THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH IN THE COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES OF THE CARIBBEAN AND AFRICA - SOME COMPARISONS

A.W. Wood
Education Research Officer, Commonwealth Secretariat

At first sight, the very exercise of comparing youth programmes of the Caribbean with those of Africa would seem questionable in view of the apparently enormous differences between the two regions. On the one hand, there is a great continental land mass of more than 300 million people, on the other a scattered assortment of islands, large and small, with a population of about 4 million.

Economic comparisons are equally difficult. The Caribbean territories are still, in the main, dominated by plantation-type economies producing specialised cash crops and other raw materials largely for export to the affluent countries of North America and Europe. In some territories, there is also a comparatively small modern manufacturing and commercial sector. The African continent in the main, certainly south of the Sahara and north of the Limpopo, is still a land of small peasant producers, many of whom are steadily moving away from subsistence farming to become involved in producing supplementary cash crops for the commercial market. The modern industrial sector is very small and slow to develop.

In educational and cultural terms, there are also many differences. In the Caribbean, the spread of formal education has gone much further, particularly as regards elementary education and literacy. There are also significant cultural differences arising from the close association of the Caribbean countries with the metropolitan countries of Europe over several centuries. The colonial history of the Commonwealth countries of Africa, on the other hand, lasted generally less than a hundred years.

Social differences are especially pronounced and have a

direct bearing upon the types of social action which are appropriate for young people. In the Caribbean, as a consequence of the particular social history of the region, the family is on the whole a comparatively weak unit and loyalties to it are fairly fluid. In Tropical Africa, there is generally, especially in the rural areas where the majority of the population live, a strong allegiance to the smaller social groupings - tribe, clan and family.

Some common needs

The value of comparing experience in the field of youth organisation and training, an area of activity necessarily very closely related to the socio-economic structure of particular societies, must therefore from the beginning be equally doubtful. Yet in fact in both regions, when the broad situation of young people out of school is examined, distinct similarities appear. There is a common need for youth programmes which will provide disadvantaged young people both with skills training, to meet the needs of industry and improved agriculture, and with social training. The latter largely amounts to a combination of civic and community education, with the aim of promoting among young people an increased pride in themselves and a greater understanding of what they might do to improve their situation.

In wider terms, youth programmes of this sort have a two-fold objective. It is hoped that they can assist in national development by improving the general level of skills among the mass of the population by working through the youth of the community. Secondly, youth programmes should help to counteract any anti-social tendencies which may have arisen among young people as a result of, for example, their aspirations to certain types of employment not being fulfilled. There is frequently a further need to give increased and more systematic attention to the possible employment opportunities which might absorb some, at least, of the products of such training. In certain instances, it may be necessary to seek to provide these through the promotion of settlements, small industries etc. This at once raises common questions concerning the kinds of supporting services needed to sustain farm settlements, artisans' co-operatives, development services for small industries etc.

Youth training in the Caribbean

In the Caribbean countries of the Commonwealth, the general picture regarding out-of-school training for young people

is as follows:-

(1) intensive and selective social and vocational training programmes in fully residential, government-sponsored youth camps;

(2) non-residential skills training in purpose-built vocational training centres, mainly, but not exclusively, government-sponsored;

(3) youth activities in non-residential centres; these are largely of a social and recreational nature but include some vocational training;

(4) training, sometimes in settlements, for rural and agricultural development;

(5) traditional voluntary youth activities of the uniformed type with a mainly social and recreational purpose.

1. Youth Camps

Broken down further, this structure covers, first, the government-sponsored youth camps, which have been operating for some time in Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, more recently in Dominica and are projected elsewhere in the Eastern Caribbean.

The youth camp provides a training in agriculture, various technical skills and other activities of a vocational nature, as well as social training and further general education to selected young people who are mainly disadvantaged, particularly in respect of home background, over a period of eighteen months to two years, and seeks to place them in employment after training. In recent instances the concern with subsequent employment has led to an involvement in cooperative development and settlements.

2. Technical and vocational training

Secondly, the structure includes a wide range of industrial and vocational training establishments, organised in some instances by non-governmental bodies. These offer young people a traditional technical training to various accepted standards. In some cases the standards are locally determined. In others, they are still linked to the City and Guilds of London Institute. Some institutions produce technically trained manpower generally,

without particular reference to the special needs of specific industries. Other training establishments are closely related to a particular industry and the trainees are largely absorbed by that industry. Trinidad provides examples of each approach. The John Donaldson Institute illustrates the general polytechnic-type approach, whilst the Point Fortin Vocational Training Centre is more particularly concerned with turning out the type of skilled personnel needed in the petro-chemical industry. There are many other similar examples of both categories in other territories.

