

CHAPTER 2

The Determination of Policy

Social development of youth

Young people in many countries suffer from having double standards applied to them. When it suits their elders, young people are expected to act as responsible adults; when this is inconvenient for older members of society, young people are expected to revert to childhood dependence. The dilemma is intensified by the tendency for young people to remain economically dependent on their parents for an increasing number of years while at the same time they are reaching physical maturity earlier. The resultant tension and confusion serve only to reinforce the disillusion of each age-group with the other. In the light of this, whatever resources may become available for the support and social development of youth will depend for their effective disposal on the creation of initial goodwill in both young and old towards each other. Resources donated as conscience money or conceived as a means of "buying off" youthful aspirations will only widen the rift. Young people will not be content to remain indefinitely as political and social eunuchs. Resources must be accumulated in a spirit of mutual help towards the development of society as a whole, with young people as full participants and older people willing to share their grip on control of policy.

When the Seminar came to discuss the social development of youth some time had to be spent in agreeing on a definition of the concept.

The need was recognised of relating the approach to the needs of young people and not to a search for means by which contemporary adults may seek to perpetuate the social system which they now control. The Seminar was reminded in stark terms that social development might involve conceding to young people the right to influence society towards changes of which their elders might not approve. "The right to make mistakes

remains part of the right to be democratically free." The extent to which the social development of young people should proceed within a prescribed social framework would depend on the particular situation of each society. The need should not be overlooked for the inculcation in adults of realistic attitudes towards the potential and achievements of young people.

There was basic agreement that the goals of social development could be set only in relation to each particular society, but that the underlying purpose was to provide in a fast-changing society for the development of each young person for constructive and meaningful participation. The goal of individual development was not incompatible with certain wider issues, such as commitment to a sense of national purpose and the formation of favourable attitudes, enhancing employability and helping towards a satisfactory family life.

Responsibility for making available resources to support the social development of young people should lie with one Ministry and there should be guidance from an inter-Ministerial group. Most delegates felt that the chief agency should be the Ministry of Education. In the words of one participant: "The school has the resources and should do the job." This brusque analysis conforms to the recognised situation in many countries that, in times of rapid social change, the family is no longer adequate as an instrument for the total socialisation of its new members. Hence responsibility devolves on the agency which, after the family, influences young people most: the school. Where formal schooling is not available for all children the socialising process may be taken over by youth workers, voluntary organisations, the mass media or peer groups. Not all of these agencies are always beneficial.

Assuming that educational facilities, in the broadest sense, are available, then resources should be channelled through them, in terms of finance, manpower and organisation. The amount of government investment in human resources already runs at a very high level in most Commonwealth countries. A balanced educational system, sensitive to the felt needs of young people, could best co-ordinate and support programmes for social development. The example of Ceylon offered itself, where a broadly based educational system, decentralised so that each unit bases itself squarely in the community which it is serving, can act as the centre for a wide-range of out-of-school activities, and can even think in terms of generating additional resources through promoting the local production of useful, worthwhile and acceptable

goods .

The desirability of centralising the administration of finance and organisation for the social development of youth was emphasised. Some delegates felt that the responsibility should be entrusted to the national education system, even though all resources need not necessarily originate from that quarter. Finance might well be drawn from earnings, local commerce and industry, or international aid; individual volunteers and voluntary bodies should be drawn into assistance with organisation, and not least among this personnel should be young people themselves. The recently-formed Malaysian National Youth Consultative Council provides a worthy example of a government responding to the desire of young people to influence decisions which will affect their future. Through such participation social development policy and practice may be guided by those most concerned. Not all countries yet recognise the need for positive measures to further social development, and many demands compete for official resources. The primary need in such cases is for an effective case to be made for action, the resulting programme being constructed to encourage contribution and participation from the widest possible range of sources.

The effectiveness of any programme depends primarily on the quality of the personnel who come into direct relationships with young people, that is, teachers and youth workers. Concern was expressed at the apparent decline in the status of teachers at a time when society expects ever more from them, although, of course, the complicated nature of the problem was recognised. Teacher-training institutions not infrequently come at the end of the educational queue for money, equipment and recruits, for example, while older teachers often resist change for fear that educational developments might render them obsolete and unemployed. The re-establishment of teachers in terms of social prestige is an essential factor towards their improved effectiveness and involvement. Examples exist of efforts to enhance the status of teachers through systems of awards and national days: India is among the foremost in this endeavour. The importance of realistic salary structures for teachers and youth workers should not be minimised, for two reasons: salary bestows status and salary attracts a particular level of recruit.

