

EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES IN SERBIA

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Abstract

Extent and area of expertise of additional education of the directors, employees and members of agricultural co-operatives in Serbia are analysed in the paper. Results are based on the survey-research of standpoints of the directors and members in 79 co-operatives or 10.2 percent of agricultural cooperatives that have had positive financial result at least ones in three year period (2007-2009). Data were processed in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and interpreted in order to provide adequate conclusions. Only 53.2 percent of agricultural co-operatives in Serbia that were included in sample, invest in education of employees and members, while 62.0 percent invest in education of directors, although 78.5 percent of directors think that costs for education of given groups of users can be characterised as investment. In education of all groups of users dominate lectures – as the most frequent form of additional education, although winter schools are offered to members in 43 percent of co-operatives, while courses and training have also high frequency of answers in additional education of directors (45.6 percent). Training for members is usually organised in the field of crop breeding, which is consistent to the fact that 64 percent of co-operative members included in the survey have dominant crop breeding on their farms. Based on the results of the research, it is possible to evaluate state and to find models of improving types and levels of education and training of directors, employees and members of agricultural co-operatives in Serbia, in order to prepare and adapt them for modern conditions of business.

Key words: agricultural cooperatives, education and training, Serbia.

Introduction

Cooperative education is one of the oldest principles by which co-operatives operate in the world. In the first almanac issued by the Rochdale cooperative in the same year when this co-op was established (1844), there was a list of so called “practice” on the basis of which operated not only this one, but all the consumers, and later other types of co-operatives. Although co-operatives operated according to certain

rules, some of them were not included in the principles until there was a clear need for this, or until the legal requirements allowed it. That is the case with cooperative education. While the first cooperatives allocated certain resources for education, this rule was included in the co-operative principles only in 1854, after the Registrar allowed foundation of such a fund. Until then, resources for cooperative education were allocated on behalf of other needs.

Why there was such a strong need for education in the mid-Nineteenth Century? In those years, cooperatives were the organizations that offered their members the opportunity to acquire specific skills and knowledge and to use this as a tool for employment outside the cooperative sector. During this period, cooperatives focused on educating their members with general education through courses, lectures, adult schools, publishing newspapers and allowing members to use cooperative library. Later, when the public education system filled their role of general education, these organizations have focused predominantly on cooperative education. In its almanac from 1860, the Rochdale cooperative published the list of five cooperative principles: open membership; one man, one vote; limited interest on capital; cash trading; and education. (Thompson, 1994).

The principle of cooperative education has been retained in all subsequent reforms of principles and it was an integral part of the first generation of cooperative principles from 1937, the second generation from 1966, and it was also included in the third generation adopted in 1995 in Manchester on the 31 Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance, known as the basic cooperative principles, that remained unchanged until today.

Cooperative education and training should be focused not only internally, or to the representatives of the cooperative sector (cooperative directors, board members, employees and cooperative members), but also externally, on three levels: (1) to representatives of government institutions, (2) to potential members (in the case of agricultural cooperatives, to producers who are not members of the cooperative) and (3) to the general public, especially to youth.

The focus of the cooperative education to representatives of government institutions is particularly important for the countries of the former socialist regime, where, for the prosperity of the cooperatives, it is necessary to create an adequate institutional and regulatory environment. In this sense, changing the way of thinking primarily of government officials is essential, and it is very important to emphasize that the cooperatives are private and open organizations, and that they can contribute significantly to overall economic development. Without a positive attitude of the state institutions towards co-operative sector, cooperative development is not only seriously threatened, but it can result in stagnation or even in complete extinction of certain types of cooperatives, as is the case in Serbia with saving and credit cooperatives. Despite a very developed sector of savings and credit cooperatives in

the world and the significant tradition in Serbia, The Law on Banks (2005) prohibited their existence and thus restricted access to favourable sources of financing to agricultural cooperatives, which were traditionally associated with the savings and credit cooperatives in Serbia.

Over a billion people in the world are members of cooperatives,¹ which illustrates the strength and potential of the cooperative sector. In some countries, however, there is a misunderstanding, and even antagonism toward this form of business organization. In most cases it happens in countries where cooperatives were previously used to achieve certain (governmental) goals. Therefore, it is extremely important that the general public is introduced with the benefits of the cooperative organizations. In order to increase membership, cooperative education should be directed to potential members, emphasizing the benefits they can gain through cooperatives. It is particularly important to introduce youth with cooperative advantages, because it can result with increased membership in future generations, but also with elimination of any negative attitudes towards the cooperative sector.

