

Educational planning and unemployed youth in Africa

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EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND UNEMPLOYED YOUTH IN AFRICA

Summary

During the 1960s almost all African nations placed high priority on rapid expansion of their systems of formal education as instruments of social and economic change. It soon became evident that this rapid expansion of school facilities and enrolments, especially at the lower levels of education, was leading to a major dilemma of absorbing educated youth into productive work once they had completed their schooling. Open unemployment among these young people has now become a central concern of Governments and people.

Lack of employment opportunities in any society is usually taken as an index that something is radically wrong with the design of the economy. In exactly the same way, open and persistent unemployment among school leavers in African nations represents a commentary on the directions and the style of development being pursued.

It is clear that adjustments within education - whether in-school or out-of-school - by themselves cannot solve the problem of jobless educated youth. These adjustments will have to occur as complementary to substantial revisions in the functioning of the economy. Severe, even drastic, modifications in existing economic arrangements are being called for. In this process, more employment opportunities would be available. At the same time, alterations in the priorities and in the curricula of education of all kinds would be required to make sure that they accord more closely with local realities.

The approaches to meeting the employment needs of educated youth may be, thus, (a) to make widespread changes in the economy; or (b) to alter the amounts and the nature of education, both formal and out-of-school; or - more appropriately - (c) to follow a strategy that involves the creation of more productive work opportunities (by including people everywhere, young and adult, more effectively within designs for national economic progress) together with adjustments in education of all levels and types.

It is the purpose of this paper to indicate the main lines of the problem of unemployed educated youth; to suggest the options in economic and educational policies to deal with this problem; to explore the significance of educational planning of both formal and out-of-school education, and within this, the significance of vocation-oriented education for young people.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND UNEMPLOYED YOUTH IN AFRICA

Archibald Callaway

PART I: UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG EDUCATED YOUTH

1. The problem in outline

Within low-income nations of Africa, attention is being focused on widespread and growing unemployment among young people. Most of these job-seeking youth have attended schools for varying lengths of time, but they cannot find work which matches their aspirations or their potential abilities. Largely a phenomenon of the last decade, this type of open unemployment has tended to be cumulative: each year the numbers of uncommitted youth have grown. Thousands of unemployed have increased to tens of thousands.

Among economists, recognition has now come that concentration on raising growth rates of per capita income is not enough; development designs for the 1970s must also include strategies for creating productive work for the vast numbers of unemployed and underemployed. For those concerned with education, a similar turning point in ideas has occurred. The continued expansion of formal education along existing lines is no longer considered adequate. Questions are being asked: How can education systems be geared more closely to economic and social realities? In particular, what types of education have a more direct effect on generating employment on a wide scale?

While economies have been growing at fairly high rates, they have not been developing in directions which open up anywhere near enough job opportunities to absorb the large numbers of educated young people arriving each year to join the labour force.

Compounding the problem has been the dramatic acceleration in population growth. Over the past two decades the wider dissemination of modern health education and services has reduced infant mortality and prolonged the life span of adults; in only a few countries has a compensating attempt been made to lower the birth rate. The strain of sheer numbers can be seen not only in the rising numbers of unemployed but also in the tightening land supply and increasing poverty in some rural areas, the worsening slum conditions in cities, jammed urban transport systems, over-crowded hospitals and child-care clinics, the inability of governments to meet the popular demand for more schools and universities.

In many countries the rapid extension of formal education has itself been a significant factor in the growth of youth unemployment. This vigorous

expansion took place in line with the generally-held belief that massive increases in education would help to generate economic growth. Gradually it became revealed that large numbers of young people completing different stages of schooling were not finding work that represented a reasonable payoff for the years spent in classrooms. In tropical Africa, by the early 1960s school leavers were unable to secure the kind of jobs they hoped for; now in some countries secondary school leavers experience similar conditions. Throughout Africa, governments have become alert to what appears to be a major imbalance between expanding systems of education and malfunctioning economies.

This situation is described as "open unemployment among school leavers", "graduates without jobs", or "surplus youth". What meaning do these phrases have for educational planners? Can unemployment of educated youth be solved (or partly solved) by cutting back education at the appropriate levels and thus not producing "surpluses"? Or is this condition the result, as is sometimes claimed, of the "wrong" kinds of education - for example, too much rote learning of dead facts rather than learning, say, rural skills? Or will the employment problem solve itself in the long term without taking any specific action?