The Seminar welcomed the suggestion that the Commonwealth Secretariat should organise a conference to con-

sider the whole area of teacher preparation.* Teacher education was basic to efficient systems of formal education, as was leadership training to less formal areas of education. Leaders operated at different levels, each of which required appropriate types of training related directly to the context in which the trainees could expect to operate. "Leadership" covered such a wide range of functions that closer definition of the term should be made for each set of circumstances. Training methods for leaders were better based on practical experience than formal instruction. More efficient and economic systems of training might include an expanded but discriminating use of the newer media. The need for follow-up and later retraining was an essential factor for ensuring continuing effectiveness and relevance of leaders.

Employment of youth

(a) Resources for the creation of employment opportunities

Current fashion attributes to education an important role in the creation of unemployment. Ill-attuned to contemporary vocational needs, educational systems are accused of producing unemployable young people, disoriented and disgruntled. In theory the argument might be sustained for gearing educational opportunity to anticipated absorption by various sectors of the economy. The fallibility of manpower plans and the growth of political consciousness, however, rule this out as a practical programme. Governments, therefore, have to seek resources on a great and growing scale for the creation of employment opportunities to absorb as high a proportion as possible of the working-age population.

The dilemma of the developing countries is that their economies are based on the sale on the international market of primary products, the price of which they have been unable, so far, to control. In general they have limited reserves, limited local capital available for investment, and a tax structure inadequate for development on a scale commensurate with the needs of development.

The Seminar considered the patterns of world trade especially as they affect developing countries, which rely upon

* The Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee at its meeting on 7 September, 1971, agreed that the topic for the next Commonwealth Specialist Conference, projected for early 1973, should be "Teacher Education".

the world markets for adequate prices for their unprocessed primary products. Although local processing can help to create employment some countries have found traditional buyers unwilling to accept produce if even the first stages of processing have been completed in the countries of origin. The disproportionate effect on the economies of countries such as Ceylon or Malaysia occasioned by quite small fluctuations in world prices for tea or rubber were cited as typical examples of the dilemma. The solution may lie in part in a more concerted approach to buyers by primary producing countries, as well as in continued efforts to diversify production within each country. The potential role of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation in the field of export promotion was described and delegates welcomed its inauguration.

(i) Financial resources

Financial resources for the creation of employment opportunities cannot be envisaged as exclusively a national responsibility, although a helpful climate can be created through such measures as tax relief, farm subsidies and pioneer status for rural or small industries. Care should be taken to avoid the situation, not uncommon in recent years, in which such concessions have encouraged the promotion of unduly capital-intensive enterprises.

The relationship of international aid to development and employment opportunity gives rise to much controversy. The Seminar agreed that in principle the untying of aid (a topic considered in detail in the Pearson Report*) would very probably exert a direct and beneficial effect on the number of employment opportunities in the developing countries, and that in the long run this would be also to the benefit of the richer countries. The Seminar, however, recognised that this principle has to operate within the context of political feasibility. Some anomalies in the present aid situation were recalled, such as the fact that very few aid donors find it possible to commit in any one year all the funds earmarked for this purpose. Two major reasons which appeared to account for this were the receipt of an insufficient number of acceptable submissions to donor countries, and the increasing reluctance of some developing countries to subscribe to the conditions accompanying tied aid.

* Lester B. Pearson (ed): Partners in Development, London, Pall Mall Press, 1970.

Resources in terms of money should be sought from as wide a range of potential contributors as possible, from local earnings and local capital supplemented by overseas capital and international aid.

(ii) Manpower resources

Manpower for the creation of additional employment opportunity, like the necessary money, must be sought on both the national and international market. Local skills will need the reinforcement of imported expertise. The need is particularly great for the production of technical teacher-trainers, without whom no programme of technical and vocational training can hope to reach its potential of efficiency. Local skills, however, should not be neglected and should be sought especially among craftsmen and small-scale entrepreneurs who are not conventionally classed as educators. Master craftsmen and master farmers have already made a successful contribution to job creation through apprenticeship schemes in a number of countries and expansion should be possible.

(iii) Organisational resources

Programmes for development must rest finally with national governments, but for their implementation central authorities should rely heavily on participation by voluntary organisations, trade and commercial bodies, and on young people themselves. The work of creating job opportunities and implementing programmes in itself provides jobs at a number of levels. Representative bodies with executive powers within the overall plan can provide both hope and dignity for those involved.