Material and methods of research

The conclusions presented in this paper are the result of the survey conducted by the Serbian Association of Agricultural Economists conducted during April and May 2011 in 79 agricultural cooperatives in the Republic of Serbia. The survey was conducted within the STAR sub-project AE-002 “Strategy of the Development of Agricultural Co-operatives in the Republic of Serbia”, financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the Global environmental Fund (GEF).

In order to select the cooperatives for the survey, data were collected from the Serbian Business Registers Agency (SBRA) in April 2011. According to this source, there are 2,381 registered cooperatives in the Republic of Serbia, excluding Kosovo and Metohija, of which 1,585 or 66.6 percent are agricultural cooperatives. From this group were eliminated 202 agricultural cooperatives that were on the list of the National Bank of Serbia (NBS) for initiating bankruptcy process, remaining 1,383 agricultural cooperatives, of which 743 or 53.7 percent are in Central Serbia and 640 or 46.3 percent in Vojvodina.

In the sample group were included only those cooperatives that achieved at least once positive financial result in previous three-year period, according to the annual financial statements presented to the SBRA. In this way, the basic group was reduced to only 773 prospective cooperatives that meet specified criteria, with their territorial distribution as following: 344 or 44.5 percent are located in Central

¹ <http://2012.coop/en/ica/co-operative-facts-figures>

Serbia, while 429 or 55.5 percent in AP Vojvodina.

This survey included 79 agricultural cooperatives, which makes 10.2 percent of 773 perspective agricultural cooperatives, or 5.7 percent of the total number of agricultural cooperatives which (according to data of NBS and SBRA from 2011) were not in the process or were planned for bankruptcy. Territorial distribution of cooperatives covered by research fits really determined number of registered cooperatives, since 38 were surveyed in Central Serbia, and 41 in AP Vojvodina.

The questionnaires were prepared for two groups of respondents: directors and representatives of members. In each of the selected cooperatives were carried out two interviews, independent in time and place. In each of the selected cooperatives, first interview was conducted with director, followed by an interview with the representative of cooperative members, which was carried out without the presence of the director of the cooperative in order to get the most reliable answers. The survey was implemented by interviewers who have previously completed two-day training, and all interviews were conducted in person (face to face). In 59.5 percent of agricultural cooperatives included in research representatives of members were president of co-op assembly or board members.

Data collected by this survey-research were analyzed in the programme Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and the results were interpreted in order to obtain relevant conclusions. During processing the data we used descriptive statistical analysis and indices of variables (classification and presentation of data, and the determination of basic statistical indicators of series: frequency, participation and measures of central tendency). In addition, we tested the correlation of selected indicators in relation to relevant factors, which made possible to establish cause-consequence analysis.

The described methodology for the collection and processing of data points to the quality of preparation and a high degree of reliability of responses, which allows us to infer about the activities of agricultural cooperatives in Serbia.

Results and discussion

Before we start with the analysis of the situation in the agricultural cooperatives in Serbia, it is necessary to explain the difference between cooperative education and training.

Cooperative education and training

Cooperative education is aimed at forming cooperative consciousness and ideology. The goal is to create awareness among the general public about the benefits of cooperation, the objectives that can be achieved through membership in the cooperative, and the potentials of the cooperative sector in general. Cooperative education tends to introduce the members of cooperatives with the fact that they are not only members of one cooperative, but also of the entire cooperative movement

and it is aimed at the acquisition of knowledge, both among the membership, as well as the wider population, about co-operative values and principles, but also about designing and implementation of cooperative vision. To accept the idea that their problems can be solved through cooperative, people need to be informed about the nature of cooperatives and to understand the postulates upon which they rest. However, cooperative education isn't only directed externally, to the general public, but also internally, to the members of cooperatives. When an individual become a member of a cooperative, it doesn't mean that he or she has all the necessary knowledge on cooperatives. This is precisely one of the main tasks of the cooperative education – to inform the members and the cooperative leaders, directors, and employees, with the benefits of these organizations.

Cooperative training is more practical than ideological and theoretical activity and focused primarily internally, i.e. to specific audiences within the cooperative sector. The main task of cooperative training is to improve the efficiency of business, by providing certain groups of users with adequate knowledge and skills.

