

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS OF YOUTH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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1. The International Labour Organisation has been increasingly concerned with youth problems in developing countries and it has sought both singly, and in cooperation with other UN Agencies, to expand and strengthen its activities which are directed towards helping to understand, identify and meet major youth problems in developing countries, such as those of lack of work opportunity, of vocational guidance and training, of integration into work life, and of protection from exploitation and abuse.

2. Almost 54 per cent of the total population of the world is made up of children and youth. The labour force under the age of 20 is expected to increase from 230 million in 1970 to over 245 million by 1980, and the 20-24 year age group from 211 million in 1970 to about 246 million by 1980; at the same time there will be about 43 million children under 15 in the world labour force in 1970.

3. Children and youth under 20 years of age made up around 53 per cent of the total population in the developing countries, as contrasted to 31.3 per cent, for instance, in the six countries of the European Common Market (1960-62). Percentages in Trinidad and Tobago (1961) and Jamaica (1960) stood at 52.1 and 50.1 respectively. To point up the seriousness of the problem of youth unemployment, it might be noted that in Jamaica, according to the 1960 census, 39 per cent of all unemployed were in the relatively short 15-19 age group, and that 54 per cent of the unemployed were seeking their first jobs.

4. The rapid increase in the number of young persons seeking employment, the existence of millions of youth entering the labour market with little or no proper training, and of the many in whom education has instilled unrealistic attitudes to work preferences will require a new approach and major effort to deal with the problems involved. This might call for efforts to relate education more closely to manpower needs for development purposes; to supplement the inadequate education and training systems with special arrangements aimed at helping young people

to get some preparation for their future participation in economic life; and to review many of the present notions on education, such as the role it has to fill in society and its relationship to employment.

5. It is against this background that the ILO has been giving increased attention to the complex problems involved in the vocational preparation, vocational guidance, and employment of young people in the developing countries. In the World Employment Programme (WEP) which has recently been launched by the ILO, and which is expected to occupy an eminent place in the strategy for the Second Development Decade, education, training and vocational guidance of young people are of fundamental importance. One of the main objectives of the PREALC (Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean), the Latin American and Caribbean component of the WEP, is to develop these activities and to seek to widen youth training and employment opportunities.

6. In the vocational training field, in which the great bulk of the ILO's operational activities are concentrated, many projects benefit youth directly or indirectly, and greater efforts are being made to ensure that youth training is part and parcel of an integrated system of human resources planning and development within the framework of national, economic, and social development. ILO vocational training experts and manpower planners are jointly studying the needs of youth and the opportunities for meeting them through training and employment. Vocational guidance experts have been made available to a few countries (including Trinidad and Tobago), seeking to develop job information and career advice to children and young people. Help is being given in the establishment of youth employment services and land settlement facilities. The work under the ILO's rural development programme includes an important youth component and projects are specifically directed towards promoting more favourable prospects and concrete opportunities in rural areas towards improving training for agriculture and related activities.

7. It is recognised, however, that present ILO activities barely touch the problem and that a far more intensive effort will be required in the years to come. With this end in view, an inter-agency approach to youth problems is being pursued within the United Nations family of organisations. An attempt is also being made to seek the cooperation of the international non-governmental organisations in inter-agency programmes, to employ more foreign volunteers in youth schemes and to mobilise bilateral assistance

for our youth projects. A joint UN/ILO inter-regional seminar on youth service programmes was held near Copenhagen in November 1968, in collaboration with the Government of Denmark, to consider guidelines for the development of national youth service schemes, and in 1971 the ILO will convene an inter-regional meeting of youth service leaders on the organisation and management of youth service programmes, to examine management problems of such programmes and to assess national experience in operating youth programmes of various kinds. The participants will also be called upon to evaluate a cost-benefit analysis of such programmes (which is at present being carried out by the ILO), and a general analysis of their economic and social justification; the participants are expected to study the principles, standards or practices for effective operation of these programmes.

8. Recognising the inter-relationship of the problems of training and employment of young people and emphasising the need for a new approach to assist member governments in this matter, the ILO Conference at its 1970 Session adopted a Recommendation concerning Special Youth Employment and Training Schemes for Development Purposes, designed "to enable young persons to take part in activities directed to the economic and social development of their country, and to acquire education, skills and experience facilitating their subsequent economic activity on a lasting basis and promote their participation in society."