It is sometimes maintained that there can never be an oversupply of educated youth. Obviously a society is better off the more people it has who can read and write and who have learned more advanced ways of doing things. This argument cannot easily be sustained, however, when considering the optimum management of the nation's scarce resources for development. Education is expensive and the more a nation spends on its schools and universities, the less there is for building roads and dams, putting up factories, and improving agriculture. Part of the reason why employment opportunities are lacking may well be, therefore, that the resources which could create more jobs have been pre-empted for education. Again, no longer is it assumed that education (even the "right" kinds of education) by itself creates economic growth. Now it is more fully recognized that the greater the investment in the formal education of a person, the greater the requirements of complementary investment in other factors to get the school leaver (or university graduate) started in a productive vocation - and this means financial capital, whether from public or private sources.

For the educational planner, then, questions of resource use become even more vital against the background of mounting unemployment among educated youth. How high a proportion of national resources can reasonably be spent on education? Are the priorities within education consistent with national interests? How can existing programmes be operated with greater efficiency? Also significant is the relevance of classroom education to the society in which pupils will have to build their careers: modifications in expensive formal education may be called for. And, too, there may now be required greater emphasis on out-of-school education more closely attuned to the economic scene: farm extension, on-the-job training, functional literacy programmes.

While certain principles can be discerned relating the problem of youth unemployment to educational planning, there is clearly no blue-print that can assist all countries. The magnitude and distinctive kinds of unemployment differ in each country according to the level and pace of the individual economy, the rate of population growth in relation to resources, the historical development of the educational system, the particular social and political framework. Planners in each country will have to examine their

own unique situation. By identifying the employment problem, analyzing its relation to the education system and the economy, they can determine policy options. The problem can be alleviated only from within.

2. Its extent and seriousness

In most African countries educated youth account for half to three-quarters, at least, of those openly unemployed. Evidence of the growing numbers of these jobless youth may be gleaned from various sources; statements by responsible policy makers, labour exchanges vastly overcrowded with young registrants, employers requiring higher qualifications for many jobs.

While the problem is widely recognized, statistical assessments of the extent of unemployment among educated youth (and even more so, of the underutilization of human resources generally) are difficult to achieve. For example, those school leavers who remain in villages and rural towns are often only partly committed to work, justifying their living costs by helping at peak periods of the year on the family farm or in a local workshop. Quoted numbers normally refer only to the openly unemployed in urban areas. These recorded statistics do not reveal the difficulties of (a) those who are employed part-time, usually as a means of helping to pay for personal living costs, while they seek work with better prospects, (b) those fully employed but below their present capabilities and with little chance of developing their talents later, and (c) those insecurely employed. Also, girls and young women, who have attended schools and are without jobs, are sometimes not recorded as unemployed unless they have additional specific qualifications: for example, as teachers, nurses, secretaries.

For policy purposes it is important that each country should know more about the numbers and also the characteristics of these job-seeking youth: ages and education, positions in families, background and living conditions, migratory movements, aspirations, periods unemployed, as well as incidence of unemployment in different parts of the country.

Out of every 1,000 who reach a standard of permanent literacy in primary schools, only 10 to 20 per cent go on to secondary schooling. At the end of the primary stage, thus, 800 to 900 seek work. Those who come from rural areas and farming families often reject the occupations of their parents. They feel (and their families usually support them) that their schooling has fitted them for tasks with better prospects. Many migrate to stay with relatives in towns and cities and hope that with persistence they will get wage-paid jobs. They are now able to read and write in the national language, to deal with numbers of a reasonable complexity, but they have no particular vocational skills to offer an employer. Many of them hope to find an attachment which gives them training on the job and develops their potential skills. But very few jobs are available and competition is intense. And so, many remain without work for long periods.

How do the employment difficulties of these school leavers differ from those who never went to school at all? Those without formal schooling usually follow the occupations of their parents or relatives and learn on the job from an early age. Their world is thus circumscribed, their possibilities for choice are limited, and for the most part they lack the confidence to search for jobs in the modernizing economy. In most cases they have few hopes of breaking away from the certainty of a life-time of poverty.

While in most countries primary school leavers and dropouts from the early years of secondary schools make up the great bulk of the unemployed, increasingly secondary school graduates are noted among the jobless. In a few countries, graduates from universities now have to make a prolonged effort to get jobs which seem to them to match their qualifications. The indications for the years ahead are that graduates will have to accept jobs with lesser starting salaries and slower chances for promotion, and secondary school leavers, too, will need to lower their expectations.

