PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

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SUMMARY

1. Opportunities for employment of youth within large-scale modern establishments (government service, large industries, modern transport and commerce) are limited and will remain so, proportionately to applicants, for decades to come.

2. The principal efforts in creating job opportunites for youth must, therefore, focus on the smaller economic units within the economy: that is, on farms, and on non-farm enterprise in rural and urban areas.

3. In order to be successful in increasing the rate of employment absorption of youth within these smaller economic units - in jobs that are, in prospect, productive and rewarding - there is urgent need to grasp the essential characteristics of what presently exists and to find ways for improvement.

4. Thus, in designing programmes to create jobs for youth, the beginning should be made with things 'as they are' rather than 'as they should be'. What happens naturally? For example, how does a child who does not attend school learn the basic skills for his (or her) occupation, whether on the farm or in trading or craft enterprise? To what educative influences is he exposed and what are the elements within the process of growing up to become a member of the adult work force? Again, what is the significance of master-apprentice relationships in trading and in workshops?

5. Efforts to upgrade the skills of fathers and masters (through extension services) mean the improvement of the training of youth dependent on them. Since the economies of scale are by no means always on the side of large enterprise, jobs can be created for willing youths.

6. The problem of jobless educated youth is particularly pressing in all tropical African countries. It is important to understand, however, the varied degrees of urgency of these school leavers, especially of those who have migrated to cities and whose homes are in areas of low money circulation.

7. In designing programmes to assist in the creation of jobs for this hard-pressed category of school leavers, it is better not to cause too marked a disruption with existing patterns of life and work. How many discontinuities can a society afford?

8. At the project level, the following principles appear to be relevant. Projects should be evaluated in terms of whether they are or are likely to be:

a. labour-intensive

b. self-perpetuating

c. self-multiplying

d. high in self-help (low in public cost)

e. minimum of discontinuities with existing cultural arrangments

f. 'for' youth; 'with' youth; 'by' youth.

9. At the aggregate level, government policies should be consistent with the employment needs of youth and give maximum attention to:

a. efficiency of the system of prices (including subsidies, etc.) with its incentives which encourage initiatives and responses of youth in their self-creation of jobs;

b. industrialisation should be viewed as a gradient stretching from large capital-intensive units (for manufacture of cement, textiles, etc.) with high productivity and relatively high wages, through intermediate size, to the wide variety of labour-intensive smaller units with low productivity and low wages;

c. rural development should be given priority, with both general and specific programmes to help farm families improve economic productivity and to encourage small-scale farm processing units and those providing services for farmers;

d. direct control of migration of youth (mainly school leavers) to cities is ultimately futile and no substitute for a well-articulated series of rural development programmes that raise farm incomes, improve non-farm enterprises, and encourage self-help community projects (with, in some instances, compensatory help in planning and provision of materials by local authorities).

PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICAN NATIONS

I. IDENTIFICATION OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

1. The problem in outline

How do individual projects to assist young people fit within the total effort of national development? What is the impact of these projects likely to be in the long run? Are they self-multiplying? In other words, projects that help the 'few' have to be thought of in relation to their results for the 'many'; those which are short-term in focus should be measured against the long-term nature of the problem of youth employment and training. There is not much use in promoting piecemeal solutions, in fact, unless at the same time government policies are moving towards alleviating this problem on a variety of fronts. This presentation is concerned with both levels of interpretation and analysis: at the aggregate level and also at the disaggregated level; or, putting it another way, at both the macro and the micro levels.

In Africa today, there is increasing concern with the critical problem of youth employment, for young men and women, in both rural and urban areas. Governments (as well as voluntary organisations) recognise that, in large measure, success in achieving sustained and meaningful long-term development depends on the national ability:

1. to promote welfare measures that will maintain or improve the physical and mental well-being of youth before and after their joining the national work force;

2. to provide the facilities for their necessary basic education and training in specific skills;

3. to create an economic environment in which productive and rewarding work opportunities are available for youth.

The reasoning behind this determination to assist youth is that

these young people have 30 to 40 years of working life in front of them. Given the opportunities, they will help to modernise the society and the economy.

