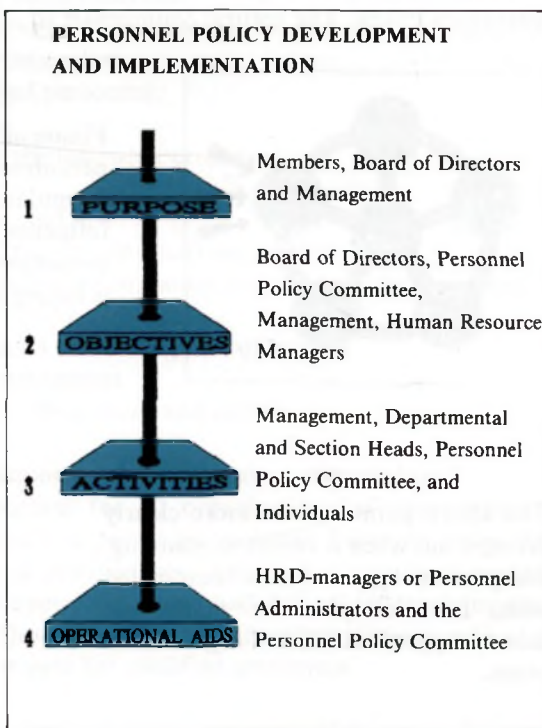
Personnel Policy is part of the overall Organisation Policy

The Personnel Policy cannot be created in a vacuum. It is part of the policy for the whole organisation. A cooperative organisation is likely to have a Financial Policy. Such a policy has probably come about as a result of discussions between management, banks, suppliers, members etc. Similarly, the Marketing Policy, for example, is a result of discussions between the management including the board of directors, the marketing personnel, the cooperative societies representing the members, suppliers, transporters etc. In a similar vein, the management needs a counterpart with whom it can discuss Personnel Policy. The natural counterpart is, of course, its personnel.
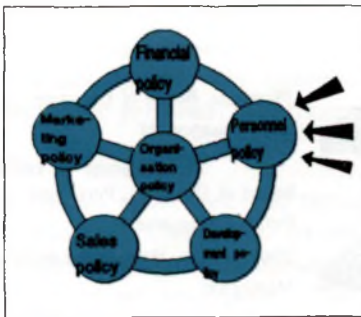
Financial policy, marketing policy, personnel policy etc cannot be formulated in isolation. They all influence each other. In particular, the personnel policy is influenced by what is taking place in other policy areas.

The above point is even more clearly brought out when it comes to planning. The personnel plan must be coordinated with, for example, the marketing, economic, production, and organisation plans.

Marketing Plan
Economic Plan
Production Plan
Personnel Plan
Organisation Plan
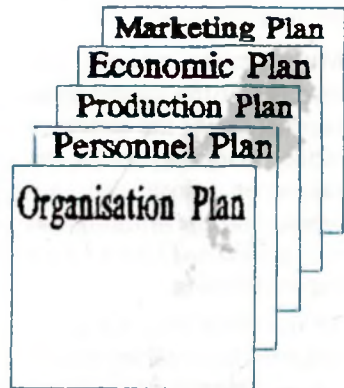
Another point to consider is the level or standard of development of the various policy areas. The whole organisation must develop at the same time. It is therefore not productive to develop, say, financial and marketing policies and leaving the personnel policy behind. All parts of the organisation interact and there must be a reasonable balance between them.

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What is the use of Personnel Policies?
Expectations differ. If we talk to employees and ask them, they will express their expectations. The management will probably have a different view. It does not mean that these views necessarily have to be conflicting.

A management view could include the following points:

- to reduce conflicts within the organisation
- to strengthen the management function
- to regulate relations between the organisation and the individual and between the individuals themselves
- to compete for well trained personnel

And the employees may give the following priorities:

- to be treated equally, fair and just
- to be accepted as part of the decision-making process
- to have more transparency in the organisation — democracy, cooperation and collaboration
- to make the organisation an attractive place of work
- to have a better work environment
- to better know our rights, obligations and duties.

Why are personnel policies important for cooperative organisations?
Personnel policies are important for all organisations of some size. The cooperatives in the region have had personnel problems for many years. They have had difficulties attracting qualified personnel and, if they have managed to get the right type of employees, they have had difficulties retaining them. Modern personnel policies should be seen by the cooperatives as one of the means at their disposal to compete for qualified employees.

Cooperatives have also been haunted by a reputation of being ineffective. It has badly reflected upon the image of cooperatives. This bad reputation—right in far too many cases—can only be done away with when employees perform effectively, i.e. when what is done is done much better: payments to farmers must be paid on time; inputs, loans and credit available when needed; effective control systems applied, e.g. for recovering loans and credit; up-do-date collection of membership fees and other dues; books written and audited etc. Performance and production must increase. This can only be achieved by qualified, well trained and motivated employees. Hence the need for personnel policies that can attract this type of employees.

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When the above points have been rectified there will be some good spill-over effects, too. For example, work satisfaction would increase. That, in its turn, would lead to a reduction of the personnel turnover which, in its turn, would reduce the personnel costs etc.

Cooperatives like any other organisation are exposed to new values in the society. Today, for example, the idea of industrial democracy and employee participation in the decision-making process is generally accepted in modern organisations. Cooperatives cannot afford to lag behind.

Finally, cooperative leaders need to better understand that modern personnel policies are not a threat to them or to the cooperative. Instead, they constitute an opportunity. In fact, being one of the steering mechanisms, modern personnel policies constitute an effective means by which the manager can strengthen the whole cooperative organisation.

Criteria for good personnel policies

International Labour Organisation (ILO) has set out a number of criteria for personnel policies. To be worthy of their name, they say, personnel policies should fulfil the following criteria:

(1) policy should be written, understandable, and present a comprehensive coverage of the function;

(2) provision should be made for ensuring dissemination and comprehension of stated policy throughout the organisation;

(3) policy should be soundly based, consistent with public policy and that of comparable organisations;

(4) policy should be internally consistent with the organisation's stated general objectives and policies;

(5) specific personnel policies (e.g. staffing, development and administration) should be mutually supportive;

(6) policy should be established as a result of multi-level discussion and consultation throughout the organisation, including consultations with employees' representatives as appropriate.

