CHAPTER 4

Supporting Structures:

Factors relating to the Development of Programmes

Evaluation

The importance of thorough evaluation of youth programmes lies in the following aspects:-

(a) it is a means of winning the support of planners and policy-makers whose backing is essential if out-of-school education and training is to develop to significant proportions; it also seeks to guide planners in the best use of resources already allotted to the out-of-school sector of education;

(b) it enables a precise estimate to be made of whether a programme is attaining its stated objectives, the impact of the programme in terms of attitudinal and behavioural changes, and of increased productivity if the programme is related to vocational training;

(c) it reveals to programme operators short-comings within the programme itself - in teaching content, methods and media used - so that the programme can be continually refined and improved.

Within these objectives conflicting demands are, to some degree, placed upon evaluation activities. This potential conflict centres upon the distinction between long-term evaluation, that is the overall measurement of the impact of a particular programme over a substantial period of time, and what has been termed action research which aims to provide operators with analytical data which can be used to modify and improve the programme. Both sets of activities are, however,

important and should be satisfied as far as possible.

Comprehensive evaluation must draw upon a wide range of skills and academic disciplines. Ideally, therefore, it should be carried out by inter-disciplinary teams. Many countries suffer, however, from extreme shortages of personnel professionally qualified in the particular areas required. Therefore, either a close relationship should be established between programmes and the universities, preferably with inter-disciplinary bodies such as Institutes of Development Studies, or evaluation teams should be provided from external sources. Some concern was, however, expressed at the frequent inability of academic evaluation activities to take account of the political and social elements and pressures which are either contained within, or weigh heavily upon, on-going programmes and may modify or distort stated objectives. Academic evaluation should therefore be supplemented by the wisdom and experience of the hardened operator.

Many academic evaluation exercises tend to become too detached from the needs and realities of the operational situation. They become over-intellectualised and unable to present the results of evaluation to administrators and operators in understandable and usable terms.

There was equally little sympathy with the conventional form of "evaluation." This has tended to feature a rapid visit to a project by a single "expert", usually an experienced if superannuated operator, inclined to deliver himself of a rapidly prepared digest of views accumulated en passant, coupled with his own necessarily subjective impressions based upon experience elsewhere. Such experience may not be particularly relevant to the immediate situation.

Alternatively, those responsible for programmes often do not define clearly enough what it is that they wish to have evaluated. The over-all operation and impact of a nation-wide programme affecting many thousands of participants is probably beyond the scope of realistic evaluation. Too often, however, evaluation teams are required to look for the effects of programmes at national level. Tasks for evaluators should be set in measurable terms if planners and administrators want comprehensible results. Such tasks necessarily imply seeking to isolate the effect of a programme on a specific production process in a particular community. They may also be concerned with a comparative assessment of teaching content or various

methodologies.

Finally, it was stressed that provision for certain evaluation procedures should be made at the earliest possible stage in the life of a project. This does not necessarily mean the attachment of a fully-manned evaluation team to a project from its inception, although in certain experimental situations this may be valuable. It should, however, include provision for the collection of essential baseline data against which subsequent measurements can be made.

Costs

The seminar considered how the limited funds can best be utilised and examined how the costs of training facilities may be minimised to extend the benefits of training to the maximum number of young people.

One school of thought argues that out-of-school youth, having missed the advantages of secondary schooling, should, if given a "second chance" by inclusion in programmes for the supplementary education and training of young people, not be required to accept material facilities of an inferior nature. This can serve to exaggerate existing feelings of second-class social status. Whilst there was some sympathy with the reasons for this viewpoint, it was not widely supported within the seminar. The fundamental issues are the training of, and the stimulation of employment for, the maximum numbers of young people outside the school system. This necessarily involves minimising the costs of training.

Various methods whereby costs can be curtailed were reviewed:-

(a) low-cost buildings: in many training situations, whether the programme is centred on an institution detached from the actual employment sought, or whether training in situ is adopted, some buildings are required. As a general principle, it is desirable that the cost of buildings be kept to a minimum. In recent years, there has been in many countries a wide variety of experimentation in minimising building costs, both in relation to youth programmes and in other development activities. Information blockages, however, still exist between countries. There would, for example, be considerable value if a register of information on

low-cost building techniques were prepared, possibly confined initially to the Commonwealth countries of Africa. Subsequently it might broaden to embrace any relevant experience. The preparation of such a register by the Commonwealth Secretariat would be an especially valuable initiative;

(b) labour costs: these can be reduced by using, as far as possible, voluntary labour (the surrounding adult community; work-camps) and the labour of the trainees themselves. Since there is some risk that, in the use of trainee labour, savings on costs may be made at the expense of the training end sought, a balance should be struck between this form of "self-reliance", and the overall training function;

(c) the production of food: in certain circumstances the trainees themselves can contribute towards minimising the recurrent costs of training by producing some of their own food. Again, however, the training end must be paramount and food production for its own sake should not be exalted into such a high position within the overall programme as to diminish its effectiveness in achieving the essential training end;

(d) domestic organisation: trainees can carry out essential domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, maintenance of facilities, thus reducing the need to provide supporting staff;

(e) equipment: basic training equipment can often be devised using local materials within the training programme itself, thus reducing the need to import costly items from overseas, items which are indeed often inappropriate to the training programme in terms of level of technology. The manufacture of low-cost, labour-intensive tools and equipment is an essential feature of rural training work generally. The seminar noted with interest the activities in recent years of the Intermediate Technology Development Group Ltd., and pressed for a wider circulation of the information which this Group is making available on tools, equipment and materials suitable for rural development;

(f) transport: this is inevitably one of the most costly items in any rural development programme. To assist in minimising transport costs, the need was stressed for further experimentation on, and increased information on, low-cost animal-drawn vehicles in areas where their use is practicable;

(g) productive labour: where new skills are being introduced though a training programme into an area where these were previously lacking, it may be possible for a training programme to provide a commercial service to the surrounding community and thus contribute towards training costs.