Welfare programmes for youth are part of the total welfare outlays of the nation. When the local environment is improved by such measures as eradicating malaria and smallpox, extending modern medical facilities, improving nutrition, providing a clean water supply and encouraging better sanitation, then parents can give their children a healthier start in life. There are also specific programmes undertaken by governments, voluntary organisations, and local leaders for youth: (1) providing recreation and a sense of belonging (youth associations of all kinds in both rural and urban areas); (2) giving supplementary occupational learning (for young men-farmers' or fishermen's clubs, for young women - sewing or homemaking clubs); (3) supporting special groups (centres for blind and those handicapped in other ways); and (4) giving corrective or remedial training (homes for juvenile delinquents). No African nation - for that matter, no nation anywhere - is in a position to do all it would wish to in the field of welfare for its youth. Difficult choices have to be made in establishing priorities.

Confronted by rising numbers of school-age children and by advances in science and technology requiring long-term investment in new and higher-level skills, those responsible for educational planning also have before them complex decisions. Above all, ideals of a larger, more diversified, improved system of general and technical education have to be matched continuously with competing claims for the use of present and future resources.

Neither measures for the needs of welfare nor provision for training in skills, however, can have meaning unless there exists an economy of opportunity for youth to find beginning jobs that are productive and remunerative. Such openings derive in large part from the pace and patterns of economic development. Generally, the higher the rate of growth that is achieved, the greater the number of employment opportunities that are revealed. These opportunities are increased by the extent to which higher labour intensity is encouraged, where this proves economically and technically feasible. The balance between investment in rural and urban development also affects the types of work available for youth.

Most national economic and social plans are designed on at least a three to five-year basis with horizons that stretch for

a much greater period and thus allow the short-term plan to be viewed within longer time dimensions. In the same way, the focus on the needs of youth has to be extended in time. What are the expected numbers of young persons who will be reaching the age for joining the national work force at particular stages in the future: five years, ten years, twenty years from now?

By world standards today, African nations have high annual net increases in their populations: typically between 2 and 3 per cent. In the present context, what does this mean? (1) There are high proportions of children to total populations. Frequently between 40 and 50 per cent are below the age of 15 with consequent dependence on adult workers for provision of their needs for food, clothing, health, education, and so on. (2) The rate of advancement in the economies has consistently to exceed the annual net increase in population in order that people's expectations for improvements in their living standards begin to be met. (3) Because of the increasing numbers of young entrants to the labour force each year, the problem of making the economic and social arrangements that would reveal suitable beginning employment opportunities for youth becomes more formidable.

Just as the needs for youth employment have to be seen in the longer time dimension, they must also be projected against the diversity of home backgrounds. For any one African nation there is not one environment, but many. Different groups of people vary in their traditions, their ways of living, their initiatives and their responses. Different natural resources mean contrasts in degrees of wealth and poverty: some areas have cash crops, plentiful land, or mineral wealth; while others have only subsistence farming or perhaps a grave shortage of fertile land.

In recent years, economic and social change in Africa has taken place at unprecedented intensity, yet one of the characteristics of this rapid change is its uneven spread and uneven depth. In certain rural areas, families live now in almost the same manner as their forefathers have done for many generations. At the opposite extreme, some families in cities live as they might in any modern metropolitan centre anywhere in the world. Certain areas have vigorous local crafts and small industries; others have attracted a concentration of large industries; while still other areas have no signs of any industrial beginnings. Some places have had modern schooling for three or four generations; others have no schools yet. Thus, there are not only marked differences between individual societies within nations, but also

many variations in the extent of modernisation.

Because of these disparities in background, multiple approaches are necessary to the problem of youth employment, requiring close knowledge of local cultural and material conditions. What are the characteristic forms of social organisation and of immediate and extended family relationships? How widespread have been the effects of such modern forces as the widening market, the school, introduction of new cash crops, beginnings of industrialisation? What are the salient features of economic organisation: communal, co-operative, private or family enterprise? What group associations, whether traditional or modern in origin, care for aspects of welfare for young people? How do young people develop skills in these varied local conditions? What are the usual lines of absorption of youth into the adult working scene? What is the role of young women in the evolving society? What conditions do local leaders (either traditional elders or particularly successful individuals) make in helping to meet the needs of young people? What has government and voluntary help so far accomplished?