2. The Process

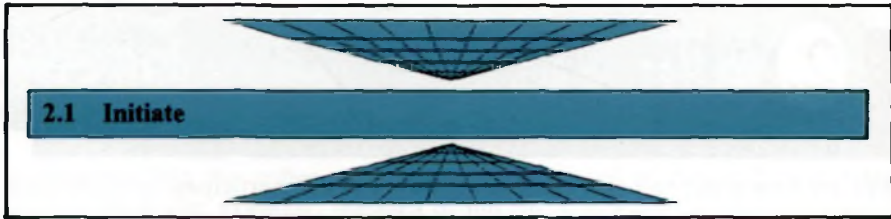We are now ready to begin considering how you can participate in developing modern personnel policies in your cooperative organisation. I have already mentioned the key word—process. Process means that something is in motion, in action, moving from one stage to another, changing and progressing. Working with personnel policies is like that. It is not something static, something you do once, and then forget about it. Personnel policies are about human beings, people; organisations and other places of work; jobs; the society and how they all interact in a dynamic process. There is always change and this change must be reflected in the personnel policies. Hence the need to keep the process alive.

The diagram below shows the various steps of the personnel policy development process.

Initiate
Prepare yourself
Study, analyse, set priorities
Plan
Implement
Follow up
Modify, revise, change again
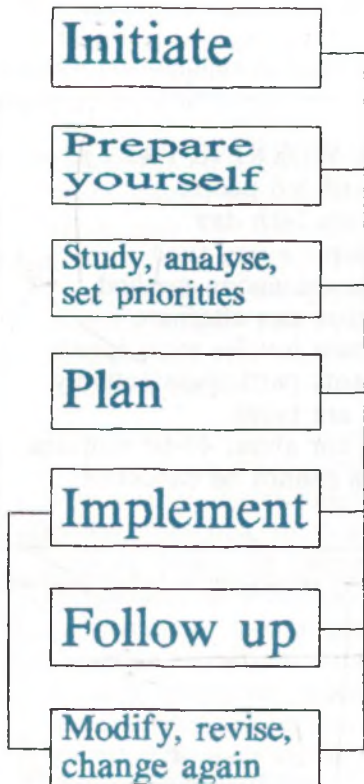
This is the model or approach that we recommend you to use when you work with the development of your personnel policies. It consists of seven (7) distinct steps: the first one is the initiative. Somebody has got to take the initiative. When the process has started, the initiators have to prepare themselves, get more knowledge. Then follows an in-depth study of your present personnel policies and the setting of priorities. Once that is done you are ready to prepare a plan for what you intend to do, how and when. Implementation is a crucial step where your organising skills will be tested. Implementation has to be monitored or followed up to see if you are on the right track. If not you will have to modify and revise your plan, activities or approach—and start to implement the changes you have made. Again you have to follow up the implementation of the changes. Perhaps you will have to change again—and the process continues.

Who takes the initiative to discuss with the management? Most likely some of you—employees of the cooperative organisation—have been discussing personnel matters for some time. May-be there is something you are unhappy about. It could, for example, be working hours, no canteen at your place of work, bad working environment, no consistent personnel training programme, the present job descriptions are old and irrelevant etc. There can be many reasons for you to discuss staff matters. These discussions are necessary to understand what people feel about certain things. But discussions alone will not improve matters. There is need for more than that. There is need for action.

The action you need to take at this point is to make an appointment with the management. The purpose of this meeting is to convey to the management that there are certain things (be specific!) in the organisation that you feel could be improved. State confidently that you believe these problems can be solved through the introduction of modern personnel policies. However, you need to study these policies further in order to come up with a comprehensive solution. At this point ask permission to form a working party consisting of 5–8 employees.

WHAT IS A WORKING PARTY?
- a group of 5–8 people
- meet every 14th day
- same people every time
- using the discussion method
- chairperson can alternate
- chairperson involes participants
- participants participate actively
- minutes are taken
- meeting for about 40–60 minutes
- meetings cannot be cancelled

Prepare yourself for this meeting. You must convince the management that you have a point. When you prepare yourself you should, for example, consider the following:

■ The discussions you have had with other employees; order and structure their views and present them

■ The development trends of the organisation: strong and weak points; can weak points become strong with the help of modern personnel policies?

■ What do the long-term plans look like? Do they say anything about the personnel?

■ Are there any new labour laws or agreements in the pipe-line that might have an effect on the organisation and its personnel

■ List the things you would like to change.

We now assume that you have discussed with your manager or chief executive and that you were given a "go ahead" to form a small working party. (If you have been refused for one reason or another, then you have a lot more preparatory work to do—do not give up!)

THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

Trade unions have been formed to watch over the interests of the employees vis-a-vis the employer. They fight for better pay, shorter working hours, better working environment etc. This is their traditional role.

However, many trade unions have realised that what ultimately determines an organisation's ability to pay them well, to shorten the working hours, to improve the environment etc is its business, its management and leadership. Therefore, questions related to business operations, management and leadership have become of great interest to the trade unions.

Thus the scope of the trade union's activities has widened and it is becoming more and more involved in the decision-making process of the organisation. Many trade unions find this situation conflicting. At times, they have to defend unpopular and sensitive decisions of the organisation, e.g. to make some of their fellow employees redundant.

From the above description we can understand that Personnel Policies is an area of great interest to the trade unions. They should be encouraged to take part in the policy development process.

The working party that you have now formed should go through your personnel policy and see how it is applied. That goes for both written and unwritten policies, if any. This is not supposed to be an in-depth study but rather a general overview. You should, in particular,

■ find out more about how the employees of all categories feel about the present personnel policies and their application—get their views, write them down, prepare a report.

The next step is for the working party to make an appointment with the manager or chief executive and present the report. That presentation should include an account of:

■ the present personnel policy as seen by the employees

■ how it is applied

■ how it can be improved to the benefit of the employees and the cooperative organisation

■ the need to further study the present personnel policies

■ finally, propose that a Personnel Policy Committee (PPC) should be set up by the board of directors to further study our personnel policies.

After your meeting with your chief executive, inform all employees of the outcome of your discussions and tell them what you are planning to do next.

2.2 Prepare Yourselves

Before we go into details of how to prepare ourselves let us spend a few moments reflecting on what we are going to do, why and what we shall be aiming at.

Development is change. Personnel policy development is therefore also change. What we want to do is to improve the present personnel policy, not so much its form of presentation but rather its application. This is often easier said than done. It implies that people have to change in one way or another. Some people adapt quickly and easily to change. Others are more cautious and take a long time to accept change, still others simply refuse to change.