Within this broad classification there are also various training establishments which seek to provide a training in various precise manual skills for specific service occupations. Examples of such programmes are the Community Development Department's Craft Training Centre in Barbados; also in Barbados, the Homecraft Centre; in St. Lucia, the training school set up by the Hotels Association and in Dominica, the Convent Craft Training Centre. Each of these has its own particular vocational purpose.

The aim of the Barbados Craft Training Centre is to build up local handicraft production so that the lucrative tourist trade, which often has produced little in the way of material benefits for the mass of the community, can be tapped for the benefit of the local population. The training programme of the Homecraft Centre in Barbados is framed in recognition of another recurrent social phenomenon in that country - the need for many people to emigrate to find employment. A basic objective of this course is admitted to be to equip young people, mainly girls, for employment in the catering industry or in domestic service in Canada or the United States.

In St. Lucia, the recent very rapid expansion of tourism has greatly strained the island's reserves of trained manpower at the lower and middle levels for the hotel industry. The Vocational Training Centre in Castries, established at the end of 1969, should contribute towards a solution of this problem, particularly at the middle level. The Hotels Association itself has mounted a series of crash training courses in the specific skills required of low-level personnel. A ready source of employment for former trainees is provided by the sponsors.

In Dominica, handicrafts have been strongly established over several years and a widespread reputation earned for high quality in the goods produced. The Convent Training Centre in

Roseau pioneered this work, although it is now only one among several such establishments. The purpose of the training activities is to communicate to young people out of school, mainly in this case unmarried young women, skills related to particular crafts which are known to have a ready commercial outlet, and to provide facilities for production and the marketing of the output. The special value of this type of programme is that it indicates the possibilities for modestly profitable self-employment even where the immediate employment situation is very depressed. In addition some special provision is made for the training needs of women. This is of particular importance in many Caribbean countries where there are proportionately more women than men in the locally resident population.

3. Youth centres

Thirdly, youth centres - purpose-built structures which act as focal points for various youth activities - are fairly widespread in the Caribbean countries and are an aspect of both governmental and non-governmental provision for young people out-of-school. Originally, the activities at these centres were largely social and recreational. More recently, in view of the general need for technical skills throughout the Caribbean, some youth centres have attempted to provide various vocational and pre-vocational training activities as optional additional components of their programmes. This approach has not yet been adopted in all youth centres throughout the region. Where it has been attempted, activities differ extensively in their nature and results vary. It is becoming increasingly accepted at policy level that youth centres should become alert to the realities of the employment situation and should seek to assist young people out-of-school to solve their employment problems, since unemployment is a major cause of the demoralisation of young people and therefore a major cause of social dislocation.

The youth centres illustrate many of the familiar problems of institutionalised structures which seek to cater for the needs of young people out of school. Where training in various skills has been introduced, for example at Boys Town in Kingston, such activities have been hampered, firstly, by the lack of skilled instructors and other resources, such as equipment and materials, and secondly, by the fact that many young people who come into contact with these centres are apathetic towards skills training. In certain cases, practical courses introduced into certain youth centres have had to be dropped because of lack of interest among the young people at whom they were aimed. Equally, however,

particular types of training activity have found ready acceptance. The course for girls in hair-dressing and beauty care at the King George VI Club in Kingston, for example, has proved very valuable in attracting girls into an atmosphere which had traditionally been heavily orientated towards sporting activities likely to appeal to youg men.

Large numbers of young people in urban centres throughout the West Indies, however, remain unaffected by the youth centres (still more so by the youth camps) and it is in the main these young people who pose the social problems. This is not, of course, a peculiarly West Indian problem, the same being true of, for example, Britain. The 1969 report 'Youth and Community Work in the Seventies' tentatively accepts the estimate of the Fairbairn Committee that only 29% of young people in the 14-20 age-group are affected by the Youth Service. The Albemarle Committee a decade earlier had estimated that the proportion was "one in three". The 1969 report places great emphasis on new approaches to youth work so as to reach the unattached group of young people, which is the major source of delinquency.