These measures can make an important contribution towards paring down the overall costs of training. They have further significance in that they incorporate a training function, and help in preparing trainees for the real working situation whilst reducing the artificiality of detached institutionalised training.

Implications were seen in these suggestions for aid-giving and aid-receiving, whether multilateral or bilateral, governmental or non-governmental. Governments should clarify to aid-givers their concern to minimise training costs, to diffuse training to affect the largest numbers, and to avert the erosion of the effect of training brought about by establishing unrealistic facilities. As a matter of urgency governments should establish a cost policy for training establishments.

Goverments can do this with comparative ease in institutions for which they, or their aid-giving partners, are responsible. Often, however, non-governmental organisations are responsible for the financing of training programmes. These may present more of a problem. In order to ensure that all organisations involved in youth training accept a common policy on the costs and scale of training, governments should exercise their right to withdraw planning permission or registration from projects involving exaggerated expenditure by comparison with local norms.

On the side of the aid-giving agencies, there was concern at the growing disillusionment in many countries with aid generally. An overcritical approach towards receiving aid may reinforce this disillusionment and ultimately further diminish the flow of external assistance. The best way to

convince aid-givers that they should reduce the flow of aid is to use aid wastefully. If donor agencies see that resources are being used to the best advantage, they will be more ready to continue giving aid.

Leadership training

The seminar considered the problems of leadership training in the developing countries of Africa and the role of youth programmes in this process.

In order to assess how training may function, it is necessary to define the qualities of leadership which are thought to be worthy of encouragement. The qualities suggested are - personal example, identification with and knowledge of the group led, understanding of others including their needs and aims, ability to interpret and stimulate two-way communication, ability to inspire others, imagination, integrity.

These qualities were reviewed with reference to the present situation in many countries. The particular lack in many countries is modern leadership in close touch with and attuned to the problems of the people whom they are required to lead. In many respects traditional leaders, who are in daily contact with the life of their people, can be expected to have a more immediate understanding of their everyday problems. The process whereby leaders are now prepared - by and large the formal system of schooling - can sometimes result in an estrangement of the emergent leader from his community and its problems. There may be a parallel lack of understanding of the modern leadership by the mass of the population. The danger seen in this situation is that the leadership seeks to promote development by telling the people what is thought to be right for them instead of seeking to discern and satisfy the people's needs and interests, and shape development techniques and plans accordingly.

Three broad types of leadership training were ascertained:-

(a) Leadership emerging from society: this is possible either through the traditional structures or forms of authority or through new structures which have been incorporated within existing society, youth groups and youth activities being one obvious category. Here again the role of government is crucial. Local leadership emerges more readily where social

conditions consciously seek to promote this. Equally, the converse is true. If, therefore, the "modern" leadership, which in most rural areas means the local administration and the development departments of government, sees development work as being its personal monopoly, that is, something which the mass of the population cannot be expected to appreciate but in which they must be induced to acquiesce, then local leadership is likely to be stifled at birth. Indeed, from the viewpoint of the imported "leaders", the emergence of leadership potential from below obviously constitutes a threat to their position and is therefore to be resisted. Sound development, particularly in the rural areas, must, however, be based upon the understanding by the mass of the rural population of what they themselves can achieve and equally of what others can achieve for them. Local leadership which has emerged organically from the rural population is thus essential if this understanding is to be aroused. Therefore, all activities which seek to promote local leadership, and in particular programmes for rural youth training, should be encouraged and at the same time educational effort must be directed at the imported, "modern" leaders to increase their understanding of this situation and induce them to support rather than resist it.

(b) Indirect training through formal education: procedures for the location and development of potential leaders are intrinsic in the established practice of the formal school, particularly at the secondary level. The dangers inherent in such patterns are parallel to the dangers contained in conventional academic curricula. The values that such procedures induce are not the values of the mass of society and are thus in some respects liable to amplify the rift between the future administrator and the mass of the population. In any re-organisation of secondary schools, consideration should be given to the value of established leadership training procedures such as the prefect system, sixth form privileges, etc.

(c) Other non-traditional forms of leadership training: various additional ways were considered whereby leadership, both at policy-making level and at the level of the implementer, is trained. These are through youth groups, through vocational training institutions, through specific leadership training courses, through counterpart training, through military and related training. All are of great value in the process of comprehensive social development, particularly in the rural areas, and therefore necessarily of equivalent value

in catering for the mass needs of young people out of school. The relatively small numbers of young people affected by such courses is alarming. In addition, many of these courses, apart from those particularly concerned with the promotion of leadership, do not give enough attention to the future role of the trained young person as an agent for social change in his community. This again underlines the need for all training courses to include non-vocational elements to motivate the trainee towards the development process, to commit the young person to the pr omotion of new ideas and attitudes after his training and so to clarify to him his position as a potential leader in his community.