Education and training in co-operative sector can contribute not only to improving the business, but also to help reducing conflict between the management and members of the cooperative. If both parties fully understand the cooperative way of doing business, as well as their rights and obligations that arise from membership or from the leadership of the cooperative, any unrealistic expectations can be eliminated and it is easier to make decisions, especially regarding the distribution of surplus.

It should be emphasized that the co-operative education and training are not exclusively directed towards the characteristics of the cooperative sector. On the contrary, the cooperatives organize lectures, courses, training and other forms of education and training that can cover a wide range of topics – from specific, depending on the needs of the membership (for example, the use of plant protection in agricultural production, through general education, such as the use of computers, to social issues such as gender equality). Depending on the topic of cooperative education, members of agricultural cooperatives can have a double benefits: on one hand, they are in a position to learn about ways to improve agricultural production and thus improve business on their farms, and on the other, through cooperative education they can gain broader knowledge that will assist them in understanding their rights in the management of the cooperative and expressing their opinions. Also, cooperative can help them learn to use computers and to collect different information over the Internet or to engage in social networks according to their own preferences.

Education and training of directors of the cooperatives and representatives of management should focus primarily on the acquisition of appropriate business skills to ensure positive financial results of the cooperative. However, it is very important,

especially for cooperative directors, to know specifics of business in cooperatives, starting from the cooperative values and principles, through legal and institutional environment in which cooperatives operate and cooperative bookkeeping. Only in this way the cooperative management can ensure business success, taking into account the full features of cooperatives as economic organizations.

Models of cooperative education and training

There are different models of implementation of cooperative education and training. The most common method of realization of cooperative education and training is through lectures, courses, evening schools and similar. In some cooperatives, training is required for board members² (i.e. middle and senior management), and it can be implemented in a cooperative or in selected educational institutions that are often specialized in training and education of cooperative staff, and most of them are located in universities or in cooperative unions. In Slovenia, for example, a cooperative union is organizing courses for members and employees of cooperatives. In Germany, one of the tasks of the cooperative associations and unions is to promote cooperative movement, which is resulting in an increased number of cooperatives, and cooperative education is becoming subject of interest to a growing number of universities that are organizing adequate courses and training. (COGECA, 2010)

However, there are other models of cooperative education and training. Some unions offer their members a free subscription to the relevant magazine or send them cooperative newspapers, also at no charge. Cooperatives can provide members the opportunity to participate at conferences and scientific and professional meetings, taking over the costs incurred on these activities. (Carr et al., 2008)

The importance of cooperative education can affirmatively be shown by the fact that relevant international organizations prepared and published materials for the realization of cooperative education. The International Labour Organization (ILO), which actively supports the development of cooperatives, published a document titled *Materials and Techniques for Cooperative Managerial Training*, while the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO UN) developed *Appropriate Management System for Small Farmer Cooperatives (AMSAC)*. In addition, there is significant international cooperation in the field of cooperative education: for example, France's National Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives conducts training programs in co-operatives in West Africa. (FAO, 1996) In addition to the activities of international organizations, in the countries with developed cooperative sector it is a common practice that educational

² As cooperatives with large membership in Canada and USA.

institutions of different levels publish literature for cooperative education (as is the case in the U.S.A.,³ the United Kingdom, and even in Kenya and Tanzania).

Investment in cooperative education and training in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia

Although there is formal obligation to invest in education in cooperatives, in accordance with the basic cooperative principles, just over half of the agricultural cooperatives in Serbia carry out this activity. Most of the cooperatives included in research invest in education of directors (62.0 percent), while small number of cooperatives invests in the education of its members and employees (53.2 percent) (Table 1).

Table 1 Agricultural cooperatives in Serbia according to investing in the education of members, directors and employees⁴

	Members	Directors	Employees
Cooperative invest in education	53.2	62.0	53.2
Cooperative doesn't invest in education	36.7	32.9	41.8
No answer	10.1	5.1	5.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

With regards to the territorial distribution of agricultural cooperatives, more is invested in the education of all categories of users in cooperatives in Vojvodina, in relation to cooperatives in Central Serbia. In Vojvodina cooperatives invest mostly in the education of directors (68 percent of the cooperatives), then in the education of members (63 percent) and least in the education of employees (61 percent).