4. Rural and agricultural training

Fourthly, there are various examples in the Caribbean region of training for rural and agricultural development in which young people are involved. This aspect of youth work has, however, received rather less attention in the Caribbean than in Africa. The explanation for this is primarily historical. Popular antipathy towards the land, with the consequent general abandonment of it, has gone much further in the Caribbean than in Africa. The classic instance of this is Trinidad and Tobago where, according to a recent estimate, agriculture produced only 9% of the Gross National Product, despite high rates of unemployment among young people and substantial areas of unused land suitable for agricultural development.

In certain cases, most obviously Barbados, the situation is exacerbated by acute land shortage, at least at the level of the small farmer. Again for historical reasons, it has been necessary for the small farmer to work on land holdings of sub-economic size, supplementing his income by occasional and seasonal work on plantations, or by combining small farming with other employment, for example carpentry or building. The result has been to promote in young people the conviction that farming can offer no prospect of even a modestly prosperous future.

In other cases, where there is still land available in some quantity, as in Jamaica or Trinidad, it has been thought necessary in setting up training projects for rural youth to entice suitable recruits by stepping up the material inputs to a very high degree, establishing from the outset highly industrialised farming systems. The result has been that settlement schemes, such as the Rhymesbury Scheme in Jamaica, have proved extremely costly in terms of settlers placed on the land. While there are individual examples of settlers within these programmes who have developed their new holdings and are farming in a modern way with acceptable results, these schemes have only been able to accommodate very small numbers. Indeed, this strategy has so far made only the smallest contribution towards providing employment for young people out of school.

An alternative approach to rural development and the involvement of young people in this process can be seen in the settlements and training programme of the Guyana Co-operative Union. This organisation is seeking to tackle the complex problems of establishing agricultural co-operative settlements in the largely undeveloped Guyanese Interior, an exercise made especially difficult by the particularly rugged terrain and the customary deep-rooted suspicion of agriculture among large sections of the community in Guyana, as elsewhere in the Caribbean. In this programme, certain options which are open to those shaping policy for rural settlement and training in Jamaica and Trinidad are non-existent. In terms of finance, a heavily-capitalised operation is not possible, firstly, since Guyana is not a wealthy country; secondly, since it is important that the settlement programme, in the interests of Interior development, should involve as many people as possible. Intensive supervision is also impossible. TheCo-operative Union does not have the manpower resources to direct the settlement programme closely. More important still, the physical conditions, the remoteness and lack of communications in the Interior make it necessary that settlements display a large measure of self-reliance.

To meet this situation, the Co-operative Union has devised a settlement and training programme which has many similarities to the low-cost programmes recently devised in Africa. The involvement of young people in this type of programme is a prerequisite. The physical demands of such schemes are one element in this. The need for strong motivation and indeed an element of self-sacrificing idealism is another. The co-operative settlements, although composed predominantly of young people,

do, however, have a leavening of older people who provide valuable social balance and mature leadership when this is necessary.

In the training approach, the settlements programme of the Guyana Co-operative Union challenges many vested assumptions in this field. Recruits often have minimal education and in many instances have little or no previous acquaintance with agricultural work. The programme does not, however, offer an extensive preparatory training before settlement. A short preliminary course lasting a few weeks is basically concerned to raise the morale and increase the motivation of the settlers towards the development of the hinterland. At the same time it provides some training in the basic techniques needed to establish first crops and erect simple accommodation. More serious agricultural training takes place after settlement through the periodic attachment to the co-operative of an extension worker who lives with one group for several weeks before moving to another. Agricultural training is thus carried out in the situation with which the settlers are most familiar, and is related completely to the particular agricultural operations which the co-operative is involved in at the time.

The settlement work of the Guyana Co-operative Union provides a model which is increasingly familiar in the context of rural development in Africa, but which has very few parallels elsewhere in the Caribbean region. The customary explanation is that Guyana's physical and social conditions are so different from those of the West Indies that any experimentation in the former has very little applicability to the latter. Indisputably, in terms of availability of land and density of population, there is very little similarity. There may, however, be some room for replication where population density is still comparatively low and there is unused land available, and where modern sector development has not gone too far. A rural training approach which seeks to establish young people as improved farmers of modest scale, with comparatively low capitalisation and with training and productive work being combined in the working situation, might pay dividends. Dominica seems to offer an obvious possibility.