2. Learning processes.

Young people growing up in Africa are exposed to either one or both of two distinct learning processes: the first comprises the various indigenous forms of learning; the second, the disciplines of modern classroom education. The indigenous learning, through a variety of means - ceremonies and rituals, songs and dances and story-telling, combined with arduous training in specialised arts and work processes - has passed on from generation to generation the spiritual values and technical knowledge of African societies. Modern classroom education has existed for varying periods in different parts of Africa. Both learning processes play their part in transmitting knowledge and cultural values and in preparing youth for undertaking their life vocations.

In Africa today, the percentages of children who are gaining formal primary education vary widely: a number of countries have more than 40 per cent of school-age children in classrooms; some have less than 10 per cent. The average for all countries taken together of children achieving literacy - that is, allowing for drop-outs before the fourth year of primary education - would probably be around 30 per cent. (Adult literacy also varies considerably with a few countries greater than 25 per cent, some less than 10 per cent, and an average for all countries somewhat less than 20 per cent.) At the secondary level, a few

countries in Africa have been able to provide for more than 10 per cent of that age group.

Clearly, any appraisal of the needs of youth must consider all youth and the varied processes of learning, both in the classroom and out. How do the 60 to 70 per cent of children who do not attend school learn the basis for their life work and become absorbed into the labour force? What policies and specific projects for education on the job can improve their abilities and widen their outlook?

The characteristic form of enterprise in any African country is the self-employed family unit: the farm, the craft or artisan workshop, the stall in the market or the shop, the small transport business. Children who do not go to formal schools often become 'economically active' at around age 7 and learn on the job. Some children in a family may learn the occupations of their parents; others may be apprenticed to relatives to diversify their training.

This widely-spread indigenous training in skills is central to any explanation of the emergence and growth of private and family productive enterprises in Africa. Through this system, young people (including, nowadays, youth who have attended formal schools) are learning a wide range of arts and crafts, from the traditional skills of wood-carving and bronze-casting to the contemporary ones of electrical wiring and dry-cleaning. They are learning to trade, to drive vehicles, to handle tools and machines. They are learning to make clay bricks and concrete blocks, to build houses, to bake bread, and to repair cars, trucks, typewriters, and household electrical equipment.

The distinction is sometimes made that indigenous learning processes are static, passing on only traditional skills, while modern education alone provides the dynamic approach necessary to transform societies. Such a sharp contrast is misleading, particularly when it can be shown that new techniques and new skills are being infused through this indigenous learning system. What is clear, however, is that parents or masters cannot teach skills to their children or their apprentices which they do not themselves possess. It follows that any assistance to raise the technical performance of adults - for example, through agricultural extension or through a business extension service - will eventually help these young learners. This is an indirect means: to raise the skills of fathers and masters is to help sons and apprentices. Or youth can be helped by such direct means as

short courses for young women in poultry-keeping or sewing, for young men in particular aspects of farming or craft work. Any national or local policy for youth employment should thus consider ways for upgrading skills on the job.

3. From school to work

While the challenge is that of providing opportunities for all the youth of a nation - rural and urban, young men and young women, those with formal schooling and those without, those following traditional occupations and those hoping for jobs in the modernising economy - there are certain groups who call for special attention: who because of the rapidity of social change have become displaced from their home communities and are living more or less precariously at the margins of city life. In most African countries today, these youth who have hopefully set out from rural areas to search for jobs in cities are those who have had some years of formal schooling.

Rising populations and rapidly expanded facilities for elementary schooling have meant vastly increasing numbers presently passing out from primary schools. Secondary schools and vocational training centres are able to accommodate only a small proportion of this number. Many of the rest search for jobs and often remain unengaged in any constructive work for long periods. One effect of modern education is thus to convert a situation of under-employment in villages into one of open unemployment in towns and cities.

This gathering unemployment among school leavers may be illustrated in terms of a simple model: the rate at which these young people are leaving school is rising much faster than the rate at which beginning opportunities for rewarding employment are expanding within the economy. And thus, given the attitude that many have towards traditional farming and other low-income rural occupations, the backlog of uncommitted youth grows.

Indications for the years ahead in some African countries are already becoming clear: university graduates will be required to accept employment at a lower starting salary with promotions coming slowly; secondary school leavers will have to accept jobs of a lesser order; and primary school leavers will have little chance for beginning wage-paid work.