Most of the surveyed agricultural cooperatives (38.0 percent) are investing in the training and education of all groups of users, while 27.8 percent the cooperatives do not invest in these activities at all. In 15.2 percent of cooperatives there are no investments in education of one of the three user groups, and workers are in most cases excluded from additional education. In only 6.3 percent of cooperatives only one user group gain education and training (in two co-ops directors, in other two co-ops employees, and in one of the co-operatives included in survey members of cooperatives are the only group that has training and education). In 12.7 percent of the cooperatives, surveyed director didn't answer to some of these questions.

³ For example: Cooperative Education Policies and Procedures Manual, published by University of Agriculture in Carolina, USA.

⁴ Source for this table and all further figures in the paper: Survey-research, SAAE, 2011.

The dominant part of the directors of agricultural cooperatives believes that paying for education is an investment (78.5 percent), compared to 8.9 percent of directors who claim that these costs are just another expense. An identical number of directors (6.3 percent) indicated that investment in education is of different nature (they think that education in cooperatives is a need or a necessity), or they didn't want to answer this question.

We analyzed the correlation of investment in education and training in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia and selected factors, such as: the size of the cooperative according to the number of employees, age and education of directors, duration of cooperative (how long ago was cooperative founded), achieving positive financial results and other factors.

According to the survey, there is no connection between the number of employees and investment in their education. Cooperatives that have no employees obviously do not have the training costs per employee (which was used as a control question). It was established that cooperatives with less than 5 employees, which dominate in the sample with 50.6 percent, almost in equal measure invest (55.3 percent of cooperative) and do not invest (44.7 percent of cooperative) in their education. Of the six cooperatives with 21 to 50 employees, five invest, and one doesn't invest in the education of employees, however, there was no statistically significant correlation between these variables. It is evident that co-ops with greater number of employees are more inclined to invest in their education than co-ops with fewer workers.

Directors and representatives of members answered the question: Does cooperative invest in education of its members? Most of members (84.8 percent) believe that the co-op is investing in their education, compared to only 53.2 percent of directors that have confirmed this response. Such a high discrepancy in the responses of directors and members can be partially explained by the fact that the cooperative members and directors perceived "investment in education" in different ways. The cooperative members may feel that the education include receiving useful advice in informal communication from experts in the cooperatives regarding solving specific problems, related primarily to agricultural production. Agricultural cooperatives which have the agricultural pharmacy, besides providing inputs for production, will give additional information about their use (for example, how to use herbicides). Cooperative directors probably would not have rated this service as an investment in the education of its members, but it is possible that the members were more likely to qualify these information as education.

Of the 42 directors of cooperatives that invest in education of members, 31 of them (or 73.8 percent) indicated that cooperative members have non-economic benefits of membership in the cooperative, where they particularly refer to the use of different educational courses, lectures and winter schools. At the same time, of the 29

directors who rated that cooperative doesn't invest in the education of members, as many as 13 of them (44.8 percent) said they members have non-economic benefits, i.e. that the cooperative offers educational courses, lectures and winter schools. One of possible explanation for the above differences in the responses of directors is that cooperative manages to provide lectures, winter schools and courses free of charge – within different projects or as an additional service with the purchase of certain inputs for agricultural production. In this way, the cooperative is in a position to provide members acquisition of new knowledge, without direct payment for these purposes.

Of the 42 directors of cooperatives that invest in education of members, 61.9 percent of them marked out “education and informing of members and employees” as one of the five most important issues that need to be resolved in agricultural cooperative sector in Serbia. The remaining 16 directors (38.1 percent) don't believe that this is one of the most pressing issues of agricultural cooperative sector. Obviously, minority of the directors in cooperatives that invest in education of its members believe that these activities have satisfactory results, while the majority of them believe that education of members, despite the training they receive in the cooperative, is at a relatively low level, and that co-op members should receive further education and that it should be addressed as one of the five most important issues in agricultural cooperative sector. However, this raises new questions: Can cooperative do more to educate its members? For which reason the existing education is not enough? etc. In other words, if cooperative is already investing in the education and training of members, why are the effects of these activities insufficient, and why there is a need that education and training of members should be included as one of the most important problems in the agricultural co-operatives? There is no correlation between the time of the establishment of cooperatives and investment in education. Cooperatives included in research were grouped according to the time of foundation in two groups: old co-ops, established to 31.12.2000 and new co-ops established from 01.01.2001. (Ševarlić and Nikolić, 2012-a: 12) In the category of cooperatives that invest in education of its members, old and new cooperatives are identically represented (by 21 cooperatives), and the situation is almost the same in the group of cooperatives that do not invest in educating members (14 new and 15 old cooperatives). So, there is no significant relationship between the classification of cooperatives in the old and new and the investments in education of cooperative members.

