

PART 1

The Report of the Seminar

CHAPTER 1

Problems and Policies

Training needs and problems

The training needs of young people in many parts of modern Africa are a reflection of the total situation concerning youth and employment in developing countries. Recent projections by the International Labour Organisation indicate that in world terms the labour force under twenty years of age can be expected to grow from 230 millions in 1970 to more than 245 millions in 1980. An expansion from 211 millions to 264 millions is predicted for the age-group twenty to twenty-four years, making a total increase in the labour force under twenty-five years of age of approximately 68 millions of which 64.5 millions will live in developing countries. This degree of expansion must be set against the discouragingly slow rate of new job creation, particularly in the sought-after modern sector of the economies of developing countries. Therefore, exceptional measures must be adopted if a significant proportion of these young people are to be fitted for and established in any form of rewarding employment.

With these considerations in view, the seminar directed its attention mainly to the mechanics of various projects which have been established in African countries in recent years with the object of training young people and creating employment outlets for them. There was a general feeling that projects of this nature, what the I.L.O. has called "special employment and training schemes for development purposes", have a function in particular situations, and that there is value in any exercise which seeks to isolate the causes for success and failure of such projects. Nevertheless it was regarded as essential that the attention of all agencies interested in this field should be directed to the broad dimension of the training needs of young people out of school and not simply towards activities aimed at particular segments. For example, isolated "success stories" which have

raised substantially the level of living of a few young people involved in a particular project are valuable mainly in so far as they are capable of replication on a broad front. This is not, of course, to minimise the value of experimental work which may contribute to the design of programmes which tackle the long-term training needs of the mass.

The seminar doubted the value of concentrating on selected groups of young people. These may act as divisive influences on rural societies both socially and economically. No matter how many local successes may be recorded, the fundamental need, without which there can be no widespread answer to the overall training needs of young people out of school, especially in the rural areas of Africa where the vast majority live, remains for a general raising of the rural base. The aim must be rural development on a broad front involving the whole of rural society and not simply those elements in it which happen to come below a certain age limit.

The urge of young people throughout Africa towards "modern" ways of living was recognised. The well-known causes of this were re-examined - the impact of commercialism, the transplanted modern ways of living through the spread of government in all its forms into even the remotest areas, the mass media, the schools. The process of modernisation is, however, not equally spread throughout Africa and even within particular countries there are still substantial variations of degree in this respect.

The consequences of the urge towards a "modern" way of life when opportunities in modern-sector employment are so limited, and are likely to remain so for many years, were also reviewed. The drift to the towns, job seeking, disillusionment, frustration, petty crime, prostitution, vandalism, alienation from agricultural work, particularly agriculture in the traditional context, political unrest arise from this fundamental factor.

Whilst these manifestations have become established features of the youth situation in most parts of Africa in recent years, it was stressed that the needs, interests and aspirations of young people are not static. Young people form the most volatile element in these societies and this should act as a powerful justification for directing development efforts towards the younger sections of the population. In contrast, when young people continue to live within traditional rural society and the traditional rural economy, powerful customary constraints may

deter them from innovative activities. Young people in African countries who are responsive to change can often encounter frustration in their relationships both with the traditional life and with "modern" society which cannot expand sufficiently rapidly to absorb them. Young people in many African countries frequently regard themselves as social rejects. They seek to contribute something towards their societies' advancement but are unable to do so. The tensions which result inevitably lead towards various forms of social upheaval.

The seminar did not analyse in detail the problems of particular groups, urban, rural, etc. It was accepted that the essential cause of the widely advertised youth "problem" in Africa today lay in the rural areas, in continued rural decay and in the lack of comprehensive measures of rural regeneration. The frustrations of young people in traditional society, the problems of the young drifter in the cities, the antipathies of the primary school leaver towards the land, even the general lack of broader social responsibility of the young university graduate, can all be tackled by a thorough-going development of the rural sector. Despite such programmes, there will still be a substantial group of unemployed young people in cities for whom special measures related to the urban environment will be required. Although a high proportion of young people who seek employment in the major towns are of rural origin, most tend - after a year or so when their efforts to obtain remunerative jobs have produced a sufficient measure of disillusionment - to return to the rural areas. Those youth of rural origin who remain in the urban areas (either indefinitely or intermittently jobless) are usually found to have come from particular areas where the fertility of the soil is exceptionally poor, where money circulation is low or negligible, and thus where opportunities for profitable work with even the most modest prospects for the future, are virtually non-existent¹.