In order for us to better understand this change process, let us take a look at the illustration below.

Group behaviour

Individual behaviour

Attitudes
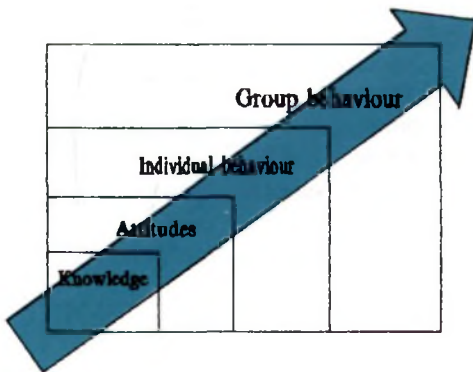
Knowledge

What does this figure tell us? It says that first people (in this case yourselves) who promote change must have knowledge of what they want to change, how to do it, and what implications will result from the proposed changes. This is the easiest part. You acquire knowledge by reading books, reports, studies and by discussing with and interviewing knowledgeable people etc.

The next step is to change attitudes. This is often more difficult as it involves emotions. These can be either positive or negative and range from very weak to very strong. It is, however, hoped that once people have acquired knowledge, they will be better prepared to adopt positive attitudes and commit themselves towards the proposed change.

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The third step is even more difficult. It means that a person now shall change his or her individual behaviour and act according to what he or she has learnt. For example, if your manager has learnt all about employee participation in decision making and he understands the benefits that would result from it, but still refuses to allow such participation, then he has not adapted his individual behaviour to his new knowledge.

The last step is the most difficult one. It involves changing the behaviour of a group of people, a work group, a section, a division or a whole organisation. To be able to do so effectively you shall have to work through key persons in your organisation, leaders, formal and informal, and get their support and commitment.

So this is the road you shall have to travel to develop your personnel policies. This should be your strategy. It is a participating change strategy. It may look long and cumbersome but change and development are not easy to implement. However, do not be discouraged. The work is rewarding for yourself, your colleagues and for the whole cooperative organisation.

From this small deviation, let us now go back to our main topic to see how we can prepare ourselves for the work ahead of us.

We now assume that a PPC has been formed. You have probably already discovered that you will need more knowledge about modern personnel policies.

In line with the above strategy, acquiring more knowledge would thus be your starting point. Therefore: Organise training for all PPC-members. This should be a course of, at least, 2–3 days' duration. They would need to be exposed to various topics. The following ones should be included:

Example of PPC-Composition

2 board of directors
1 the manager personnel dept.
1 trade union representative
2 employees

At least two of the above people

should be women

(I) Your cooperative organisation
In order for you to work out practical and realistic personnel policies, the PPC-members must know more about the organisation:
— financial position
— market situation
— development trends
— long term plans etc

These topics are for your chief executive to handle.

(II) Personnel Policy

(a) Theories on human nature (models, values, attitudes)

A common frame of reference is a good base for the PPC-members and their work on modern personnel policies. Personnel policy decisions are based on complex and generalised views—theories, models, ideologies, values, norms etc—of human beings, of organisations and of the society at large. These theories have been worked out by researchers, economists, sociologists, psychologists and other scholars. It is not possible to give a full account of all these models here but we shall take a brief look at some theories on human nature to find out more about how we are as human beings, how we behave, how we work, what motivates us etc.

The rational or economic view of man/woman: This model says, in short that people are only interested in their own well-being and whatever they do is aimed at promoting their self-interest. More specifically it says about employees:

(i)   Employees are primarily motivated by economic incentives and will do whatever affords them the greatest economic gain

(ii)   Since economic incentives are under the control of the organisation, the employee is essentially a passive agent to be manipulated, motivated, and controlled by the organization

(iii)   Feelings are, by definition, *irrational* and, therefore, must be prevented from interfering with a person's rational calculation of self-interest

(iv)   Organisations can and must be designed in such a way as to neutralize and control people's feelings and, therefore, their unpredictable traits.

Douglas McGregor, an organisation and psychological analyst, formulated his famous "Theory X". Some of his assumptions are:

(v)   People are inherently lazy and must, therefore, be motivated by outside incentives

(vi)   People's natural goals run counter to those of the organization, hence they must be controlled by external forces to ensure that they work toward organizational goals

(vii) Because of their irrational feelings, people are basically incapable of self-discipline and self-control

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(viii) People can, however, be divided roughly into two groups—those who fit the assumptions outlined above and those who are self-motivated, self-controlled, and less dominated by their feelings. This latter group must assume the management responsibilities for all the others.

This is quite a pessimistic view of human nature. McGregor formulated his theory in the 1960s but this view of human nature is still common in some parts of the world. It has been commonly applied in many areas of work, in particularly in industry. It says, in short, as the average person does not want to work, he or she has to be forced to do so, he or she has to be given detailed instructions on how to do things, to be controlled and even threatened with punishment, if he or she does not produce a reasonable piece of work.

Discuss this view of human nature and, in particular, the following questions: From your experience, is there any truth in this theory? If so,

■ what implications will it have on the management of an organisation?

■ what type of personnel policies do you think it would lead to?

The social view of man/woman. As a reaction to the rational or economic theory, other researchers found a set of social factors which they combined into a social type of theory. The sponsors of this theory were to be found in the human relations movement whose prime spokesman was Elton Mayo, a psychologist and professor at Harvard. In brief, this theory states:

(i)   Social needs are the prime motivator of human behaviour, and interpersonal relationships the prime shaper of a sense of identity

(ii)   As a result of the mechanization entailed in the Industrial Revolution, work has lost much of its intrinsic meaning, which now must be sought in social relationship on the job

(iii)   Employees are more responsive to the social forces of the peer group than to the incentives and controls of management

(iv)   Employees are responsive to management to the extent that a supervisor can meet a subordinate's need for belonging, for acceptance, and for a sense of identity.

As you will see this theory is quite different from the first one. It emphasizes different things and implies a different management style. First, managers, it says, should not only be concerned with the task, but should give attention to the needs of the employees working for them. Secondly, feelings should not be bared from the place of work. If people feel good, they will work better and produce more. Thirdly, the management should promote work groups and group incentives rather than individual incentives. Finally, supervisors at lower levels should spend less time on controlling and more on listening to and trying to understand the needs, feelings and aspirations of the employees. These supervisors should also effectively represent the employees at higher management levels.