To complete the educational picture, there are the highly-educated: those with advanced degrees in various professions, who in recent years have been leaving their home countries in greater numbers for economically advanced countries where they find positions with better salaries and more favourable conditions of work and living. While these medical doctors and "Ph.D.s" are very few in proportion to total numbers seeking jobs, their migration makes a particularly poignant comment on the difficulties many countries have in harnessing their educational progress to national economic and social development.

The employment problems of the educated, then, appear to run the whole length of the educational system's outputs with clusters at different levels and types for different countries. The incidence and intensity of unemployment vary according to the facilities for education and also, in some measure, on varied cultural settings - on the strength of family life and the continuity of family association between rural and urban areas. But though these variations do exist, there is nevertheless one element constant: the educational systems are not sufficiently in harmony with the abilities of the economies to absorb educated youth in productive work. Education, thus, is still far from making the contribution that it could make to development.

It has been said that unemployment of young educated people is not so serious, that in time they will find something to do. But, for the following reasons, this condition of widespread youth unemployment must be considered of critical importance.

(a) The numbers of educated youth without jobs are already considerable and are continuing to grow. The condition is not correcting itself and, in fact, in the immediate future may grow worse.

(b) Such unemployment has a high social and economic cost. Those not working reduce the standard of living and the potential savings of family members who are. And for the nation, heavy expenditures of scarce public resources (as well as private funds) have been devoted to the education of these youth. When development is urgently being sought, unemployment means a tragic waste of human resources.

(c) Given that the distribution of income and property is unequal in most developing nations, unemployment of this magnitude accentuates these inequalities by pressing down wages and earnings of the self-employed. The situation within countries thus tends to polarize: "The rich get richer, while the poor get poorer."

(d) Too great an exodus of educated youth from rural areas can lower farm production and retard agricultural modernization. So long as rural areas are depressed, then there is a powerful stimulus for young people to go to cities. Since cities and towns cannot absorb them into meaningful employment, education merely converts underemployment of the countryside to the open unemployment of the cities.

(e) Too rapid an influx into cities brings strain on municipal water supplies, sanitation, transport systems, community health services, housing - sometimes leading to urban squalor and shanty towns. Governments are then pressed to provide vast expenditures on amenities, which may further widen the contrast between rural and urban development. Many cities are presently growing at 6, 8, and even 10 per cent net increase in population each year.

(f) When unemployment stretches over a long period with consequent insecurity, there follows the threat of increasing juvenile delinquency and crime, physical ill health, mental disturbance, and resort to drugs. 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 youthful unemployed present a distinct threat to national stability and thus risk the success of programmes for national economic development.

3. Causes

(a) Accelerated growth of populations

Throughout the 1950s, the rate of population growth increased steadily until in the mid-1960s it levelled off at an average of 2.5 per cent. In contrast, the average annual rate at present for industrialized countries is not much above one per cent.

Where an annual increase of 2.5 per cent is maintained, the population will double every 28 years; and the number of entrants to the labour force, after the appropriate interval, will also double. With an annual increase of 3 per cent, the time span is shortened to 23 years.

With such high rates of population growth, 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, shelter, health, education, and so on. This means that less national resources are available for expanding the economy and providing more useful jobs.

(b) Rapid expansion of formal education

During the period from 1950 to 1965 enrolments at the three main levels of educational systems in Africa nearly tripled. The following table gives comparisons with other regions of the world.

Average Annual Rate of Growth in Primary and Secondary School Enrolments, 1950-1965

	Primary	Secondary*
Developing countries	6.8	9.0
Africa	7.8	9.4
South Asia	7.0	7.5
East Asia	4.8	11.7
Middle East	8.5	13.4
Latin America	5.4	9.6
Southern Europe	3.0	8.1
Industrialized countries	1.8	6.0

* Total enrolment in middle-level general, technical, and teacher-training institutions.

There is still a long distance to go towards universal primary education. Today in Africa only some 40 per cent of school-age children attend school. (In Latin America, 50 to 60 per cent; in Asia, 50 to 60 per cent.)

The period of unprecedented educational expansion did bring with it difficulties - some predicted, others not adequately foreseen. In some countries, the sharp rise in educational costs went far beyond the figures estimated and, in some cases, fees had to be re-introduced after being abolished and other cuts had to be made. On the average, the share of national budgets now being devoted to education amounts to 16 per cent. A number of countries allocate as high as 25 per cent of their government expenditure to education. Between 1960 and 1965 the annual rate of growth of educational expenditure in Africa was 16 per cent. The average amount being spent on education comes to around 4 per cent of national income.