It was believed that the root of any widely applicable answer to the training and employment demands of the large majority of young people must lie in the broad development of the rural sector and therefore of all categories of young people. Primary school leavers, however, who make up an increasing

¹ This is explained in a detached analysis of the dimensions, composition and characteristics of the problem of unemployed youth by Archibald Callaway, "Education and the Rise of Youth Unemployment", in P.C. Lloyd, A.L. Mabogunje and B. Awe, (eds.) The City of Ibadan (C.U.P. 1966).

proportion of young people out of school in many African countries, pose special problems and may therefore require special measures. The justification for this priority lies in three main factors. First, one of the effects of formal schooling is to heighten political awareness. The primary school leaver can, therefore be expected to present more of a political problem if his employment ambitions are not fulfilled than will the young person who continues in the traditional environment and is unaffected by formal education. Secondly, because of the investment in cash and effort required to produce a primary school leaver, supplementary measures to bring a direct return on this investment may be justified. Thirdly, the primary school leaver, having at least numeracy and literacy, should present a training advantage and facilitate the attainment of the training end. However, while priority in the development of programmes should be given to the primary school leaver, opportunities for training must be provided for all sectors of out-of school youth, including young people with no formal schooling. Where programmes for primary school leavers offer a combination of training and development activities, provision should also be made for the project to involve as far as possible the surrounding rural community as a whole.

There was some examination of the particular problems encountered in the development of programmes in rural areas. Again, it was clearly recognised that conditions vary very widely throughout Africa. Nevertheless, certain broad features of the training and employment situation of rural youth can be discerned. First, there is an overriding lack of skilled people whether in farming itself or in jobs ancillary to farming. Secondly, there is a general lack of knowledge of the types of training approaches which can be adopted in order to provide these skills. Thirdly, there is a widespread lack of motivation among young people towards farming which is, for the vast majority, traditional, and therefore largely subsistence, farming. This lack of motivation is often compounded by traditional practices which inhibit the development of improved agriculture, for example grass-burning, over-stocking, resistance to fencing, etc. Fourthly, when training and motivation can be provided, the final realisation of the goal of training programmes often requires that the newly trained young person be capitalised in some measure; lack of adequate means for capitalisation is a grave constraint on the effective operation of training programmes. These particular problems are aggravated by the normal constraints on rural development work throughout most of Africa-falling commodity prices for many of the most reliable and well-established cash-earning crops, lack of roads, marketing systems, pest control, storage, etc.

Perhaps the main contribution of training programmes directed at young people in the rural areas may be to inspire in these young people enough dedication and motivation to accept what is inevitably going to be a life of few material rewards and considerable hardship. This was regarded as necessarily an ideological process. The importance was also stressed of "training for frustration" both educated young people who seek to equip themselves for work in rural development and equally those young people who are trained for farming or other directly productive rural work. An explanation was sought for motivation in trained youth towards national development. Some participants in the seminar regarded this as necessarily a purely monetary matter; others contended that the harsh realities of the rural economies of many African countries demand that training programmes be supplemented by other motivational elements, ideological or spiritual.

The role of governments as the prime suppliers of development capital and promoters of development activities in the rural areas was emphasised. In this dual function, governments should look carefully at the kinds of initiatives that they promote, bearing in mind always the size of the employment and training needs of young people in the rural areas. In particular, governments should accept a training responsibility in the execution of capital works projects and use these as an opportunity for the development of local skills and the injection of cash into rural economies by the provision of even occasional employment. Related to this are considerations governing the kinds of technology appropriate to necessary large-scale development work in rural areas. Can there be any justification, for instance for the use of modern, large-scale labour-saving equipment in situations where paid employment is so desperately short? It is important not only to build labour intensity into large-scale works in the rural areas, but also for governments to give more support, both material and in terms of training, to the development of rural small industries.

The development of rural programmes primarily for young people is also impeded by still powerful social factors, particularly where customary forms of social organisation remain strong. In many traditional societies there is a deep-seated reverence for seniority and old age and a suspicion of transferring responsibility to young people.