Discuss this theory. Use the same questions as under the rational or economic view above.

The self-actualization view of man/woman. The human relations movement had a great influence on how people came to view human nature. Other researchers found new factors and presented studies in support of the HRM-views. Surprisingly, it was McGregor (see above) who came back and gave name to this thinking. Based on the research of many colleagues, he formulated a new theory. This time he called it "Theory Y". It says:
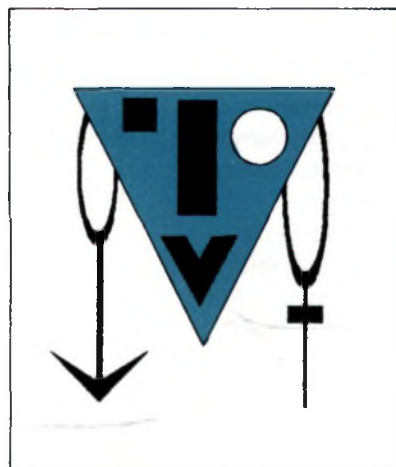
(i) People have various motives and needs:

1. *physiological needs* (food, clothing, shelter, rest, sleep, health etc.)
2. *needs for survival,* safety, and security
3. *social needs* (belonging, association, affiliation, relations, friendship, affection, love etc)
4. *satisfaction and esteem needs* (independence, self-confidence, recognition, status, respect, appreciation)
5. *needs for self-actualization,* i.e. to be able to make full use of one's talents and resources.

The picture to the right shows Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs. In (a) physiological needs are the most important ones, while, in (b), they have been satisfied and safety needs have been activated. In (c), both physiological and safety needs have been satisfied

a. High — Strength of Needs — Low
Physiological needs | Safety needs | Social needs | Esteem needs | Self-actualization needs

b. High — Strength of Needs — Low
Physiological needs | Safety needs | Social needs | Esteem needs | Self-actualization needs

c. High — Strength of Needs — Low
Physiological needs | Safety needs | Social needs | Esteem needs | Self-actualization needs

d. High — Strength of Needs — Low
Physiological needs | Safety needs | Social needs | Esteem needs | Self-actualization needs

e. High — Strength of Needs — Low
Physiological needs | Safety needs | Social needs | Esteem needs | Self-actualization needs

and social needs are of prime importance. Once previous needs have been satisfied, new needs will arise. (d) shows a person who is seeking recognition, status, respect, appreciation etc -esteem needs and (e), finally, has all his or her needs satisfied, except for self-actualization needs on which he or she is now concentrating.
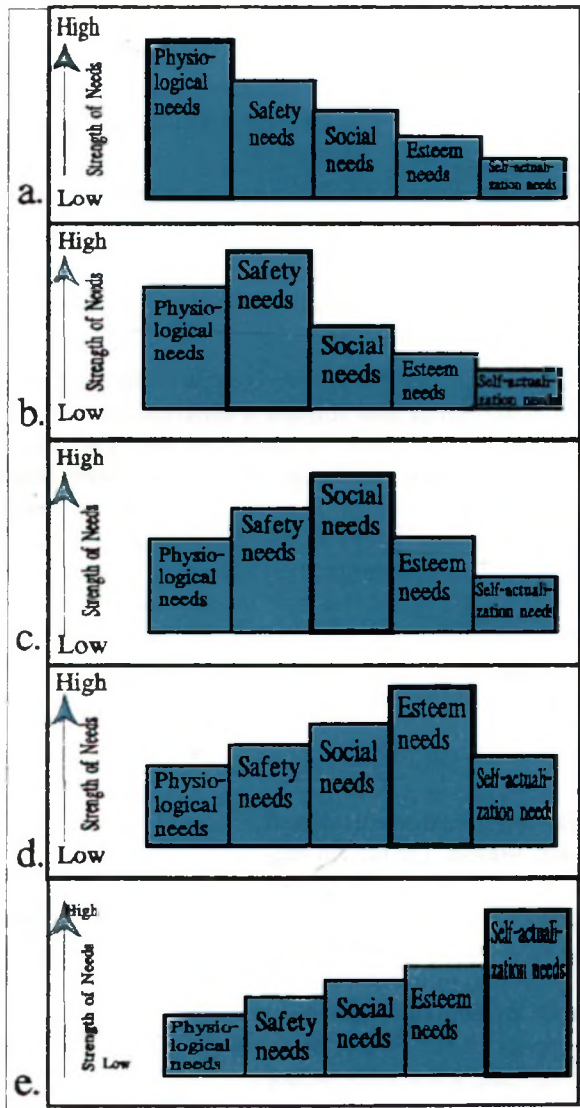
Thus people move up the "needs ladder". When lower level needs are fulfilled (food, shelter etc) other needs become more prominent.

(ii)   The individual seeks to be mature on the job and is capable of being so, in the sense of exercising of a certain amount of autonomy and independence, adopting a long-range time perspective, developing special capabilities and skills etc.

People are primarily self-motivated and self-controlled; externally imposed incentives and controls are likely to be threatening and to reduce the person to a less mature individual.

(iii)   There is no *inherent* conflict between self-actualization and more effective organisational performance. If given a chance, employees will voluntarily integrate their own goals with those of the organisation.

This theory is again different from the above ones. It implies that managers need not worry so much about being considerate to the employees but should concentrate on making the jobs challenging and meaningful. They should delegate more, give more responsibility to subordinates, facilitate instead of controlling. The employee *is* motivated and the organisation should seek to channel this motivation into organisational goals.

The idea of employee participation in the decision-making process and more particularly the decisions that affect them directly originates from this thinking and theory.

■ Discuss this theory as you have done with the above ones.

■ Discuss Maslow's need hierarchy. Is there any truth in it? Do you find it too artificial? Relate it to your own experience.

The complex man/woman view. This view brings us up-to-date with the present thinking. It says that man/woman is more complex than the above theories make us believe. In brief, this view states:

(i)   Peoples' needs vary from situation to situation and from time to time

(ii)   Motives and needs from very complex patterns. Needs cannot be so easily categorized (as the above theory implied) to form general hierarchies. Money, for example, will cut across many needs and can satisfy many of them including self-actualization.

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(iii)   Employees learn to develop new needs in organisations. As an employee
        gain experience by working in an organisation his or her need pattern will
        change. If the organisation is not able to satisfy the employee's needs, he
        or she will go to another organisation where the prospects are more
        favourable.