What would seem to have more relevance to the Caribbean as a whole is the concept which is central to the Guyana Co-operative Union's development approach - that balanced development, in both the economic and social sense, must not overlook the expansion and development of the rural base, particularly

when modern industrial development is not able to create new jobs at a rate which will keep pace with the job aspirations of school leavers, and other traditional employment outlets for school leavers are becoming increasingly restricted. In addition, other aspects of this programme reveal an understanding that the full realisation of the economic potential of the rural areas does not confine itself to agriculture, and that small rural-based industries and craft activities must play an important part also.

5. Traditional voluntary youth organisations

The final main area of youth activities in the Caribbean is that of the traditional voluntary youth organisation, often the uniformed sort. The organisations within this category are comparatively widespread in the Caribbean. They involve mainly young people in school and affect largely the younger elements of the age-group. Undoubtedly such organisations contribute usefully to the social education of young people and serve to promote individual self-confidence which is a valuable element in the development of the adolescent. Comparatively, there is a greater proportion of the age-group in the Caribbean in school than there is in Africa. It might therefore be expected that such organisations affect proportionately more of the age-group than in Africa, where the voluntary uniformed youth organisations are almost entirely confined to the few young people who succeed in winning their way into the upper reaches of the school system.

Such organisations in the West Indies (as in other parts of the world) are facing a period of questioning over what their role should be. The focal point of this questioning is the employment situation for young people leaving school and the social problems posed by the high incidence of unemployment among them, as well as the universal dissatisfaction of youth with traditional authoritarian structures. There is as yet no clear indication on the part of these organisations of new programmes which can make a direct attack on this particular problem, although clearly any programme which is able to engage the energies and interests of such young people, even programmes of a purely social nature, must be regarded as contributing in some measure towards its alleviation.

Youth training in Africa and the Caribbean - some comparisons

In which respects then does this broad situation regarding the out-of-school education and training of young people in the Commonwealth Caribbean relate to equivalent situations in the Commonwealth-countries of Africa, and how might comparative

experience be of assistance in the development of programmes?

In the African region, there are outwardly several marked similarities. The work of the national youth services in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia broadly overlaps with the official youth camp programmes in Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad. Technical skills at sub-technician level are communicated through various vocational training centres on broadly the same basis. At technician level and above, the training structures almost coincide. Training for rural development has necessarily gone much further in Africa than in the Caribbean and a broader range of approaches has been devised. This necessarily reflects the greater preoccupation in Africa with the development of agriculture and the rural areas and rural communities in general. Youth centres involving skills training are a relatively under-developed area of activity in the African countries. Such non-residential centres as exist have tended to provide the mainly social type of programme and have been largely confined to urban areas. The voluntary youth organisations in Africa and the Caribbean are in very similar stages of development.

Youth camps

Each region would seem to have produced some lessons for the other. For the West Indian youth camps, there would seem to be great relevance in the preoccupation which has grown up in recent years among their African equivalents with what happens after training. Most of the African programmes are based on the fact that the camp training phase is a mere beginning to the overall operation of providing a supplementary training for young people and also an opportunity to contribute to the development of their country. Most training programmes have therefore developed second phase operations which enable graduates to become involved in rural development through farm settlement schemes. The beginnings are also being made to the introduction through youth service programmes of non-agricultural skills into the rural areas, thus assisting the process of economic diversification and advancement. In contrast, the youth camps as they are at present operating in Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana are essentially training operations, their preoccupation with what occurs to the trainee afterwards being until very recently limited to various 'placement' activities which seek to fit the young people concerned into whatever employment opportunities exist.

Equally there would seem to be some value for African youth services in studying the approach to training in the youth

camps in some West Indian territories. Generally speaking, a more varied training is offered in the West Indies. There is therefore more freedom of choice for the trainee in the kinds of activities that he would wish to pursue. More particularly, however, there would seem to be in the West Indian youth camps more concern with the trainee as an individual, with his particular personal qualities and problems, and with how the training programme can either develop or alleviate these. This general characteristic probably arises from the fact that youth camps in the West Indies have been seen as part of the social welfare and educational apparatus, and personnel engaged in youth camp training are usually drawn from this particular professional background. In most African situations the orientation of the national youth services is towards agriculture and industry, and personnel involved are inclined in these directions.

The main area where the youth camp programmes in the two regions differ is in the degree of political involvement in the respective programmes. In several instances in such programmes in Africa, it is frankly assumed that the fundamental need, as far as out-of-school youth is concerned, is to motivate them towards development activity, meaning in effect that "political education" in some instances or "motivation training" in others is regarded as a crucial aspect of the programme.