A further social problem centres upon the powerful motivation among many young people to see city life and enjoy the social facilities, real or imaginary, which are associated with

this. In part, this drive towards the cities is the product of the virtual absence of social and recreational facilities for young people in many rural areas. It may to some degree be modified by building up leisure facilities, even of an elementary sort, in the rural areas.

Whilst the development of social activities for young people is of real importance, it must be recognised that to provide such facilities will not in itself, as seems often to have been assured in the past, solve what are primarily employment problems.

Involvement of young people in policy-making, planning and implementation of youth programmes

Generally, the seminar agreed that there is a problem concerning the lack of co-operation between young people and adults in policy-making, planning and implementing programmes for youth. This applies to young people in general and not simply to unemployed youth out of school. In traditional society, the social barriers to the involvement of young people in decision-making were strong and still endure in many instances, particularly in rural areas. It is of the greatest importance in planning programmes to fit them into the social and economic conditions of particular areas; the custom and tradition of local society relating to young people should, therefore, be fully researched and understood. There is, for example, little point in training young people as rural activists or "animateurs" if it can be predicted that the older generation will not heed the trained young people simply because of their youth. It would help to avoid counterproductive social tensions if change introduced through the development of youth activities were wherever possible built on existing patterns and existing relationships.

A similar lack of understanding and communication was seen between educated and uneducated youth. Uneducated youth are often suspicious of programmes in which numbers of educated youth are involved and therefore tend to hang back and fail to profit from activities which can be particularly beneficial to them.

It was observed that in many African countries young people are already involved in policy making. At national level this is the particular province of senior politicians and civil servants. By comparison with other continents, young people are highly represented among this group in African countries. Further down the scale, young people have the opportunity to

involve themselves in the evolution of policy through participation in the youth sections of political parties. Despite this, the mass of young people, particularly uneducated young people, are not consulted in the making of policy and must too often carry out plans which they do not fully understand.

Some consideration was given to how young people can express themselves more effectively in policy-making. One possibility suggested was that there should be a national non-party association of youth clubs and groups which can speak for youth. Such a body would however, be likely to speak for organised youth only; this would amount to a small proportion of the total. Another possibility would be the devolution of policy-making to a much greater degree away from the centre down to regional or even local levels. Indeed certain countries are already experimenting with the devolution of planning in this way. In any new planning structures that may emerge as a result of these developments, it is of the greatest importance that some provision should be made for young people to have an effective voice. If planning cannot be understood by the young people at whom it is aimed, then it is bad planning and unlikely to succeed. Equally, sound planning, understandable to those who are supposed to benefit from it, should allow those being planned for to be involved.

The greatest opportunity for the involvement of young people was seen to be in the work of implementation, in the actual creation of job opportunities by directing energies and aspirations to those ends which are likely to prove rewarding; in many cases this means the rural sector. Before this process can readily occur there will have to be fundamental changes in the schools so that effort is devoted towards providing young people with some understanding of the likely employment situation after school. Furthermore, rural development programmes will have to be devised into which young people can fit and which will provide them with some confidence in their future in the rural areas. As an essential precursor to this, it is necessary to seek information on the employment situation. This implies research in order to provide detail on the respective jobs of young people and adults so that any programme which seeks to create employment opportunities may build soundly on the existing structures. Some new forms of job-making can sometimes destroy traditional employment. This is particularly the case with small rural industries which are already providing much employment in certain rural areas and which may be menaced by ill thought-out incursions of more "modern" industry in the guise of training programmes for rural youth. This underlines the fact that in order to help young people,

it is almost always necessary to help adults also. It is certainly necessary to keep in mind the existing situation in the whole community in the development of programmes, whether these seek to raise the level of farming or to build up local crafts and skills. The essential task is to build bridges between young and old.

Training and Employment

The seminar considered at length how far the employment situation relating to young people can be affected by training, and how the aims and content of training programmes may be affected by an understanding of the realities of the employment situation.