(b) Improving employment prospects for young people

The marshalling of resources provides the necessary material with which to build a structure of employment, but it is only the beginning. The situation in any country is extremely complex. In New Guinea and Hong Kong, for example, young people leaving school frequently find themselves precluded from employment because of legislation which lays down a minimum age for young workers. In many countries, girls have to choose between a few opportunities traditionally allocated to females, or work in the home. The practical problem of wage-structures, too, exacerbates the situation. It is not unusual to find in a developing country a ratio between highest and lowest wages of 20:1, where a healthy ratio is deemed to be about 6 or 7:1. The

cost of government employees' pension schemes may run at ten times that government's investment in an employment programme. Young people view this with resentment. The social and economic health of a number of countries rests in the altruism with which governments approach the problem of creating employment opportunities.

The development of suitable technologies can play a valuable part in increasing employment. Such technology must be related directly to the level and needs of each society. Dangers are inherent both in excessive concentration on capital-intensive technology and in uncritical acceptance of labour-intensive processes. Machines are neutral. Their usefulness lies in their selective application to ensure, in the context of the developing countries, maximum efficiency commensurate with maximum labour absorption. The work of bodies such as the Intermediate Technology Development Group has much to offer. Universities should be urged to concentrate their powerful research facilities on the development of intermediate technology and the search for means to increase job opportunities.

Self-employment offers many possibilities and merits much more attention. The modest achievements in this sphere so far serve to highlight the lack of entrepreneurial skills in many developing countries. The Seminar suggested that the Commonwealth Secretariat should identify instances of the successful training and establishment of entrepreneurs and circulate resulting information widely. The need for managerial training was recognised as a potential direct contribution to promoting employment opportunities. The service occupations, too, seem to offer one area of potential employment which could grow quickly in many developing countries.

There was general agreement on the desirability of involving industry in skills training. The difficulties in this were fully appreciated: small family businesses are reluctant to accept apprentices from among general applicants, companies are reluctant to spend money on the training of employees who then leave to offer their newly-acquired skills elsewhere. Some form of inducement payments to firms might be necessary, and reluctance on the part of trades unions might have to be overcome. Nevertheless, the undertaking of training by industry was seen as a social responsibility not to be avoided.

The Seminar considered the merits of tourism as a source of employment and of foreign exchange. The experience

of some countries has not been entirely happy and those now embarking on tourist programmes could well benefit from lessons learned by others. The recent Commonwealth Secretariat report on the development of the tourist industry in Commonwealth countries was noted. Several major problems were cited. In some countries tourism has generated jobs only at the lowest level; countries should try to ensure for their nationals the opportunity for posts at all levels. In some cases "package tours" have resulted in countries experiencing all the disadvantages of disruption of their traditional ways without commensurate benefits by way of a significant influx of foreign exchange. In some instances the inflow of foreign exchange is illusory; if food and other goods are not produced locally and have to be imported to cater for the tourist trade then little net profit tends to accrue in terms of convertible currency.

(c) Training programmes for young people

Education and training for young people should not be planned on too short a time scale. Programmes tailored too closely to immediate needs may overlook the long-term need to provide for retraining as technology and employment patterns change. Nevertheless, immediate needs cannot be overlooked. Manpower surveys, for example, have a useful role to play when strategies are to be reassessed, even though the limitations of such surveys are not to be overlooked. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation may provide a useful source for the organisation of manpower surveys as well as for ongoing evaluation and revision of existing surveys. This work can lead to a more effective system of technical education, geared to the production of technically trained young people with skills directly related to opportunities in the modern sector but with sufficient basic understanding to be able to benefit from additional training or retraining.

Training programmes intended to have a significant impact on the employment situation would need to be organised on a scale greater than that considered adequate so far. They would need to be designed as part of a comprehensive attack on unemployment through properly planned youth mobilisation schemes linked to national development plans and operated under high-level administrative control. Vocational training, youth services, settlement schemes and other training enterprises conducted in a vacuum can be at best temporary palliatives. They may even exacerbate the situation if young people, having given their time to such training, find themselves still without a satisfying occupation at the end of it.

The most encouraging area for growth in employment opportunities is in rural-based activities. In most Asian countries only 10%-12% of the GNP is derived from the industrial sector, and it is unrealistic to anticipate the absorption of more than 15% to 20% of the labour force in this sector. If, however, young people can be induced to assist in the development of an efficient infrastructure in less urbanised areas, the prospects would be brighter. The development of medium-sized "market" towns, smaller than the cities but with many of the amenities, could transform the situation in many countries. They would attract labour-intensive, locally-oriented light industries, provide the service base necessary for improved agriculture, obviate the necessity to migrate to distant cities in order to enjoy the attractions of urban life, and provide a ready market for local agricultural produce. The prospects of self-employment, too, would be greatly enhanced. In many countries the appeal to young people to return to the land will be ignored while the disparity between the known disadvantages of rural existence and the supposed attractions of the town remain so great. One solution may be "to take the town to the countryside" and train young people for the new needs of the community.