(iv)   No single motive determines an employee's productivity or effectiveness in
        an organisation. It is rather a complex set of motives, e.g. the job to be
        done, the employee's family and social situation, the atmosphere created
        by colleagues, the employee's knowledge, experience and abilities etc.

(v)   There is not one single management style that will work for all employees
        at all times. They will respond to different styles depending on the same
        complex set of factors as in (iv) above.

What does this theory tell us? Perhaps it can be said in one word, flexibility. It
all depends on the situation at hand. There is no single answer. There is no one
theory on human nature or management style valid for all organisations all the
time. Each organisation has to seek its own solutions. The human nature is too
complex to be squeezed into rigid theories and models.

Again, discuss these ideas. Begin with the same questions as under rational or
economic view above.

(b) Organisation theories

Above we reviewed some theories on human nature. There are similar theories, models or "schools" on organisations. Some of them are:

a. the bureaucratic school
b. the scientific management school
c. the administrative school
d. the systems school of thought
e. the socio-technical model etc.

If your time and resources for this training course allow, you should invite a facilitator to introduce this topic. It would add to your understanding of organisations and how personnel policies develop.

(c) Political ideas

Also political ideas have a lot to say about human nature. Therefore, again, if your resources allow, you would benefit from getting an overview of this topic, too. At least the following political ideas have something to say that is relevant for our purpose:

a.   the conservative school of thought
b.   the liberal school of thought
c.   the democratic school of thought
d.   the socialistic school of thought

Work environment

Work environment can be studied at various levels: society, organisation, group and individual level. There might be many different work environments within a single organisation.

The physical environment including lighting, ventilation, temperature, noise, dust, smoke, gas, pollution, waste, bad odour etc. Workers in an industrial plant are often more exposed to these problems than other groups of employees. But the work environment is not only a result of physical factors. There are other factors in an organisation that influence the work environment. Some of these are:

- the organisation structure (bureaucratic, technical etc)
- the decision-making system
- the personnel policies
- training opportunities
- salary and wage systems
- promotions
- communications between groups
- "climate" created by colleagues

In addition, all people do not perceive the work environment in the same way. One person may find the environment intolerable, while another person can accept it easily. Thus, the work environment is also subjective:
- some employees think they can adequately participate in decision-making, while others do not
- some see their jobs as meaningful with a lot of opportunities, while others do not
- some people feel very bad about conflicts in the organisation, while others do not seem to be bothered
- some employees feel happy and identify themselves with the cooperative organisation, while others do not etc.

The effects of bad work environment may include one or a combination of the following manifestations: disappointment, lack of motivation, low productivity, absenteeism, a sense of being powerless, alienation, stress, frustration, work injuries, psycho-somatic illnesses etc.

(III) Personnel Policy: Role and Area

What type of questions or issues are of interest to personnel policy? There can be many. It depends a lot on your organisation, what it does, how it performs, "its" attitudes and behaviour etc. Below are some areas covered by modern personnel policies.

PERSONNEL RESOURCES
selection methods
introduction
placing

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
economic
technical, administrative
forms of decision making

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT
training, transfers
job enrichment and enlargement
promotion

ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT
forms of work organisation
organisation structure
work processes

LEADERSHIP
consultation
information
influence

REMUNERATION SYSTEMS
salaries and wages
insurance, pension
training, promotion

PHYSICAL WORK
ENVIRONMENT
noise, light, air, lay-out
dust, smoke, gas,
hygiene, protection, equipment

SOCIAL WORK ENVIRONMENT
group affiliation
influence, acceptance
contacts (see, hear, talk to etc.)

SAFETY AND HEALTH
safety regulations
training
ergonomic factors

INFORMATION
economic performance
newsletter
organistional changes

Reference: ICA-manual "Modern Personnel Policies"

(IV) Human Resource Management

HRM or Personnel Administration is the application of the personnel policies. The Personnel Department is responsible for the implementation. Technically, you first work out the personnel policies and then structure the Personnel Department so that the policies are properly reflected in the structure. How the Personnel Department is finally organised will therefore depend on the policies. Remember, however, if it is called HRM—Human Resource Management—this should be reflected in its organisation chart to show that it is development oriented and does not only administer (See under *What is modern?*, p.2).

The chart below shows some traditional areas of personnel administration (planning, salaries & wages etc) and some new HRM-activities (work environment, consultation & collaboration etc).

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Personnel Administration

Personnel Planning	Activity Planning	Implementation

Personnel needs

Personnel resources

Personnel Development
- introduction
- training

Personnel Mobility
- recruitment
- transfer
- redundancy

Salaries & Employment Conditions
- negotiations
- interpretations of laws agreements

Work Environment
- industrial health services
- social oriented activities

Consultation & Collaboration
- committees
- liaison groups
- participation

(V) How people and groups of people function

Many cooperative organisations are bureaucratic in the sense that practically all decisions are taken by the chief executive and rules and regulations rule the roost. But isn't it good that an organisation is governed by rules and regulations? It is. The problem with most bureaucratic organisations is that they go too far. "To follow the rules" becomes a goal in itself, instead of a means to achieve the real goals, e.g. to become the most efficient supplier of farm inputs in the country. Excessive bureaucracy prevents cooperative organisations to become innovative, creative and dynamic.

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The organisation structure determines to a large degree how the organisation works and the behaviour of the employees. Let us take the bureaucratic form of organisation and compare it with modern organisation theory.

Ideas prevalent in bureaucracies	Modern organisation theory
Specialization	Each employee must see the whole work process and understand his/her role in that process.
Unity of command	Problems should be solved where they arise and not pushed up the hierarchy
Decisions are made by applying ready-made rules.	Decisions are made by those who have the required knowledge and access to relevant info regardless of their formal position in the organisation.
The only way to get a person to act rationally from the point of view of the organisation is to tell him exactly what he is supposed to do.	Only by letting individuals develop and grow freely can organisations develop in an increasingly turbulent environment.
It is important to introduce standard procedures to control the employees and to orient the management towards the monitoring of the procedures and rules.	Rules are worn out very fast nowadays. To learn and to re-learn, to renew, to adapt, to be able to find new solutions to new/old problems become more important.
Contacts, collaboration and communications in an organisation shall be impersonal. Personal relations shall be replaced by official role relations.	Communications in an organisation shall flow freely. Employees shall be open, exchange facts, ideas and show feelings. They shall not avoid conflicts.
Conflicts should be avoided.	Conflicts, tensions and opposing views in an organisation might be healthy and serve as driving forces for change.
Man is a machine. Private initiative must be limited to the minimum.	Private initiatives, entrepreneurial spirit, a person's need to achieve etc are important for the organisation and sometimes determine its survival.