Investment in education in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia, especially of members, partly depends of the cooperative's director. The cooperatives where directors are younger more often invest in the education of its members, then those cooperatives in which directors are older. (Graph 1) Level of director's education, however, does not affect significantly on the investment in education in cooperative.

The greatest impact on investment in education in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia has a business result, since cooperatives that have continuously recorded a profit in the last five years have the largest share in the number of cooperatives that invest in education. (Graph 2)

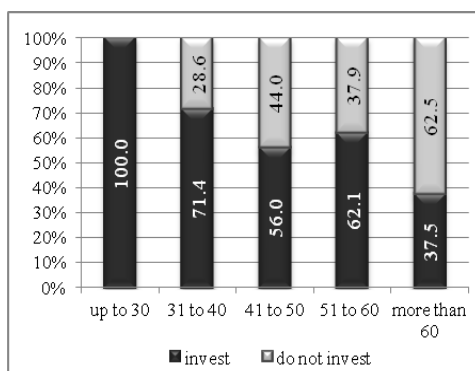


Figure 1 Agricultural cooperatives according to the investment in the education of its members and the age of directors

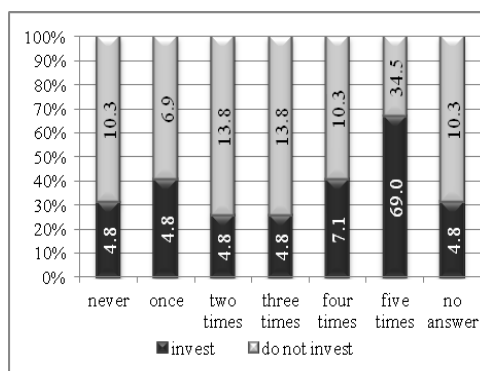


Figure 2 Agricultural cooperatives according to the investment in the education of its members and making a profit

Organisation models of cooperative education and training in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia

Traditional models of cooperative education and training are predominant in the agricultural cooperatives in Serbia. According to the responses of directors, in education of all groups of users dominate lectures, although they are still the most common when it comes to the education of members (in 68.4 percent of cooperatives). (Figure 3) Members receive additional education and training also through winter school (43.0 percent), training courses (35.4 percent), excursions in the country (29.1 percent), and in a slightly less number of cooperative excursions abroad (10.1 percent). Traditionally, members of agricultural cooperatives in Serbia mostly attend lectures and winter schools, since these two models of additional education are usually organized during the winter months, when farmers have more free time, or when they are not busy with agricultural work.

Although the survey results upheld the expectations of organizing model, some of the results are partly surprising. According to the responses of directors, employees in agricultural cooperatives are referred to excursions in the country (16.5 percent) and abroad (6.3 percent). In accordance with the nature of the requests for additional education of employees, more adequate model of their training would be training and different types courses. However, one of the characteristics of the

agricultural cooperatives in Serbia is that in a certain number of cooperatives, workers represent (dominant) part of members. So, it is possible that in those cooperatives where further education of employees are organized through excursions at home and abroad, the workers are at the same time the members of cooperatives and that they attended these types of additional education more as members than as employees.

Education of director of agricultural cooperatives in Serbia is conducted through lectures (59.5 percent), courses and training (45.6 percent), excursion in the country (35.4 percent) and winter schools (31.6 percent). Most of the directors that said that the cooperatives do not invest in education of directors, did not respond to a question about models of education of directors, which is quite expected and partly justifies the high percentage of surveys in which this question has not been answered.⁵ However, in 17 cooperatives, directors stated that their education is carried out through certain models of additional training (such as lectures and courses); although they have already emphasized that the cooperative does not invest in the education of director. This can also be explained by providing additional training for directors of the cooperative, without financial costs, which is usually a result of participation in a variety of cooperative programs and projects that in most cases is carried out by NGOs, with the aim of promoting and improvement of cooperative sector in Serbia.