The relationship between training and employment prospects should be that of mutual reinforcement within a national policy. Untrained youngsters may not be able to take advantage of potential opportunities; on the other hand, opportunities may not exist until their possibility is recognised by the trained observer. In the modern sector much closer links need to be established between industry and education, as, for example, in Singapore, where firms are committed to absorbing the output of technical training courses and providing further training.

Enhancing the status of rural occupations

The status of rural occupations will rise only when the rewards can be equated with those obtainable elsewhere. Exhortations about the essential dignity of labour and the merit of all honest work have fallen on deaf ears for at least a century and a half in Commonwealth countries. They will continue to do so when the visible evidence confounds the oral assurance.

Status is increasingly related to income. Raising the status of rural occupations would involve raising the income-level and the material conditions enjoyed by those engaged in them. Other endeavours must be considered as, at best, reinforcement and subsidiary to this main requirement. A few

hopeful signs can be seen, such as a slight but perceptible change of status in some areas since the Green Revolution, with some prominent men moving into rural areas.

A number of activities can be instituted to reinforce the effort to raise income-levels. Among these there may be included assistance to improved production, storage and marketing techniques; the injection of substantial capital, especially through loan finance; the provision of a broadly based infrastructure of services; and the rationalisation of land tenure. Other activities directed towards the improvement of status and the rural dweller's self-image could include the use of the mass media (as in the Indian Radio Rural Forum), the regular inclusion in national honours lists of agricultural workers, and the organisation of high-quality exhibitions and shows.

In terms of direct action for and by young people, Young Farmers' Clubs commend themselves, both as sources of training and leadership, and also as suitable bases for co-operative activities. (Much useful information could be exchanged on factors affecting the success of different types of co-operatives.)

Opinion is divided about means by which young people in rural areas might be given equality of educational opportunity, an important consideration in raising the status of those areas. Positive discrimination in favour of rural children appeared to be an over-simplistic and essentially inefficient system. Existing concentration in textbooks on the urban environment could be seriously challenged. Means to ensure the posting of high-quality staff into rural schools would bear investigation once more, possibly in the context of bonus payments or notional additions to years of service for promotion purposes.

In this connection, the Seminar welcomed the possibility that the Commonwealth Secretariat might undertake research and organise meetings on the increasingly important topics of testing, measurement and selection processes.

Control and co-ordination of youth programmes

The Seminar agreed that national governments must accept responsibility and play a decisive role at the level of general policy. One principle which adduced much support was that governments should provide the general framework for the system, within which non-government organisations could operate with maximum flexibility and freedom. The government was

recognised as the best agency for co-ordinating and integrating national youth policies and programmes, once these had been formulated in full co-operation with the communities and groups (including young people themselves) who would be involved in their implementation. Such a national machinery should be built so as to make possible swift adjustment to change in social and economic patterns, and should provide for the direct access of its representatives to points of political power and decision-making across the range of Ministerial responsibilities. This is vital at both planning and administrative levels.

Youth programmes not infrequently break down at the level of local administration and implementation. Planning should take into account the need to ensure effective follow-through right down the line. Malaysia, Ceylon and India have each well-developed structures for planning and administration of several youth programmes, although it is yet too early fully to evaluate them. They have arisen out of each country's growing experience, and have been planned to fit within the social and governmental context of each country. Their continuing experience and later evaluation will be of immense benefit to other countries in the earlier stages of developing such organisational arrangements. Facilities should be provided for national leaders to be kept abreast of developments and opinions in the youth field.

The particular advantages of non-governmental agencies were listed. Among activities mentioned as best undertaken by such agencies were religious education, sporting and cultural activities, experimental projects, and the promotion of means by which young people and their views might be brought into the public arena. Finally, a familiar philosophical point was raised as to how far recently independent countries in developing their structures are doomed to repeat the blunders of other countries and how far the experiences of others can be of value in accelerating smooth progress. This in turn indicated the need for efficient methods of evaluating programmes, adequate systems for which did not appear to exist yet. It was pointed out that continuous evaluation was necessary and that in developing programmes adequate arrangements should be made for building in evaluative procedures rather than embarking on assessment as an after-thought. It was suggested that the Commonwealth Secretariat had a valuable role to play in the evaluation of programmes and it was strongly recommended that the Secretariat should produce a basic, practical handbook on methods of evaluating youth programmes.

Co-ordination of programmes will be facilitated primarily by the production of a national policy within which each agency can recognise a precise function. Having thus established the strategy, ongoing supervision can be exercised best by a genuinely representative and executive National Youth Council. The bodies now established in Malaysia commend themselves as examples of an attempt to involve young people in directing the policy of the organisations which are designed to serve them.