9. These special employment and training schemes were expected by the Conference to serve one or more of the following purposes: (a) to give young persons who are educationally or otherwise disadvantaged such education, skills and work habits as are necessary for useful and remunerative economic activity and for integration into society; (b) to involve young persons in national economic and social development, including agricultural and rural development; (c) to provide useful occupation related to economic and social development for young persons who would otherwise be unemployed; and (d) to enable young persons who have educational or technical qualifications which are needed by the community for development, particularly in the economic, social, educational or health fields, to use their qualifications in the service of the community. A recurrent theme in almost all interventions during the discussions on this subject was the recognition of the seriousness of the problem of unemployed and untrained youth in developing countries, which some representatives described as frightening. Attention was drawn to the fact that although the number of such persons passing the school leaving age is constantly increasing, the increase in job

opportunities has not kept pace, with the result that many of these young persons remain unemployed, or eke out a precarious existence in various very low productivity occupations. Some of the speakers at the Conference drew attention to the fact that benefits of secondary or higher education had in many cases the effect of isolating youth from their environment without equipping them to contribute through their work to the development of their countries. This was one reason why many countries already had, in recent years, drawn up various types of special programmes (differing from normal training schemes and adult education programmes and involving arrangements which are not quite the same as those normally found in work relationships), with a view to providing work and training for these young people while at the same time enabling them to contribute to their countries' development. The ILO is assisting a number of these countries in these efforts by providing whatever technical expertise they require plus a limited amount of fellowships and equipment.

10. Closer co-ordination of these special youth employment and training schemes with general development planning will be necessary to ensure that the projects undertaken complement other national or regional development work, and that training is so organised as to yield the maximum benefit within the framework of the general vocational training and educational system and of development plans. Better assessment of present and future job opportunities on national or regional levels would contribute to the planning of training for skills for which there is actual or potential demand and the subsequent settling of participants in employment.

11. Whether in the developed or in the developing countries, it is clear that the demands and problems of youth cannot be tackled in isolation. They must be dealt with within the framework of economic growth and social and cultural development as a whole. But there is an urgent need to plan for and with youth, within the over-all content of national development, to pinpoint their needs, to find imaginative solutions to the problems involved in enabling young people to develop their full potential and to contribute to the national well-being, and to associate youth in a direct and responsible fashion with the policies and programmes affecting them.

Out-of-School Youth Programmes in Jamaica

12. Of Jamaica's total population 1.93 million (end of 1968), 1.1 million were between the ages of 0-24; 300,000 or 15 per cent

of the population were between the ages 15-24. Annually, some 30,000 to 40,000 young persons reaching the age of 15 are in search of a job, while the number of new jobs, added to replacements, probably provides fewer than 15,000 jobs a year. It is estimated that this year (1970), 40,000 young people coming out of the primary cycle can have little hope, because of the limited facilities available, of entering the secondary level.

13. Despite the enormous efforts being undertaken by the Jamaican Government to expand, improve and diversify the formal educational system, the problem of untrained and unemployed out-of-school young persons continues to grow. For the present, it seems hardly possible for the formal educational system to absorb the ever-increasing numbers. Another solution has already been experimented with in Jamaica with varied degrees of success, namely, the provision of special youth programmes for training and employment.

14. In essence, these programmes are designed to give the disadvantaged and poorly-educated young person a minimum level of vocational training, self-discipline, leadership training, cultural, sports and leisure activities. These programmes, under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Community Development, comprise :-

- (i) Youth Camps (providing unskilled unemployed boys, aged 15-18, with civic, agricultural and industrial vocational training for 18 months);
- (ii) Youth Centres (at present urban non-residential centres mainly used for cultural or sports events but with a minor vocational training component);
- (iii) Youth Clubs (mainly of a social or cultural nature);
- (iv) Summer Nature Camps (usually of three weeks' duration organised mainly for city youngsters during the summer vacation. They are intended to expose urban youngsters to healthy outdoor living in a sociable and cultural environment);
- (v) Summer Work Camps (Camps organised to carry out a specific task such as clearing land, road-building);

- (vi) National Volunteer Organisation (Composed of educated youth who offer their services to the community).