Another serious result of such rapid expansion was, in many countries, a drastic fall in the quality of education. Criticisms were levelled that children completing the new primary schools were not even reaching a level of permanent literacy. There were many reasons contributing to such disappointing results - over-crowding in schools with as many as 50 pupils in a class, poor supervision of teachers, lack of textbooks and other materials; but the main reason was the shortage of trained teachers. Training colleges were unable to keep up with the demand and so untrained teachers were brought into schools. Now in many countries a period of consolidation is taking place with emphasis on upgrading the abilities of teachers, improving school administrations, and providing essential basic materials - thus trying to improve standards on a variety of fronts.

Inefficiencies have been revealed. Perhaps the most awkward one now confronting educational administrators is the high number of dropouts. Children start school and then after a few years fade away. In African countries as a whole, only 30 children out of an initial 100 stay the course and complete primary schooling. This represents an enormous waste of financial resources with little, if any, benefit to the children so briefly exposed to numbers and letters. In some places the early years of schooling are free, with progressive fees being introduced at later stages; here children of poor parents are unable to continue. In other places parents do not value formal education highly or are not aware of the need for sustained schooling through the complete first phase; children are entered and then withdrawn as soon as they are strong enough or grown-up enough to help with adult occupations. Whatever the causes, and there are many local variations, this condition of such high proportions of dropouts urgently requires investigation and some approaches for solving the financial waste and the human problems which it presents.

Priorities have been questioned in many countries. Where concentration of resources, both financial and administrative, went into the huge enlargement of primary schooling, often the neglected sector turned out to be technical education at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

The most generally-noted shortage has been that of intermediate skills - medical technicians, nurses, agricultural assistants - the auxiliaries needed in so many fields to carry through directives from professionals. In some countries, educational institutions are lacking to train this range of middle-level skills. In other countries, the shortage

results not from lack of training facilities but because of wide discrepancy between income incentives; students compete to gain the extra years of higher professional training because their life earnings might be as much as ten times as high. Here the problem is not one of educational planning but of incomes policy.

By far the most serious problem, however, has been the emergence of widespread unemployment among school leavers. It might be argued that this lack of jobs has more to do with the malfunctioning of economics than with an unbalanced enlargement of education. The question would then be asked: why are there not more jobs available for those who complete the different levels of education?

(c) Economic growth but few jobs

African countries reveal wide diversity in demographic conditions, available natural resources and economic performances. Populations range in size from Nigeria with 67 million, to Gambia with less than one million. In some countries, settlement of families on cultivable land is intense; in others, sparse. Foreign trade is a vital generator of activity in most economies. The extent and pace of industrial progress varies and so, too, the range of improvement in production and living arrangements in the countryside. Some nations have experienced administrators; others have drastic shortages of trained manpower. Illiteracy is much more prevalent in some countries than in others. Some nations have shared more fully in the accelerated schooling and university education of recent years. Nations also have their own values, religions, deriving from unique historical circumstances, which contribute in guiding the style of development.

Yet within this diversity there are common elements. Average incomes per person are relatively low when compared with those in today's industrialized countries. At this stage of progress, the relatively few high-productivity, high-wage establishments stand out markedly against the background of the many low-productivity, low-income family farms and other small-scale enterprises. The typical economic unit is still the modest family farm, and along with it, the stall in the market, the small transport business, the craft or small industrial workshop.

During the period since 1950 annual rates of economic growth have averaged around 4.5 per cent, but with populations increasing at the high rate of 2.5 per cent the rise in income per person has been held down correspondingly. This economic performance compares well with rates of growth achieved by industrialized countries during the same period; however, population increase in these countries was not much above 1 per cent and thus the increase in per capita income has been higher.

Why has economic growth not opened up profitable job opportunities on a wider scale? The answer can be found in the nature of the development process. Labour absorption of major modern and semi-modern establishments is limited: in the civil service, large industries, the principal commercial and transport enterprises. Governments usually account for as many as 40 per cent of all wage-paid jobs but the rate of recruitment of new junior staff - set by the tasks ahead, the restraints of the budget, the rate of retirement, and the replacement of foreign staff - is slow relative to the number of youthful applicants.