The employment situation varies in its nature from country to country and even from region to region within countries. Nevertheless, there is a common explosion in demand for jobs particularly for young people. Essentially, the satisfaction of this demand depends on the creation of new employment. The traditional reaction of decision-makers to the prospect of large numbers of young people who are unemployed or underemployed has been to expand facilities for further training whether by the extension of formal education, which absorbs larger numbers for longer periods, or by the erection of vocational training establishments of various types. The former expedient merely defers the problem. The latter approach assumes that to equip a young man with skills will necessarily solve his employment problems. Whilst this assumption may have some force in situations where artisan skills are lacking, and throughout Africa at the present time there are pockets where this is the case, the overall size of the modern sector of the economy where these skills are required is small. Furthermore, the number of such jobs throughout the continent may for some time continue to be comparatively small. It is dangerous to erect costly training facilities which can rapidly saturate the demand for artisan skills if the modern sector of the various economies is not expanding rapidly and new employment is not being created.

Given this general situation regarding employment - a small, slowly growing modern sector together with a large, mainly traditional rural sector - the mere provision of skills training, whether in particular crafts or in agricultural skills, does not in itself constitute any real solution. It may, if carefully related to detailed manpower planning, serve to supply a flow of persons with the skills required in the modern sector.

Recognising the realities of the employment situation

therefore, the seminar regarded it as essential that training programmes should take into account the need to train for self-employment or employment in productive, self-supporting groups. Experimental programmes, aiming at establishing independent co-operatives with a range of rural skills supplementing basic farming skills are operating in certain countries. The important feature of such programmes may be their success or failure in orienting trainees towards rural living and the need to develop the rural areas, whilst at the same time redirecting the aspirations which trainees often have towards "modern" employment. In this connection experiments in various parts of Africa in productive training, whereby trainees combine earning with learning, and from earnings contribute to the costs of training, have particular value. Other experiments which seek to graft small-scale training and apprenticeship on to existing craft employment are also important, particularly when related to schemes for the improvement and development of established small industries and businesses. This again illustrates the need to correlate youth programmes with the development of the community at large.

Training for special sectors of youth

Within the seminar's general affirmation of the need for a broadly based approach to rural development involving the entire community as the fundamental solution to the problems of the vast majority of young people, it was agreed that different strata of young people present differing training problems and training needs can be expected to vary in urgency. The crucial argument in this connection centres upon the primary school leaver. Generally, primary school leavers should in theory offer a training advantage in the form of an educational base upon which to build. They should therefore respond more readily to more complex training than young people or adults who have not been to school. In the establishment, development and processing of certain high-value crops, existing training experiments in Uganda and the Western State of Nigeria indicate the special value of a minimum level of general education to assist the particular scheme to proceed successfully. At the same time rural training work with primary school leavers may be at a particular disadvantage because of their exaggerated job aspirations which very often make this group reluctant farmers who are willing to use any opportunity which may turn up either during or after training to enable them to avoid farming. In other situations, there is special value in training together young people with some schooling and those with no schooling to the mutual advantage of each group in social terms. Whilst special programmes for young people with

some formal schooling are practicable, there is danger in such programmes of exaggerating social cleavages and of overlooking the training needs of unschooled youth. In the latter connection, whilst these needs are no less valid, they evoke a different response and are, in social and political terms, less immediately threatening than those of the primary school leaver.

Finance

The idea of increased priority in expenditure on employment-related training outside the established system of formal schooling, was generally favoured. Where finance is limited, however, it may be necessary, if there is to be increased expenditure on informal education, to find this at the expense of the formal education system. The opinion was voiced, though not entirely unanimously, that this possibility must be confronted and tackled bravely despite the political dangers inherent in such a decision. This would imply curbing the continued expansion of various forms of formal schooling and reallocating resources for a time to activities more immediately related to development, including training for such activities. The alternative to this would be a continued growth in the numbers of young people emerging from schools seeking a level of employment which is simply not available in sufficient quantity to meet the demand. This in itself would imply sooner or later heavy expenditure on remedial measures in order to combat the frustrations and dissatisfactions of large numbers of unemployed young people.

Any decision to give increased priority to training for young people out of school would not be easy to reach: not only politicians and administrators, but electorates, would need to become convinced of this view. In certain countries, where the expansion of formal education has gone furthest, some disillusionment is already perceptible among parents with the advantages which schooling supposedly brings to their children. This dissatisfaction is a useful point of departure in attempting to educate parents in the need for expanded programmes of job-oriented training. At the level of the decision-makers, it was agreed that the case should be pressed for youth training to be regarded as an immediate investment in national development. It should not, as has often been the case in the past, be viewed as a palliative device within the social welfare field, which does not produce returns in terms of development gains. The onus rests with those concerned with and involved in youth training to prove their case for increased expenditure on training out-of-school youth by demonstrating real economic and social benefits.