15. The core of these out-of-school youth programmes is the Youth Camps. These provide general education and civic training as well as training in technical skills which it is hoped will facilitate entry into agriculture, handicrafts, mechanical crafts, construction crafts, and services.

16. A basic philosophy of these camps is to foster a respect for agriculture. Jamaica, like many other developing countries, suffers from a serious rural exodus to the towns, due in part to the low esteem with which agricultural pursuits are held, especially amongst the young. This of course bodes ill for a country whose economic mainstay is agriculture and whose economic plans want to stress rather than to minimise agriculture.

17. In order to instil in the trainee a respect for agricultural employment, an agricultural component has been placed in the curriculum of the Youth Camps, regardless of whether the trainee is enrolled in an agricultural section or not; the idea being that, fortified with a respect for agricultural activities, the trainee will find it easier, if need be, to return to agricultural activities. It remains to be seen whether this philosophy can be applied on the same scale to other youth programmes, and if so to what degree.

18. Although Jamaica has come a long way in the development of out-of-school youth programmes, these programmes in their present form barely scratch the surface. The Youth Camps, for instance, only accommodate 1,240 boys, constituting less than 3 per cent of those who could be eligible for it.

19. The Jamaican Government has now requested assistance from the United Nations and the Specialised Agencies to help expand the present programme. As a result of a recent ILO and subsequent joint ILO/UNESCO mission to Jamaica, the Government has requested UNDP assistance for :-

- (a) the setting up of a National Youth Service to co-ordinate all governmental youth programmes, and to administer the different programmes of the Ministry of Youth and Community Development which directly concern young people.

- (b) the expansion of the present youth camps by increasing the number of camps to 11 and by establishing a number of girls' camps and a cadre training centre. This expansion, it is hoped, will enable the camps to accommodate 9,000 trainees by 1974;
- (c) strengthening the present National Volunteer Organisation;
- (d) strengthening the vocational component of, and expansion of, the present youth centres and youth club programmes;
- (e) providing better training for the educational, technical and other instruction of the Youth Camps, Youth Centres, Youth Clubs and youth organisations in general.

20. The Government's request for assistance calls for the sending of an inter-agency team consisting of seven experts and short-term consultants as well as equipment for the various components of the programme and fellowships for counterpart staff. It is hoped that the team, in close collaboration with their Jamaican counterparts, can expand and streamline the present programme and thereby reach a majority of the young people who are neither in school nor employed.

21. The problem of the young unskilled and unemployed which Jamaica is faced with must be solved if she is to fully develop socially, economically and politically. The progress that she makes in this field will be watched with the utmost interest by other countries having much the same problem, since Jamaica has a headstart of many years, particularly with its Youth Camps which were started some fifteen years ago.

Out-of-School Youth Programmes in Trinidad and Tobago

22. As in other Caribbean countries, the population of Trinidad is young: of a total of 1,010,100,¹ 61%, or 616,650 in all, are under the age of 25, including 189,000, or 18.7% aged 15-24 - i.e. young workseekers. With around 30,000 live births a year and a death rate of under 7,000 per year, in thirty-five years,

¹ Population & Vital Statistics 1967 Report, Table 4.

the natural increase in population has risen over four-fold; and each year has produced about 14,000 more workseekers, compared with estimates of about 5,000 more jobs a year created by the rapid growth of a wide variety of industries. In 1968,² 30% of young workseekers were unemployed and it is common for a boy to be unemployed for many months, sometimes years, before he eventually gets work.

23. The balance in the employment market is also affected substantially by migration. For many years, this produced a net increase in the working population of Trinidad and Tobago, but since 1964 the net flow has been increasingly outward, rising in 1967 and 1968 to around 10,000 per year.³ In the third five-year plan, manpower estimates are calculated on the basis of an expected total net emigration of 25,000. Whereas in the past emigration was seen very largely as a harmful "brain drain",⁴ recent high-level policy statements view it as a major means of balancing the manpower budget.