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Study and discuss carefully the outline in the previous page showing the differences between bureaucratic thinking and modern organisation theory. You will see that the differences are big, often fundamental. They are fundamental because modern organisation theory sees human beings in a totally different light.

Compare with your own organisation! Draw a scale as shown below and put a cross where you think your organisation fits in.

Very bureaucratic   Not at all bureaucratic

■ What type of organistaion would you like to work in? Why?

In order to understand better how modern organisations work, you should learn more about:

a.   how work can be effectively organised in various types of groups:

   ■ work groups
   ■ project groups
   ■ "self-managing groups"
   ■ problem-based learning groups (PBL-groups)

b.   how to work together in groups

   ■ group dynamics and group work
   ■ techniques of working together
       meetings
       liaison groups
       team building
       information etc

2.3 Study, Analyse and Set Priorities

We now assume that you have participated in the above training course for PPC-members. Therefore, you now know a lot more about personnel policies and it is time to dig deeper into your own particular situation. This is exactly what we shall do in this step. You shall map the personnel policy of your organisation as it is practised today.
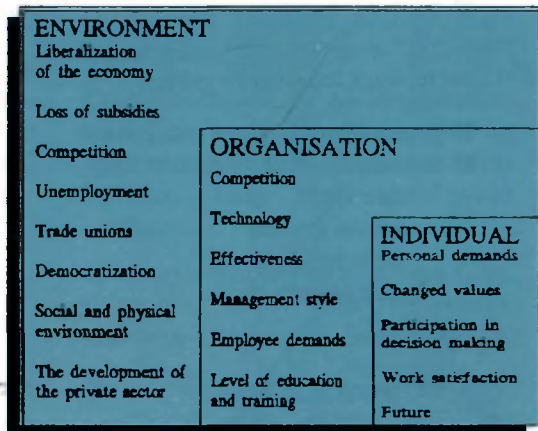
Overview
First, we shall understand that an organisation's personnel policy is not created in isolation but is linked to the individual, the organisation itself, and its environment.

Environment, organisation and individual
An organisation must continuously adapt to the environment. As the personnel policy is part of the organisation's overall policy, it, too, has to adjust to the environment. The picture below is helpful to understand the interrelations between the individual, the organisation, and the environment.

Use this chart to analyse how the organisation interacts with the individual and the environment. The factors mentioned under "Environment, "Organisation," and "Individual" will have implications for the personnel policy. To get a more realistic basis for discussion, you can changed these factors so that they better reflect your particular situation.

ENVIRONMENT	ORGANISATION	INDIVIDUAL
Liberalization of the economy		
Loss of subsidies		
Competition	Competition	
Unemployment	Technology	
Trade unions	Effectiveness	Personal demands
Democratization	Management style	Changed values
Social and physical environment	Employee demands	Participation in decision making
The development of the private sector	Level of education and training	Work satisfaction
		Future

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Your personnel policy
Now study in detail your own personnel policy. Follow the proposals below
and you will get a good insight into the personnel policies of your cooperative
organisation.

(i)   The objectives, policies and plans
Are the personnel policies well integrated into the overall objectives and
goals of the organisation, its strategic plan, and in the values that guide
the cooperative?

Are there at all any references or commitments to the personnel in the
objectives, policies and plans?

(ii)   Your personnel policy as practised today
Start by getting an overview of the present personnel structure:
— number of employees
— categories of employees
— their education and training
— age structure
— how big are the personnel costs
— forms of employment
— personnel turnover
— men and women in various categories

Management and leadership; how it is practised and applied?
■ How is leadership exercised? Is the management following any basic
  leadership philosophy?
■ To what degree are employees allowed to take part in decision making and
  other management functions, like planning, control etc?
■ How does the management consult the employees? On what type of
  questions are they consulted? Is there an established mechanism for
  consultation, e.g. meetings, liaison groups?
■ How interested is the management in trying out new forms of work
  orgnisation, e.g. project groups, work groups and teams?

Rules and guide-lines applied in the personnel area
- ■ Is there a handbook or any other written document?
- ■ Do employees have a copy?

Procedures, routines and systems in use in the personnel field
- ■ Are they documented and known by the employees?

Employees' attitudes to the cooperative organisation
- ■ Has the management seriously tried to find out what the employees' feelings and attitudes are, e.g. through an attitude survey or any other objective instrument?
- ■ Have attitudes been documented in any way?

Conflicts in the organisation
- ■ Are conflicts common? What type of conflicts are there? How are they solved? Is there an established procedure for solving conflicts?

(iii) The ICA-manual "Modern Personnel Policies"

Discuss, analyse and compare, item by item, the ICA-manual to your own personnel policy. Try to keep the following three questions at the back of your mind.

- ■ What is relevant to our own situation?
- ■ Which are our priorities?
- ■ How can we implement them?

This is a major task and will take you some time. Once you have done it, you will have a good insight into the qualities of your own personnel policies.

ICA
Modern
Personnel
Policy
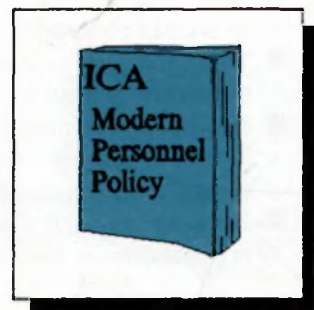
Set priorities
When you have gone through the above three steps, you are ready to set your priorities.

—Study and analyse all the material you have worked with so far; the documents you have written, your notes and records etc.

—Take a fresh look at the strong and weak points of your organisation's personnel policies

—Discuss areas lagging behind and where improvements are urgently required

—If there are many urgent requirements, consider *how much* you can manage to do

—Assess what resources will be needed (personnel, time, money) and how much of these you think can be made available

—Discuss with other people who may be knowledgeable in specific areas

—Establish your priorities

It will be wise to consult the management at this stage.

Inform
Once you have set your priorities, discussed them with the management, and agreed on the resources, you should inform all the employees of what you have done so far, the priorities you have arrived at, and how you propose to go ahead.