An alternative view takes into account the commitments of African governments to the targets for educational expansion laid down at Addis Ababa in 1961, and the difficulties for any government in curbing the expansion of schools. Recognising this, the seminar suggested that there should be a redefinition and expansion of what is thought of as education so as to include within this term the out-of-school sector, namely extension, youth training, literacy, various forms of adult education work, indeed, all efforts to communicate knowledge and skills in order to raise the technological ceiling of whole communities. Such a broadened view of education would bring together as a body the range of largely unco-ordinated and unrelated activities which now constitutes informal education. This would make informal education more readily identifiable for the purposes of financial support, and would increase understanding of and assistance for training related to employment and job creation.

Administration

The seminar discussed problems relating to the initiation and execution of youth programmes, in particular, problems concerning the allocation of overall responsibility for programmes, the division of operational responsibility between governmental and non-governmental organisations and the co-ordination of activities between all interested agencies.

The special diversity of youth programmes was stressed: they include extension work, apprenticeship of various forms, training in or relating to settlement, social or largely social, activities in non-residential youth centres. Programmes vary in aim, in duration, in location. Some form of co-ordinating agency should be evolved to survey the whole field and ensure that all bodies actively engaged in it pull constructively towards a common end and that agencies which should be concerned with the future of young people, particularly industrial and commercial interests, acknowledge and exercise this responsibility.

The conventional device adopted to achieve co-ordination is a National Youth Council or National Youth Co-ordinating Committee, usually a body advisory to governments representing the operational agencies and interested departments of government. Many such Councils work long and devotedly in the cause of youth as they see it. Nevertheless, some dissatisfaction was expressed with this traditional mechanism. Such bodies, because of their loose, federated nature, and because they often represent established interests in the youth field, can hardly be expected to

initiate new ideas . Indeed they may tend to stifle creativity in a sphere where creativity may be more important than co-ordination.

A possible alternate form of co-ordinating mechanism was discussed, namely a National Development Advisory Council, which would embrace all age groups and interests and view youth training in the context of overall development. In this respect, the recent experience of Ceylon is of particular interest. In Ceylon, following direct intervention at the highest political level, a new National Youth Council was set up with the particular task of directing the energies of some two million young people with some education who were unable to find employment. This situation existed while at the same time 70% of Ceylon's food needs had to be imported. The new Council brought together all interested ministries and representatives of the private sector in a joint programme to create employment for young people in national development work. Already 30,000 young people are engaged in such work. The Council is regarded as a valuable example of working co-operation between government and business interests in the formulation of new approaches to the involvement of young people in constructive efforts towards development, satisfying a need hitherto ignored.

In addition to running its own training programmes, government should scrutinise the finances, and control the type, content and objectives of programmes offered by all agencies. Government power to control what is taught is necessary in order to avoid the problems that can arise when the training programme of a particular agency diverges from what is generally seen as the needs of the country. The way in which this control is exercised is of special importance. If governments agree that non-governmental agencies should be allowed to operate in the field of youth training, and admittedly not all governments are prepared to concede this, then control should be exercised in such a way as not to stifle initiative.

A particular role for non-governmental agencies was seen in training for development, including the training of young people. Non-governmental organisations cannot be expected to command similar resources of finance and manpower as can governments. Their contribution should therefore lie in pioneering new training approaches, in devising new solutions. In view of this experimental function it is important that their power to innovate should not be curtailed as long as these agencies are willing to work within the broad guidelines laid down by government. Indeed, sound development necessarily involves large numbers of

small projects as well as smaller numbers of large-scale programmes. Indeed, to date, the small projects have a particularly good record of successfully attaining the training ends sought. Such projects are often closely based on the realities of particular local situations and because of this tend to attract local loyalties. Governments are well fitted to initiate and control large-scale projects; it is much more difficult for them to set up and operate the many micro-projects that are also part of the total sum of a healthy overall development programme. It is at this level that non-governmental agencies, often possessing resources of skilled manpower with the necessary detailed local knowledge, can make a specially valuable contribution.