For most countries, however, it is the job-seekers with

from four to ten years of formal schooling for whom immediate policy action is required. The reasons for such attention can be summarised:

1. The problem is getting bigger. Each year the number of jobless youth in the cities grows.

2. Aspirations have been aroused through the process of formal education. Nor is it only the ambitions of school leavers themselves: there are also the hopes of parents and relatives who have usually denied themselves other forms of expenditure in order to promote their children's education and to prepare them for a better way of making a living.

3. Too great an exodus from rural areas can lower farm production and delay agricultural modernisation.

4. Too rapid an influx into cities brings pressure on the municipal water supply and sanitation, sometimes leading to urban squalor and vast shanty towns. Governments may then be pressed to provide heavy expenditures on amenities, which may further widen the contrast between rural and urban development.

5. When unemployment stretches over a long period with consequent insecurity, there follows the threat of increasing juvenile delinquency and crime, physical ill-health and mental disturbance, and resort to drugs.

6. Heavy expenditures of scarce public resources, as well as private funds, have been devoted to the education of these youths. The payoff from this investment is being delayed.

7. If the society becomes more and more divided into those who enjoy the conspicuous comforts of modern living and those who are excluded, large numbers of unemployed present a distinct threat to national stability.

8. Unemployment has a high social and economic cost. Those not working reduce the standard of living and the potential savings of those who are. And for the nation - when development is urgently being sought - unemployment means a tragic waste of human resources.

9. If long-term solutions in harmony with the general pattern for economic advancement are not designed now, some countries may be pushed during an emergency to adopt stop-gap,

or even coercive, measures that could turn out to be very costly. Temporary set-ups organised under pressure have a way of turning into permanent institutions, which may not be the ones desired by the architects of national progress.

In meeting this problem, there appear to be a number of approaches open to governments - central and local - from both the side of education and the side of employment.

One solution often put forward is to change the curriculum for primary schools, particularly in rural areas. This suggests that if farming were effectively taught, then school leavers would become farmers and not drift to the cities and towns. But primary education cannot be narrowly vocational. Pupils who complete the course should be able to read and write, to do a certain amount of arithmetic, to understand enough science and history to interpret the world around them, and to learn enough civics to be aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of their nation. This does not make pupils into farmers or carpenters or nuclear scientists; it is basic to all these careers. Education is not only meant to adapt pupils to their society, but also to equip them to alter it. And it may well be that widespread primary schooling provides the foundation for modernising agriculture, not by trying to teach pupils to become farmers, but by giving them the tools of literacy and the confidence to try new techniques for doing things. In recent years, some have pointed out the necessity for improving the quality of education; this is one of the formidable tasks facing educational administrators. There is also a need for curriculum adjustment (for example, much more science right through primary school taught at appropriate levels; more participation in local culture through music, dance, art, folklore).

When education is viewed in its widest meaning - to include indigenous learning processes, on-the-job training, community-improvement education, as well as the formal types of classroom instruction, then certain questions arise as to what kinds of post-primary education are most suitable to prepare young school leavers for the transition from school to work. For those with a bent towards farming, what short courses or regular assistance can be given by agricultural extension to help them become progressive farmers while working on family land holdings? What is the role of young farmers' clubs? In the urban setting, what kinds of concentrated training (on-the-job or short courses) should be given to upgrade masters and apprentices in certain small industries?

Such non-formal education helps to direct the already achieved literacy of school leavers to the needs of development.

II ANALYSIS OF POLICY OPTIONS

1. Employment opportunities for youth: development from below

The presence of youth who are uncommitted, or only partly committed, to constructive work, brings to focus the underlying underemployment of labour that characterises a wide variety of activities in African countries, for example, in farming, petty trading, small industrial enterprises. The problem of creating more productive work opportunities at rising levels of real income - that is, of reducing the incidence of underemployment and of open unemployment among youth - is to a large extent just the problem of development itself.

What has been the economic record? Most African countries have been able to achieve positive, and in many cases, steady, rates of growth over the period since 1960, ranging from 2 to 5 per cent a year. But these economies have not been able to provide a sufficiently high level of meaningful employment opportunities for young people. General development has opened up some work here and there - in government administration, public utilities, communications, large industries, commercial firms - and this heightened economic activity has conditioned an atmosphere in which people have created jobs for themselves and their apprentices. But not enough.