Where are we now in the process—and how do we continue?
You have now finalised the first three steps of the process: you have *initiated* the personnel policy work; you have *prepared yourselves,* and you have *studied and analysed* your present personnel policies and, finally, *set your priorities.*

By now you know a lot about personnel policies in general and your own in particular. You have a clear idea of what you want to achieve—you have set your priorities. In principle, therefore, you have all the information and data required to prepare a policy document.

There are two options available to you:

1. To prepare a Personnel Policy Document containing objectives and guide-lines; have it approved by the Board of Directors, who then would hand it over to the Chief Executive for the Personnel Department to implement. The board would then dissolve your group—the PPC—as it has finalised its assignment.

2. The Personnel Policy Committee continues and prepares a Personnel Policy Plan containing objectives, guide-lines, activities and budget, i.e. you say *what* should be done and *how;* you integrate policies and operations in one single document.

We shall here assume that the second alternative has been preferred. Thus, the PPC continues and prepares a Personnel Policy Plan.

2.4 Plan
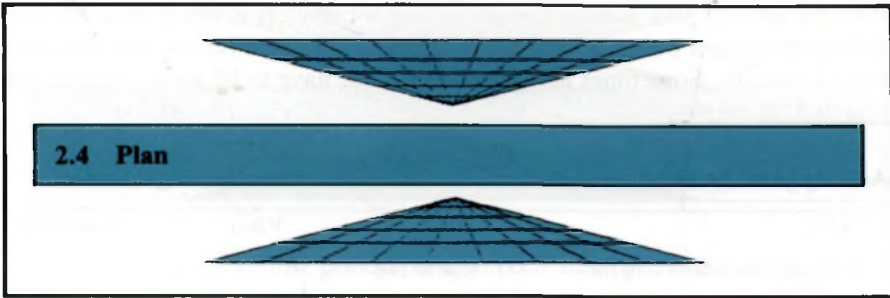
We now assume that you have set your priorities, you know what activities you want to do first second and third etc. If so, it is time for planning. When you plan you:

– State the *purpose* of the Personnel Policy Plan. Write about the long-term goals, the visions and the ambitions. They are not likely to be achieved within a few years; they are long-term visions, reaching 5–10 years into the future. They are like road maps; they will tell you where to go.
– Establish the immediate *objectives* and *goals* of the Plan and for the things you want to change. Write about the underlying *values* and then work out realistic *guide-lines*.
– Identify and describe the *activities* to be undertaken in order to reach the goals and objectives. Define the activities and limit them so that they do not become too bulky for you to handle. Work out *programmes* and *plans* for the activities to be implemented.
– Record the type of *operational aids* you intend to use, e.g. rules, routines, forms etc for the various activity areas.
– Calculate *costs* and prepare a *budget*.
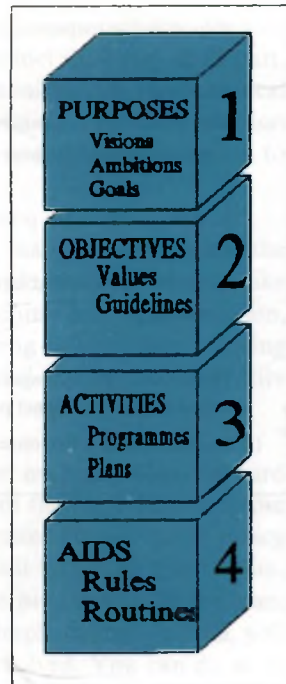
Plans can take many forms; they can be very comprehensive, detailed and sometimes complicated. Try to make your plan as simple as possible so that everybody can understand it. When you write your plan you can build it up as the above figure shows or use any other structure that suits your purpose.

A simple activity plan is shown in the example below. It is about how you can start up personnel policy work in your cooperative organisation. It covers the first six months. Sometimes activity plans do not have to be more complicated than that.

Activity plan: Starting personnel policy work in a cooperative organisation

What?	Who?	When?	How much?
1. Initiate discussions with the management	One or two employees	Early January	0
2. Decision by the board of directors	The Manager	Late January	0
3. Working party formed	Employees	Early February	0
4. Report to the management	Working party	Late February	0
5. The Board decides to set up a Personnel Policy Committee (PPC)	The Manager	Mid-March	0
6. Training of PPC-members	External consultants	Mid-April	1000
7. In-depth study of the present personnel policy	PPC	Early May	0
8. Consultation with and info to all employees	PPC	Early June	100
9. Proposals to the manager and the board on new personnel policies	PPC	Late June	0
10. Preparation of a Personnel Policy Activity Plan	PPC + Personnel department	Early July	100

2.5   Implement

There is now a personnel policy plan worked out by the Personnel Policy Committee and, we assume, approved by the Board of Directors. Thus the PPC has completed its assignment. Its task was to produce a modern personnel policy plan. It is the task of the personnel department to implement the plan. This is the most challenging phase. A plan that is just a plan has no meaning. It is the implementation that gives meaning to a plan and its underlying policies.

Although the personnel department has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the personnel policy plan, the personnel shall play their part. Many of the activities in the plan will be of an administrative and technical nature (e.g. employee statistics and data, salary scales and reviews, pension schemes, recruitment standards, financial control etc) and naturally they are to be implemented by the personnel department.

However, the personnel policy plan will contain many activities for the employees to carry out themselves. It may, for example, concern matters like bettering the work environment, improving relations and collaboration, increasing effectiveness; reducing absenteeism; observing safety rules; reducing costs; taking positive part in training and other personnel development activities etc.

Unfortunately, experience shows that employees do not normally come forward so easily to take an active part in the implementation of the plan. It is therefore necessary for you to make them aware of and interested in personnel policy matters in general and in "your" plan in particular. Still better: in "their" plan, because if you have involved them continuously in the preparation of the plan, they are likely to feel more committed to it and to its implementation. Still, you should be prepared to motivate them and get them involved. You can do so in various ways. The points below are just examples. You shall have to think about this matter further and come up with your own suggestion and proposals.

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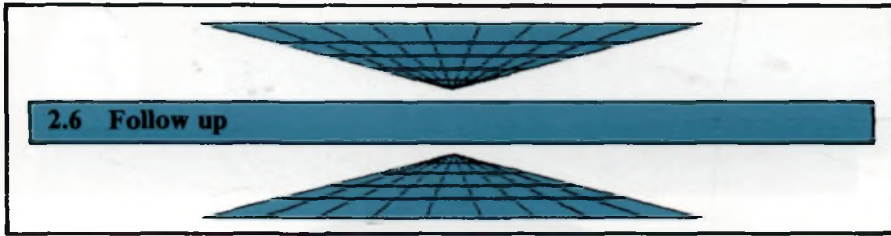Ask questions related to their particular situation, e.g.:

■ Is the atmosphere generally good in your section? Are you happy with the way you are treated by your colleagues, section head and others? Is there a problem? How can it be solved?