24. In spite of the increased numbers of young people, primary education up to the age of 14 is assured to almost all; almost 5,000⁵ per year are enrolled in secondary school courses, and about a thousand a year remain to the age of 18 or 19 to complete a seven-year secondary course. A substantial proportion of less successful secondary school students, however, find it difficult, after an academic preparation, to adapt their ideas to craft or agricultural work in which their intelligence and abilities could be in demand; many, in consequence, are believed to remain unemployed. The Government have long been aware of this anomaly. They have equipped all new Government Secondary schools with workshops for metalwork and woodwork and practical rooms for home economics; a few schools are already teaching agriculture. Teacher training is in progress for fuller expansion of such facilities.

25. Meanwhile, training facilities are being expanded also to equip young people for work in Trinidad and Tobago or for success in emigration.

² Third Five Year Plan IX, Paragraph 25.

³ Ibid IX Table I.

⁴ Ibid IX Paragraph 11.

⁵ Draft Plan for Educational Development, Tables before Appendix I.

26. An "emergency" training programme, offering 120 hours' training spread over some months in various trades, mainly in preparation for employment in building work, has enrolled almost a thousand young people.

27. Four trade centres will soon be enrolling students for longer courses (600 hours' related instruction) aimed to produce "assistant craftsmen", i.e. workers able to undertake certain parts of a craftsman's work under the supervision of a qualified man.

28. Establishments, both in the private and public sectors, are responding to the Prime Minister's appeal to extend facilities for in-plant training and apprenticeship. The Federation of Chambers of Industry and Commerce has begun special courses of training to equip craftsmen with teaching skills so that they can be called upon instructors.

29. Workshops are completing their equipment, and full-time instructors have been appointed to the four Youth Camps so far in operation, with some five hundred young men enrolled. Work will soon begin on the construction of a fifth camp for three hundred girls. The World Food Programme is providing the camps with over nine hundred tons of foodstuffs, valued at over \$TT600,000, and the Food and Agricultural Organisation is helping with advice on diet, and provision of educational courses in nutrition, through the services of an associate expert in nutrition and home economics. An ILO consultant is in Trinidad at the request of the Government to advise on policy for a placement service, to train staff for it, to arrange liaison with employers, government departments and other agencies concerned with possible work outlets and to develop publicity. He is also assisting with the orientation courses for instructors of the youth camps. The Regional Community Development Adviser of the United Nations Office of Technical Cooperation has been advising generally on the camps and has organised a follow-up survey to show the work entered by about 300 boys who have so far completed their training.

30. Some young men trained in Youth Camps are amongst those benefiting from a substantial 'Crown Lands Settlement' programme, with which the United Nations Development is assisting. It is planned ultimately to establish 1800 farm units on 12,000 acres of Crown Land.

31. All these forms of training are open to young people with very limited academic qualifications. For those with greater school achievement, training at craft, potential foreman and technician level continues at three well-established training institutions in the island.

32. Meanwhile, a National Training Board has been established, not merely to lay down policy and provide for supervision of training, but to coordinate the efforts of the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, and Labour, and the Department of Community Development and Youth Affairs in their different fields of responsibility for training.

33. It is not enough for facilities for training to be available. It is also necessary for young people to know about them, to be prepared to want to use them and to enter courses for which they are suitable. Within the Education Ministry, approval has been given for the establishment of a vocational guidance unit, charged with the initiation of a programme of vocational guidance in schools. In preparation for the coming school session, fifty teachers have been trained to use part of their time to collect information about work to be done in employment, self-employment and cooperative enterprises; to publish and use this information to help young people to see in what kind of work they can best, or where they need to, use their talents and interests; and to undertake guidance and counselling of young people to the extent possible. The ILO expert on placement services has also assisted with these training programmes.

34. The Government is encouraging initiative and enterprise on the part of young people in creating their own employment, and has provided financial, technical and other assistance to a number of projects. Following a joint mission by the ILO and the Intermediate Technology Group the Government has invited the ILO/UNDP to provide the services of an expert to assist in the development of small business. It encourages and assists handicraft activities based on the numerous community centres, and is providing staff to raise the quality of design and to assist part-time instructors to improve the effectiveness of their work. The ILO has helped with the services of an expert in handicrafts design and marketing over a period of twelve months.

35. In broader issues, through educational programmes and special seminars, Government, religious and private agencies collaborate in many ways to deal with social problems amongst youth. Relevant to this field are the activities of two experts of

the World Health Organisation who are advising on the development of the Government's family planning programme.