University graduates and trained technicians are urgently needed for positions at the higher echelons, but there has been neither the expansion nor the turnover at the lower levels to allow employment for any great numbers. Public services in many countries, in fact, have too many employees. Banks and bigger commercial enterprises are not taking in young recruits in any great quantity. Large plantations require many labourers at the beginning, during the planting period, but after that not many for maintenance. The large mines have, for the most part, stabilised their labour forces and are able each year to take only a few replacements; and these are usually selected from the miners' sons who have grown up on the mine compound. The modern building and construction industries hold greater prospects for wage-paid employment, but they are dependent on private and public funds as well as a continuing climate of political stability and business optimism.

Creation of modern industries is a slow process. And since the trend in such industries is for greater mechanisation with proportionately fewer - more highly skilled - workers, the capital investment needed to employ one worker often amounts to between £500 and £5,000. In the crucial period ahead, the flow of internal savings, together with foreign loans and investment, will create jobs in modern industry for only a small fraction of those demanding work. Even by 1980 it is unlikely that many countries will have more than 6 or 7 per cent of their people gainfully employed in factories and mines.

There is, therefore, a glaring inconsistency between what people are hoping for and what is being accomplished. To some extent this gap is understandable; hopes must run ahead in order to spur achievement. Even so, the presence of job-seeking youth at the present cumulative scale constitutes a serious warning.

Governments account for over half of the total capital formation in their countries. The more immediate results of government spending can be measured: the lift in output, income, and number of wage jobs. But the less immediate results arising from the response of private enterprise to government participation in the economy are much more difficult to assess. These responses may be illustrated by countless examples from African countries. A new feeder road brings multiple results: transporters and traders move into the villages; more consumer supplies flow in; higher surpluses move out; a co-operative for marketing farm produce is started; farm extension work becomes more effective. And as incomes rise, more money is spent locally: the tailor has more orders; the carpenter has more business; more apprentices are required; more jobs are available. Or take another example. Government initiates a highly selective programme for technical and other aid to small industries. After a time several firms meet success; others emulate; output and employment rises.

It is sometimes argued that the push for high rates of economic growth is incompatible with the achievement of high levels of employment in a free economy, but the two objectives may well turn out to be more harmonious than is commonly supposed. Certainly there can be no real national development without involving the masses of the people.

Since there are limited possibilites for providing beginning jobs in sufficiently large numbers in the more modern

establishments, what are the capacities of small-scale economic enterprises, in both rural and urban areas, to absorb more young people into profitable work?

These enterprises include the small businesses of traders, self-employed artisans, craftsmen, builders, transporters, and processors of agricultural products. These indigenous enterprises represent, quite often, a really competitive element in these economies. They take many more workers in proportion to each unit of capital than do the large modern factories; they also provide low-cost training within the traditional apprenticeship patterns. And they are of fundamental importance to the progress of any country both in conveying a flow of incentive goods to farmers and in creating the atmosphere for entrepreneurial talent to develop. But there are wide differences among countries in the variety and strength of these small enterprises.

It is true, of course, that the impetus for these small enterprises to emerge and develop derives from the general strength of the economy of which they become a part. They are especially sensitive to movements in export trade and to the often related rise or fall in government spending on general development. But governments would do well to think of industrial policy on a gradation stretching all the way from the modern large firms to these smaller industries. The aim of policy would be to help improve the production and marketing techniques and the management of these small-scale concerns.

Depending on local variations, governments can, at low cost, design policies to improve the functioning of these smaller enterprises which will in turn provide training and jobs for youth. Raising productivity in these firms will not reduce their demand for more labour. As the cost of production falls and the design and quality of products improve, the smaller industries are better able to compete against the cheaper range of imported articles. Foreign exchange will be saved. The result, in fact, will be the opposite: more products will be introduced into existing firms, new modern firms will arise. A lift to one sector spurs the rate of growth of the economy as a whole. More jobs will be created.