■ Have you access to the information you need? Can you be effective on your job? Would you be more effective if your job was differently organised? How?

■ Can you make your voice heard and get your views considered? How are you consulted? Is there any systematic form of consultation? Any follow up?

■ Have you been sexually harassed?

■ What possibilities do you have to get further training? What prospects are there for you to develop within the organisation?

■ How can your place of work become better? Safer, cleaner etc?

■ How can you influence your salary?

Inform employees continuously of what you are trying to do. Find out what their views are through:
—discussions and debates
—meetings
—training
—newsletters
—attitude surveys

Involve employees in discussions on what is happening in the society at large:
— what is going on in the private sector that might have an effect on your organisation and its personnel situation (mergers, investments, new competitors etc)?
—unemployment and redundancies
—new laws and regulations
—strikes and unrest on the labour market
—technological developments etc.

2.6 Follow up

A plan needs to be followed up. What you follow up or monitor is the use of time, money and resources. There might be unexpected delays, for example, due to breakdowns of equipment, lack of funds or you may have underestimated time or the need for people and other resources; people also fall sick, others resign etc. There can be many reasons for delays.

Your plan is a baseline. It includes all information, data, dates, costs, and work to be done. As work progresses you update your schedule and compare it to the original plan.

Before you start, consider your sources of information. You cannot do any follow up worth its name if you do not consult the employees.

Below are some questions to examine when monitoring progress:
- Is the Personnel Department applying the new policies?
- Are the policies adhered to by all concerned, e.g. departments, sections, projects etc?
- Is the personnel policy plan on track?
- Have the goals been reached?
- If there are deviatons, what type of deviations are they, and what steps have been taken to rectify them?
- Have you analysed the causes of the deviations?
- Examine conflicts and their causes.
- What are the reactions of the employees?

If you follow the method below, you will get a systematic follow-up of your activities:

- dates (on-going, completed, delays etc)
- costs (actual costs, changes to cost estimates etc)
- quality and quantity (deviations from your standards or expectations)
- causes for deviations
- consequences of deviations
- conclusions and suggestions
- actions to be taken

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2.7 Modify, revise, adjust, change again - and continue the process!
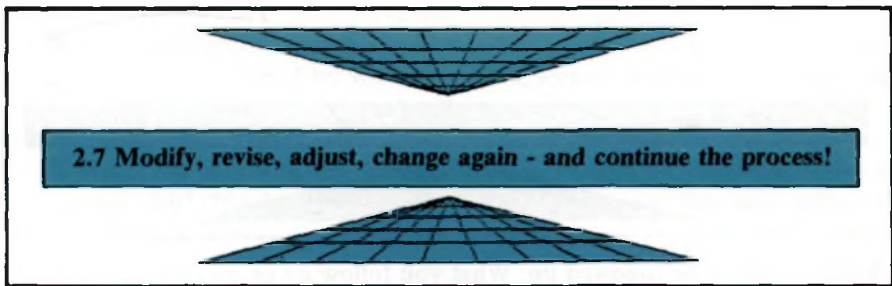
The process of developing modern personnel policies really never ends. It is a continuous process. Its intensity varies, however, according to what phase you are in. Once you have a policy generally applied and accepted, your job will be easier and it will mainly consist of modifying, revising, adjusting your present policies.

■ If you have reached the goals within one activity area, find a new priority area to work with—and new important goals for that area!

■ If the goals have not been reached, consider new approaches.

■ Fill out, expand and revise the present policy.

■ From time to time audit the whole personnel policy with the view to:
  —adapt it to the future situation of the cooperative organisation
  —adjust it to prevailing values in the society at large
  —try to be ahead of your main competitors.

3. Participation and Responsibility

We have now gone through all the seven steps of the method for employee participation. You should now be equipped with the basic "tools" enabling you to actively take part in the development and implementation of your personnel policies.

The idea behind this book is derived from McGregor's "Theory Y". It is from this theory that employee participation in the decision-making process originates. As you remember this theory takes a positive view of men and women. Employees, it says, want to work; they find it natural and they are able to work on their own; they want to take part in decisions, and particular such decisions that directly affect them. Furthermore, employees are not only motivated by money and security, but also by the need for self-respect and esteem. In addition, they are willing to accept and even seek responsibility.

This positive view—combined with the complex man/woman view (see p. 17) — constitutes a solid base on which modern personnel policies in cooperatives can be built. Thus, this view should permeate the personnel policies and the management at all levels in cooperatives. Only if managers adopt these assumptions, writes Argyris, will organisations and management systems be designed to elicit from employees responsible adult behaviour.

And that brings me to the last point I want to emphasize in this book: responsibility. Participation implies responsibility. Once you have participated in an agreed manner to the development of the personnel policies, you share the responsibility of their quality, content, formulation and application with the other parties involved, in particular the management. When you are officially recognized by your cooperative organisation as a partner in the decision-making process, you are also officially responsible for whatever decisions you have participated in making. Participation and responsibility go together.

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International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) was formed in London in 1895! Its head office is now in Geneva, Switzerland. It is a non-governmental organisation. ICA is represented in all parts of the world through its own Regional Offices and its Member Organisations.

The main objective of the ICA is to improve the living standards of the cooperative members. It pursues this objective by promoting cooperatives through its own international cooperative network but also in collaboration with the United Nations, governments, and other international organisations. At the present time (1992), more than 700 million individuals are members of the cooperative organisations affiliated to the ICA.

ICA Member Organisations are active in practically all economic sectors, e.g. agriculture, industry, trade, insurance, banking etc. They have many employees. In East, Central and Southern Africa there are more than 150,000. Personnel Policies, therefore, are important. ICA has recognised this fact and recently reviewed its policies on Human Resource Development (Abidjan, 1990). This booklet is a response to the new ICA HRD-policies.

Folke Dubell has experience from development work in cooperatives from various parts of the world. He has worked in North, West, East, Central and Southern Africa for more than twelve years. From 1987–91 Folke Dubell worked at the ICA Regional Office for East, Central and Southern Africa as Regional Development Coordinator and HRD-Project Manager.