While headway has been made in setting up new industries, the number of workers employed is still proportionately low. Large industry is usually capital-intensive and in developing countries does not normally account for the employment of more than 5 to 8 per cent of the gainfully-employed labour force. Moreover, as output rises, a less than proportionate increase in wage-paid jobs takes place - because of the use of advanced labour-saving technology and improvements in organization.

Let us assume that 5 per cent of the labour force works within modern industrial units and that the output of these industries expands by 10 per cent each year. The requirements for more wage-paid industrial employees are likely to rise at about half this rate, namely 5 per cent. This means that the annual increase in employment would be only one-quarter of one per cent of the total labour force. And a consistent annual rise of 10 per cent in industrial output is greater than many African countries experience. Large capital-intensive industry, thus, cannot be expected to become a substantial absorber of labour for a long period ahead - decades.

Again, so far as rising agricultural output is achieved through labour-saving technology, then the same principle holds as for industry - a less than proportionate gain in jobs. And so long as the rural areas suffer from their characteristic malaise and do not provide work with future prospects on or off the farms, many young people - particularly those who have attended schools - will continue to migrate to try their fortune in the cities.

Besides the high capital intensity of much new investment, a further cause of unemployment is the urban-rural imbalance and with it the widening division between average incomes and living conditions between those who are working in urban and rural areas. This does not mean that all family incomes in cities are uniformly high while those in villages are all extremely low - only that those in cities fortunate enough to have steady jobs usually gain substantially higher rewards than those with jobs or self-employed in rural areas. Trade union strength contributes to the upward pressure of money wage rates in the cities greatly out of proportion to rates of return on farms and in family enterprises in villages. A side effect of this upward move of money wages is to encourage modern and semi-modern firms to substitute capital for labour wherever technically and economically feasible, thereby eliminating jobs that would otherwise be available.

In the distribution of amenities, cities are favoured all down the line: more and better education facilities, hospitals, and health services; cleaner and more regular water supplies; more modern and better-maintained market stalls, bridges, roads. New industries are almost invariably clustered near or in cities. This bias supporting urban areas to the disadvantage of rural areas is often set in motion by powerful political lobbies, especially articulate and well-placed in the cities.

Such overemphasis on urban development attracts a dynamic movement of population from the countryside much greater than requirements for labour and eventually greater than the capacities of cities to provide even minimum living conditions. And thus today in many cities vast numbers of people live in poverty more stark than the subsistence conditions in rural areas where some support may come from family ties and claims on land.

In some nations obstacles to migration present a further cause of unemployment among educated youth. Failure to remove political, ethnic, and religious barriers results in youth with surplus skills in one area unable to move freely to another area where there is a deficit of such skills. Instances occur in which an apparent excess of secondary school leavers are unemployed in one place while in another such skills are needed - as school teachers or within government, industrial, or commercial service.

Again, relative rewards for work are often extreme in the differences between lowest and highest and also unrelated to national requirements. The situation is familiar in which primary, secondary (including technical institutes), and university graduates receive beginning incomes in the ratio of 10, 180, and 700. In many instances, the incomes pegged for different levels and types of education between and within the public and private sectors are inconsistent with one another. When the step down to the next wage level is considerable, youth understandably will hold out to get the higher return and in the meantime remain unemployed.

In previous strategies for development the possibilities of raising labour utilization have hardly been considered seriously. Rather than being an essential objective, the provision of employment is usually regarded as a by-product of development. Or it is thought of as a social investment (to relieve the worst cases of poverty or to get jobless youth off the streets), yet in conflict with efficiency in achieving the highest national output. It would appear, contrary to expectations, that the greater the extent of progress made in improving the economy (at least for several countries), the greater the incidence of underemployment and of open unemployment. For example, mass production in large factories requiring relatively few employees has often meant reduced demand for the products of craft and small-scale industries situated in rural towns as well as in cities. Underemployment is thereby increased and, along with it, a reduction in the number of apprentice places for boys and girls to learn a trade. Again, the more wage-paid jobs created, particularly through the establishment of new urban-based industries, the greater the move to the cities by educated youth to compete for these opportunities - and, thus, the higher numbers of openly unemployed.

PART II: APPROACHES TO SOLUTIONS

4. Take no action

Because the causes of unemployment are interwoven in complex ways and vary in different countries, the solutions will need to be designed according to national and local situations. The view is sometimes put forward, however, that nothing should be done, that in the long run the problem of jobless educated youth will solve itself. This is argued particularly by those not close to the anxieties of the scene. They say that the aspirations of school leavers are out of alignment with employment opportunities and that, given time and the encounter with realities, these youth will revise their expectations and establish themselves with less-preferred employers or settle within modest, probably rural, family enterprises.