The reasoning behind this approach put forward by some of its advocates in Africa should perhaps be examined. It is argued that for many young people with no particular skills to offer, the only prospect for a productive existence lies in the rural areas. Training programmes should induce them to accept this, despite the lack of glamour and generally inferior material facilities, rather than risk the uncertainties of the towns. Motivation towards the rural areas thus comes before skills training. The basis of this motivation is acceptance of a national ideology, whether this is "Ujamaa" (Tanzania), African Socialism (Kenya), Zambian Humanism or the Common Man's Charter (Uganda). There would seem to be much relevance in this for countries such as Guyana which are facing major rural development tasks. There would also seem to be relevance for other West Indian countries which have mounted settlement and training programmes in which the overall emphasis has been on communicating agricultural skills rather than seeking to engender an urge towards agriculture, or where agricultural potential remains undeveloped, partly as a consequence of widespread social attitudes which do not assist the development purposes of the country.

Technical and vocational training

In the communication of technical and vocational skills, in both regions the upper reaches of the training systems have certain similarities. There are major variations at lower levels. The nature of the economies of various Caribbean countries has required the specialisation in the specific craft and industrial activities already examined. In Africa, with the growth of interest in intermediate technology, there is a distinct swing away from the idea of considering all activity conducive towards development in terms of the techniques appropriate to a fully modernised economy. The prospects for the development of small rural industries, or for the improvement of existing local industries, are being carefully examined, mainly in relation to the processing of agricultural production or the promotion of import substitution. This type of development activity is seen in countries as far apart as Nigeria and Tanzania as a major source of employment for young people and, with this in view, various programmes are already operating with the aim of improving the operations and training capability of established entrepreneurs and craftsmen.

A further feature within this general area which has developed in a unique way in Africa in recent years is the idea of setting up a skills training programme for young people during which they will also engage in cash-earning activities. The results of this will substantially contribute to, or indeed cover, the costs of training. This has become internationally known as the 'brigade' system of training.

This type of programme has most chance of success where existing craftsmen are almost non-existent, and where there is an unsatisfied demand for such work, a situation which does not exist in Caribbean countries. The possibility is, however, illustrated of a self-help approach to skills training and employment generation outside the conventionally accepted structure. This concept cuts back sharply on the limitations on the dimension of training imposed by shortage of finance.

Alternatively, on the craft side, the Caribbean countries have in many respects progressed much further in the organisation of training, production and marketing than has been the case in most African countries, where generally craft work remains very much an individual matter. In many African countries one of the obstacles to the fuller development of craftwork is inability to adapt design ideas to popular (i.e. marketable) tests. A further

obstacle, at least as far as the primary producer is concerned, is that the retailing of much good quality craft work has tended to fall into the hands of urban-based entrepreneurs with the necessary capital and managerial skills to put the merchandise before the potential purchasers at prices considerably higher than the producer receives. African countries anxious to promote craftwork among young people might find much of value in the kind of training, production and retail organisation that has been developed by the Social Welfare Department in Barbados or by the Convent Craft Centre in Dominica.

Rural and agricultural training

Training young people for rural development is an area of particular divergence between the two regions. This divergence largely reflects the fact that in Africa generally agricultural development is given a very high priority by governments, and the involvement of young people with progressive attitudes towards and skills in agriculture is considered to be one of the main means whereby improved farming patterns can be introduced on a large scale. In the Caribbean countries, with the exception of Guyana, agricultural development, particularly at the level of the small independent farmer, has a less prominent place in national planning.

In terms of numbers involved, the main agency in the Caribbean concerned with the preparation of young people for rural development is the 4H Young Farmers Club movement which has in Jamaica a membership of approximately 25,000, making it the largest single organised youth activity. Again, however, the Clubs' effectiveness in terms of their ultimate objectives of increasing interest in the land and rural life on the part of young people is diminished by the fact that the dominant motivation tends to be away from farming. Very often these organisations are supported by young people for the non-vocational activities that they provide, without any real acceptance by the participants of farming as a way of life.