In situations where the comparative economic advantage is clearly with the large factories, there is no point in pushing the modernisation of crafts and small industries. That is, no African country should be placed in a position of subsidising more costly methods of achieving greater output in the interests of a higher level of employment and of training facilities on the job. But the economies of scale are by no means always on the side of

the large industrial units. In the case of shoe and sandal making, for example, it has already been proved that smaller enterprises with specific modern machines and some assistance in overcoming obstacles in production and marketing have been able to compete with large factories in both quality and price. Estimates could be made of the capital costs involved and the expected return in output and employment from different methods of production. When considering substitution of local products for the multitude of imported goods, the African scene offers many possibilities to the small industrialist, from food-processing to furniture-making in both urban and rural areas. And import protection becomes meaningful when a really concerted effort is being made to improve these enterprises.

A programme to help indigenous small industries could have several major effects. (1) Substitution of local products for imported goods with a consequent saving in foreign exchange. (2) A higher labour absorption of youth for training and eventual employment. (3) More jobs for skilled wage-paid artisans alongside the customary apprentices.

The suggestion has been made that small-scale rural and urban industries should be created by giving special courses to youth and in this way training them to become entrepreneurs; but this plan is unrealistic as well as expensive. Far better to work with the natural process by helping existing craftsmen and former apprentices to improve their skills. They in turn will train apprentices.

Whatever efforts are made to create more employment in urban areas, however, the greatest number of productive and rewarding jobs for young people must be found in rural areas, in both farm and non-farm activities. Promoting such opportunities for youth depends on far-reaching measures that aim to transform the economic and social conditions of the rural areas as a whole.

These measures would be directed towards hastening improvements in the quality of existing crops and the introduction of newer varieties, for use by farm families and for sale locally and abroad. They would include the stepping-up of performances of crafts and small-scale industries that process farm products and that endeavour to meet local needs for goods and services of many kinds; they would also encourage the creation of further indigenous non-farm enterprises in all villages and townships throughout the rural areas. More than this: such measures would provide renewed stimulus to rural communities everywhere

to carry through communal projects, assisted when necessary by an alliance with central or local governments which would help by advice or actual participation.

What is required, first of all, is a really effective general policy toward agriculture, which would demonstrate that improved farming can bring as much money and as rewarding a life as other occupations. Thus, as part of this concerted push to give a 'new look' to rural areas, governments would be encouraging youth, particularly school leavers brought up on family farms, to take up farming as a vocation. Governments have discovered, however, that it is no use telling these young people to go back to farming when no plans exist to help them. On reaching a sufficiently mature age, they will need some practical help, some on-the-job training, even if only by regular visits to ensure continuous improvement, which in turn gives them greater rewards and makes farming worth while from their viewpoint.

Surveys conducted in several African countries show that most unemployed school leavers who have migrated to cities are not averse to improved farming as a way of making a living. Their objections are to traditional farming in conditions where the prospect of achieving a reasonable income later, is very slim.

Control of the influx of young people into cities, perhaps with forced repatriation, is ultimately futile. Such controls not only create dissension but also are usually inefficient in their operation; moreover, they merely pass the problem back to the rural areas. They are no substitute for real incentives. As long as young Africans see in farming a poor and stunted life, they will seek for what seem to them the better opportunities of the cities.

In the present context, what specific policies can be worked out which have meaning both for improving this system of farming while at the same time providing a future for youth? Experiments already under way in Africa show some possibilities: (1) establishing large farm settlements on unused tracts of land which might draw young farmers from a radius of, say, 40 miles; (2) encouraging smaller farm settlements on unused land close to their present villages; (3) helping individuals to introduce improved methods while engaged on family holdings.

Although large farm settlements are too expensive to be widely imitated, some of their features can be retained in a

greatly modified version. Experiments have begun in which villages provide land for their own youth and the government gives initial support with subsistence payments to the settlers, subsidised seedlings, and advances for buying tools. Settlers then pay their own way as they go along. Agricultural extension advises on blocking out the land into individual units of economic size which allow for expansion over a series of years and which combine suitable crops for the area in a judicious selection between income now and income later. Co-operative buying of requisites and selling of products has been introduced. Since in the early stages the young farmers live with their own families in the village, the costs are kept to a minimum. Yet these young farmers make a distinct break with traditional farming. And when the farm unit reaches its full size and the cash crops come into full bearing, they will have an income equal to, if not above, the lower wage-earners in the cities. They will also have the greater security of growing their own food, ultimately living in their own houses and not worrying about losing their jobs.