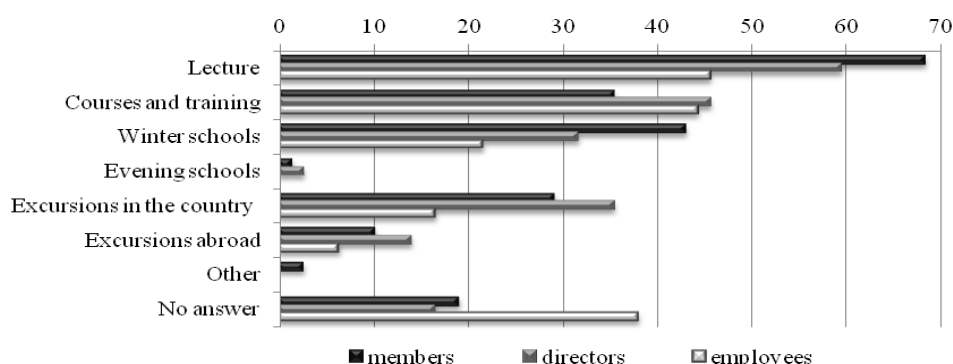


Figure 3 Models of organizing education and training in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia

⁵ We asked directors of agricultural cooperatives about models applied in education of workers. Even 38.0 percent of directors didn't answer this question. In this case, those are primarily cooperatives that have no employees at all, or cooperatives where no additional training and education of workers is organised.

In terms of the frequency of the response regarding different models of education, there is no difference in the models of education of directors and employees of agricultural cooperatives in Serbia, since both groups usually use one or two additional models of education, such as: lectures, and courses and/or training (of the above seven models). Most of different models of additional education and training provided by cooperative use members: in over ¼ of cooperatives (25.3 percent) three different models of education are provided to members, two models are present in 24.1 percent, and in 21.5 percent of the agricultural cooperative members can gain additional education and training using a single model, usually lectures.

Education and training topics in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia

As noted above, cooperative education and training can be organized in different areas, depending on the needs and preferences of users, primarily members. Education and training topic can be conditionally divided into two groups: the first, related to any aspect of cooperative movement (cooperatives as a specific economic entities, cooperative values and principles, management in a cooperatives, models of association, cooperative accounting etc.), and second, that covers all topics non-related to cooperatives (in agricultural cooperatives this could be: ways to improve agricultural production, plant protection, alternative activities such as rural tourism, handicrafts, rural industry, and more recently, organic agriculture, environmental protection and rural development).

Training for members in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia is usually organized in the field of crop breeding, which is consistent to the fact that 64.6 percent of farmers included in survey have farms with dominant crop breeding production. Extremely high frequency of response has also livestock production (50.6 percent), although only 30.4 percent of farmers are engaged in cattle breeding production. Significantly more training for farmer (on level of significance 0.01) is organized in fruit breeding and viticulture in central Serbia (42 percent) compared to Vojvodina – where this topic is not present at all in the education of members. This is understandable given the fact that central Serbia is traditionally focused primarily on fruit production. These data indicate that the topics of organized lectures, winter schools and courses are well connected and balanced with types of agricultural production organized on farms of members.

In just 25.3 percent of agricultural cooperatives included in research, director training is organized in management, and in 17.7 percent of cooperatives topic of directors' training is related to marketing. This should be substantially increased. It is interesting to notice that in education and training of directors also dominate crop breeding (in 54.4 percent of the cooperatives) and livestock (in 41.8 percent). Relatively unsatisfactory structure of education and training of cooperative directors is a result of limited offer of appropriate courses, where directors would gain useful

skills and knowledge. Obviously, there is a need for relevant educational institutions to be involved in the training of cooperative directors. Lack of adequate training courses for managers of cooperatives is not only a problem in Serbia. In Spain, this is also one of the main problems facing the cooperative sector. (COGECA, 2010: 108).

Education of employees is not adequate to their needs, since only in 8.9 percent of surveyed cooperatives employees have management training; in 7.6 percent have training in marketing, and in 6.3 percent of cooperatives in the area of business planning. The need for additional education of employees in the cooperatives have been recognized in other countries as well, so in Italy there is a separate fund called FonCoop aimed at continuing education of cooperative workers. (COGECA, 2010: 125).