The same kind of motivation away from agriculture on the part of young people can of course be found throughout Africa, particularly among those who have undergone the primary school course. In most African countries, however, a strong policy line is laid down by governments which seek to combat this tendency. Projects which aim to involve youth directly in rural development are given much support and encouragement by both governmental and non-governmental organisations. In the West Indies, popular antipathy to rural life is not very often actively

discouraged at governmental level and the impression is sometimes created that fully modernised farming, (implying abandonment of the land by the small-scale farmer), is to be promoted as quickly as possible, regardless of the social consequences. In such circumstances programmes which try to train young people in the skills needed for rural development are not entirely appropriate. Such a strategy can only be valid if industrial expansion is proceeding rapidly and employment outside agriculture is being created at a sufficiently rapid rate to absorb the young people being diverted away from the land.

It is already clear that even in the more developed territories of the Caribbean this is simply not the case. Modern sector employment is expensive to create and tends to cut back on the amount of labour employed. This shortage of employment might promote in several Caribbean countries where there is land available or under-used, or where it is farmed on a very expensive system, a re-examination of the possibilities for settlement and training in combination, which have proved effective in several situations in Africa and elsewhere.

The exception to all this must of course be Guyana where, manifestly, experience in Africa in training youth for rural development - the kind of training course selected, the refinement of training objectives, the emphasis on motivational elements, the nature of the supervision and level of capitalisation - has considerable relevence.

Youth centres

In comparing the operation of non-residential youth centres and youth clubs in the two regions, an almost converse picture is presented to that concerning young people and rural development. In Africa, with its preponderantly rural population yet under-developed agricultural potential in many areas, the immediate need is for training which will enable young people to share in realising this potential. In the Caribbean, however, the urban situation figures much more prominently. Flexible programmes for young people based on non-residential centres, offering a range of skills training, social and recreational outlets, an opportunity to be involved in organisation and management and,where necessary, the possibilities for counselling, fill an obvious need. Programmes of this nature have in recent years emerged in various parts of the West Indies and much valuable experience about their operation has been gained. The need is, however, nowhere satisfied, the usual limitation on the expansion of such programmes being finance.

Given this limitation, it might be questioned whether the scale and quality of material facilities provided in some centres are entirely merited.

A further area where some criticism might be levelled is the low level of involvement of young people in decisions about the way in which the centres run. Admittedly, the 'participation' argument weakens when, as is the case in many of the cities of West Indies, there is such a strong need among young people, especially those outside the school system, for any form of constructive youth activity.

Already in the African cities a nucleus of fully urbanised young people are facing the usual problems relating to education, unemployment and adverse living conditions. Their contacts with rural areas are tenuous or non-existent and for them political rallying-cries such as "Back to the land!" can have little meaning. The presence of this element is reflected in the rising incidence of juvenile crime in most major African cities. The open youth centre which has been evolved in the West Indies to cater for this category of young people appears to provide a model which should prove to have increasing relevance for many parts of Africa.

Traditional voluntary youth organisations

Lastly, as regards the voluntary uniformed youth movements, in both regions it is clear that they must find a new role for themselves to fit new and still rapidly changing social and economic circumstances. In Africa this process of re-examination has probably gone further; already there has been a substantial expression in practical terms of how, or indeed whether, these organisations should continue to operate. In one country, Malawi, the government has taken the radical step of establishing one national youth movement for all young people and has abolished the traditional uniformed youth organisations. In other cases, notably Tanzania, the government's emphasis on national service for large sectors of the nation's youth, compulsory in the case of those privileged enough to have undergone secondary and higher education, has tended to overshadow and play down the established role of the older organisations. Elsewhere, however, vigorous attempts are being made to work out a new role, emphasising service to the community, practical work projects and the involvement, as far as possible, of young people who are not in school.

Conclusion

The need is becoming generally recognised throughout the world for new ideas and initiatives which will provide a means whereby young people can involve themselves in the problems and the development of their societies. In the so-called "developing" countries, the general problem is compounded by the critical employment situation facing young people and their dissatisfaction with the way of life which for most people has been customary. In the search for new ideas for youth programmes, there has often in the past been a tendency both in the Caribbean and in Africa to look to the "developed" countries for transferable models. The results of this transference have been variable, since the original models were designed to fit the conditions of highly urbanised and industrialised societies, fundamentally unlike the two regions in question. The ultimate answer in the evolution of youth programmes appropriate to each region must come through action at national or even local level. The Commonwealth Caribbean countries and the Commonwealth countries of Africa would appear, however, to have sufficient similarities to make a comparative study of action in the youth field rewarding to those shaping future policies.