For those young men who start on their family land, agricultural extension workers can make regular visits to encourage them, individually or in groups, in overcoming the obstacles they meet in trying to put into practice improved methods. Small amounts of credit may be given, and advice on techniques of production and marketing. Such an approach to specialised training and settlement in existing villages has been tried out in several African countries.

Young farmers' clubs can be expanded everywhere to extend instruction, encouragement, and group feeling through the period before the youth is ready to start farming on his own; and, of course, after beginning on his own as well.

Any realistic programmes for helping to create young modern farmers based on arrangements of low cost and community self-help, and taking into account ethnic and sociological factors, will be steps in the right direction. The aim is two-fold: to initiate expanding economic farm units and to furnish a local exhibition of what improved farming could look like. Where new nutritional crops, higher-yielding strains of existing crops, better poultry, and more skilful methods of management are introduced by these young settlers, they represent an effective demonstration to local villagers. Adult farmers are likely to take greater notice of the accomplishments of their own sons than the work of government demonstration farms. They will then be more willing to meet farm extension officers and try out some of their

suggested improvements.

In the rural areas, the provision of local amenities demands more attention. Lack of them has much to do with school leavers' rejection of rural life.

In some African countries, the recent period of brisk political activity has created an unfortunate climate that 'Government will provide'. This has meant the virtual collapse of local initiative in meeting many collective needs in villages and smaller townships. Where this has occurred, new directions are required. Central and local governments, acting jointly, will have to formulate clear-cut policies towards making certain that local people know just what sort of counterpart help can be obtained through government as they themselves, under voluntary leadership, initiate projects for improved market stalls, for building dispensaries and schools, for constructing feeder roads, and the like.

Some of these projects, by their nature, are exclusively an affair of government initiative; others are better handled by government in alliance with local leadership; others again are more the business of local people's own efforts (but even here government surveys or planning advice can be helpful). Here then is one of the vital aspects of the traditional African scene - which in many countries needs to be re-defined and given a fresh start - self-help for meeting community needs.

Top priority should be to move ahead with programmes to upgrade the millions of peasant farms and the tens of thousands of small-scale industries in urban and rural areas; and to encourage local voluntary leadership in every area to undertake multitudes of projects to meet community needs. Working with natural processes in this way means a frontier effort in what may be called 'development from below.' When people feel part of such genuine nationwide movements, the rising numbers of hopeful youth (both schooled and unschooled) will have better chances of finding rewarding work for their lifetime ahead.

2. The relevance of social programmes

Every African nation has a variety of institutions and programmes promoting the welfare of young people. Some of these derive from traditional life and social organisation, such as a dance group formed by a particular age-set of young women to perform at local festivals. Others are contemporary modifica-

tions of traditional associations; for example, savings clubs among city youth based on clan relationships. Others still are comparatively modern in origin and purpose, perhaps related to schools or churches or mosques. Some have international or regional affiliations, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A.

The objectives of these associations vary widely, but they have certain effects in common: they foster a feeling of belonging to a group, give a sense of direction and purpose, provide experience for youth in organising their own activities, develop discipline and a heightened sense of self-respect. Some clubs encourage the improvement of domestic skills for women, such as homemaking, child care, sewing, knowledge of hygiene and nutrition; of occupational skills for young men, such as young farmers' and young fishermen's clubs; of abilities in sports, such as swimming or football groups.

All of these clubs for youth are important and need further emphasis, particularly in those rural areas where traditional forms of recreation and association have disappeared and no new forms have taken their place and in cities where so many young people are displaced from their home communities. They are significant for boys and girls in their early teens (from 13 to 15) as well as for older youth. Those organisations which are relatively low-cost may need encouragement to become self-perpetuating and self-multiplying. They are worthy of the extra administrative attention from voluntary organisations and from governments.

3. New training and work schemes

In response to urgent local situations, many African nations have set going youth service programmes which provide facilities whereby trainees can make an organised, disciplined contribution to national development during their period of service. Such service to the nation through work projects may be for a few months or may stretch over a period of one or even two years. Almost all the programmes are rural-oriented. A few only cater for girls and young women. Examples are: Jeunesse Pionière Nationale (Central African Republic), Service Civique (Mali), National Youth Service (Kenya), National Youth Organisation (Liberia), Young Pioneers (Malawi), Youth Service (Zambia).