It should be emphasized that concerning small number of agricultural cooperatives in Serbia organise training and education in the field related to association, and cooperative characteristics. This topic is present in the education of members in 16.5 percent, education of director in 13.9 percent and education of employees in 10.1 percent of agricultural cooperatives. Needless to say, there is strong necessity of providing additional training of these groups of users in the field of cooperative movement, but it should be noted that some problems, such as insufficient involvement of its members in the management of the cooperative, cannot be solved until the knowledge of members about their rights and obligations related to membership in agricultural cooperatives is significantly increased.⁶

Conclusions

One of the basic assumptions of development and prosperity of the cooperative sector is to preserve the identity of the cooperative, which is based on cooperative values and principles. It is necessary that members participate actively in the work of cooperative, to make decisions about business activities in the future and to realize their and the role of cooperative in the local community. In addition, for the development of cooperatives it is necessary to create favourable institutional and legal environment, which depends on state institutions and sympathy of the people who create legal documents for this sector. For both groups: the cooperative members and board members, and staff in relevant government institutions, it is very important to know and understand the underlying principles of cooperatives, in order to be able to contribute to the development of single cooperative and cooperative sector in general. Cooperative education and training have a role in providing these and other relevant information, not only to user groups in cooperative, but also to the wider population.

⁶ More in Ševarlić and Nikolić (2012-b): Membership and Decision Making Process in Agricultural Co-operatives in Serbia.

Since the founding of the first cooperatives, cooperative education and training represented one of the basic principles of the cooperative movement. Education and training can be directed internally, to users within the cooperative sector and externally to the wider public, and include providing information not only related to the co-operative sector, but also provide the knowledge necessary to improve the quality of life of its members.

Cooperative training and education in agricultural cooperatives in Serbia is not entirely satisfactory. Of 79 agricultural cooperatives covered by survey, in 57 (72.2 percent) is invested in the education of at least one user group (members, directors or employees). Directors were in most cases users of additional education (62.0 percent), which is connected with the fact that the directors have a significant role in the extent of additional education and training to all user groups. The most commonly applied models of training and further education are the traditional one, such as lectures, courses and winter schools. We can notice that there is an absence of models that require more significant financial resources, such as publishing cooperative newspapers, newsletters and similar printed materials. Crucial role in the volume and type of organization of additional education and training has economic power of cooperatives measured in continuously creating of profit.

It is commendable that in organization of further education and training, care of the needs (primarily of members) is taking into account, and that topic are harmonised with types of agricultural production that dominate in the farms and in their local area. There are, however, plenty of room for improving the education and training provided to cooperative members, directors and employees, primarily in the direction of expanding the topics, and more significant participation of the cooperative education (education related to organising and specifics of cooperatives). Therefore, it is necessary to include relevant educational institutions in order to expand the offer and to organise adequate courses, lectures and similar types of additional education aimed at broadening knowledge about the cooperative sector.

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ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ И ОБУКА ВО ЗЕМЈОДЕЛСКИТЕ ЗАДРУГИ ВО СРБИЈА

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Апстракт

Во трудот се анализира степенот и областа на дополнително образование што го постигнуваат директорите, вработените и членовите на земјоделските задруги во Србија. Резултатите се базираат на анкетно истражување на ставовите на директорите и членовите во 79 задруги, или 10,2 % од земјоделските задруги кои најмалку еднаш во период од три години, остваруваат позитивен финансиски резултат. Податоците од анкетите беа обработени во SPSS пакетот (Статистички пакет за социјални науки) и интерпретирани со цел да се донесат соодветни заклучоци. Од земјоделските задруги во Србија вклучени во примерокот, само 53,2 % вложуваат во обука на вработените и членовите, додека 62,0% вложуваат во образование на директорите, иако 78,5% од директорите сметаат дека вложувањето во образование на корисничките групи има карактер на инвестиции. Во образованието на сите групи на корисници доминираат предавањата - како најчеста форма на дополнително образование, иако членовите на задругите добиваат дополнително образование преку зимски школи (43% од задругите), додека семинарите и обуките имаат исто така висока фреквенција на одговори во дополнителното образование на директорите (45,6 %). Обука за членовите најчесто се организира во областа на растителното производство, што соодветствува со фактот дека кај 64% од членовите на задругите вклучени во истражувањето доминира одгледувањето на растителни култури на нивните фарми. Резултатите од истражувањето овозможуваат да се оцени состојбата и да се согледаат можностите за подобрување на нивото и начините на организирање на обуки и образование за директорите, вработените и членовите на земјоделските задруги во Србија, со цел подобро да се прилагодат на современите услови на работење.

Клучни зборови : земјоделски задруги, обука и образование, Србија.