For Africa as a whole, the total youth in national service of these kinds is probably no more than 55-60,000. What is the validity of helping 'the few' at considerable cost in public funds within training-service or training-service-settlement programmes? One answer is that these youth later become demonstrators or initiators; they provide leadership in their communities. They set an example that makes follow-up policies, designed to help others, easier. 'The many' will then have a set of models of what can be aimed for.

On economic grounds, these schemes may lend themselves to criticism because of their high public cost and because they often divert scarce capital and administrative talent from more urgent development tasks. And often such labour-intensive works can be accomplished more cheaply by the use of more machinery and perhaps with more experienced labour. Another difficulty frequently occurs in introducing specialisation and differential rewards for work done; without these, youths have less spur to self-improvement. Then, also, there are problems in finding continuous work that has meaning within the general development of the area and for which recurrent costs can be borne once the capital works have been completed. If a scheme keeps youth for a very long period, or has no definite time limit, the best answer may well be simply to recruit them to central and local government service for public works - as apprentices of various kinds - and thus give them the benefit of training on the job, participation in specialised work, with rewards changing as they gain ability and experience. But against these economic appraisals should be weighed the less measureable social gains of improved personal discipline and attitudes towards society and of practical expressions of patriotism.

At the present stage, much is known about benefits, or hoped-for benefits, of national youth service programmes. These private and social benefits should now be related to the costs of alternative ways of achieving the same, or better, results.

III DESIGNING NATIONAL POLICIES TOWARD YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

1. Youth employment planning

The greatest single contribution that an African nation can make for its youth is the creation of a 'climate of economic opportunity' by providing enough beginning jobs that are productive and rewarding. The foremost policy issue, therefore, is

how to make essential modifications in the functioning of the economy, by channelling investment to the public and private sectors in such a way that gives meaning not only to immediate economic growth but also to longer-run economic and social development. This means, in practice, that employment creation for youth must become a conscious objective within the development strategy, even if this results in some reduction of overall national economic growth in the short run.

In order to provide a focal point for the multi-dimensional policies relating to welfare, skills, and jobs for young people, a Youth Employment Plan might be worked out and kept continuously under revision. With manpower and education assessments, it would form an integral part of the nation's economic and social planning.

The Youth Employment Plan would bring together all the aspects of the problem into a meaningful pattern so that, instead of fragmentary solutions based on limited perspectives, the solutions would be viewed as reinforcing each other within the whole process of development. The problem would be analysed in all its diversity and within its immediate and long-term dimensions.

Thus, the difficult balance between rural and urban advancement will be more correctly appraised. Education, both classroom and non-classroom, will be more suitably related to local environments. Curriculum reform will be seen in its relation to agricultural extension. Vocational guidance and a flow of information can take place in relation to government schemes for helping young farmers and for aiding indigenous businesses. The respective roles of central and local governments can be worked out to mesh with the contributions of local self-help and voluntary organisations.

Essential, and urgent, adjustments needed in the systems of incentives and of rewards to labour within all occupations, and at all levels, will be placed in perspective.

The Youth Employment Plan would be helped by continuous research to determine the relative costs of various training and work schemes, to review pilot projects in terms of costs and results, and to exchange experience with other African countries.

2. Co-ordination of programmes

In any African nation, responsibility for youth activities is usually highly decentralised. There is, no doubt, every reason why this should remain so. On the other hand, there are frequently no less than five or six ministries and perhaps 10 to 20 voluntary organisations which are involved in aspects of this work in the field. Clearly, much is to be gained by greater co-ordination of these national programmes. In fact, the trend as observed in several African countries is to bring this about. The question, therefore, is: how best can these programmes - involving welfare, skills, and jobs for youth - be brought into a more co-ordinated administrative pattern and merged with over-all strategy of national and local development?

In similar manner: what procedures can be evolved to ensure co-operation among governments, in each region within Africa and for Africa as a whole, in the exchange of information on specific projects, the obstacles encountered and successes met?

Outside contributions to national youth programmes, including the provision of technical assistance, - for a nation, a region within Africa, Africa as a whole - again present a disparate picture. Major steps are, however, being taken among specialised agencies of the United Nations to rectify this through joint-agency meetings on youth activities in Africa and by the exchange of experience through documentation. What further lines of action can be followed so that all contributors, and African nations themselves, can be kept informed?