True, some time must elapse for educated youth to adjust to available jobs and for new jobs to be self-created. Evidence shows, however, that this type of unemployment is not self-correcting and that the numbers of jobless become greater each year. In evident frustration, many youth do take up work which does not represent a reasonable payoff from their own or from the national point of view in terms of resources spent on their education.

A variant of this view is that school leavers are often too young, too lazy, or too inexperienced. Such an opinion may have merit in particular circumstances but it can be demonstrated from practical experience that most educated youth from diverse family backgrounds and cultures, when provided with suitable training and work opportunities, do work hard to win their way forward according to their innate talents.

Related to this are the despairing cries: "School leavers don't want to work with their hands" and "They want white-collar jobs." Naturally enough, school leavers want the best return they can get and so long as the pay of a clerk is several times greater than that of a labourer on a building site, they will persist in their efforts to become clerks. And if a working life on the family farm or within other village occupations holds out poor prospects, they will shun them. It is no use telling school leavers to "go back to the land" when opportunities, even modest, do not exist.

Again, it is maintained that only in the long term can economic growth provide a wide array of employment opportunities. The "best" course towards maximum economic growth requires the use of the most efficient methods available. This means, for the present, the use of highly capital-intensive, advanced technologies - which are accompanied by relatively few wage-paid jobs. This is an overly-simple view of the development process which, in fact, requires widely different methods of production of goods and services. The economies of scale are by no means always on the side of the large capital-intensive economic unit, industrial or agricultural.

Lastly, it is contended that the more a government tries to do to solve unemployment among educated youth, the more it is required to do: the more jobs created, the greater the numbers of hopeful youth to appear on the scene. Such a situation holds true when major developments are confined to cities but not when efforts are made to balance urban development with improvements in rural work opportunities and living conditions.

The "do nothing" argument cannot be maintained, then, in the face of present urgencies. It is evident that immediate, far-reaching action on many fronts is essential.

5. Reform the economy

Finding suitable work for educated youth is part of the wider concern for the existing unemployed and underemployed: youth and adults, male and female, the educated and those without any formal education, in urban and rural areas. Unemployment among educated youth thus brings to focus the widespread underemployment, characterized by extremely low economic productivity, of much of the labour force - in farming, petty trading, small workshops. At present, 25 to 30 per cent of the labour forces of most African countries are underutilized. For the 1970s no economic issue is more critical than this: the more productive involvement

of more eligible people within the processes of development.

Social and economic objectives are clearly defined by most African countries as the reduction of poverty: the provision, as soon as possible, of acceptable standards of food, health, housing, education - and opportunities for work at decent rewards. In the meantime, immense numbers of potential workers cannot contribute their abilities, not only because jobs do not exist but also because they are poor. They suffer from malnutrition and endemic diseases. Their housing conditions are bleak. Their outlook on the world around them, and the outlook of children dependent upon them, suffer accordingly. The assault on poverty must come simultaneously from many directions. Ultimately, the only effective way to redistribute income and to reduce the wide, unacceptable disparity in living conditions between the few rich and the many poor is to provide more opportunities for employment.

Generating significantly more jobs - and creating a milieu in which further meaningful employment can be self-created - depends on measures taken throughout the economy. Manpower policy and practices will have to be concerned not only with the provision of higher-level skills but also with the productive employment of the maximum possible numbers. Strategies for greater labour intensity consistent with rising output of goods and services would become of central importance to leaders at national and local levels. Policy-makers and administrators - including politicians, civil servants, private employers, trade union leaders, heads of farmers' associations and of producers' and marketing cooperatives, voluntary organizations - all will need to extend and coordinate their efforts in this direction. And, too, information about programmes and progress need to be fully conveyed to all reaches of the society.

Because of the heavy dependence of most developing countries on international economic relationships, efforts must be continued to ensure that the balance of international trade and payments reflects the best interests of the economy through suitable exchange rates, exports that are truly competitive, imports guided by local production and consumption urgencies. Foreign trade, aid, and domestic investment will have to be kept in harmony. Donors of external aid and providers of low-interest international loans will need to be persuaded that their arrangements be designed to generate much greater local employment than at present.

Further investigations are required in most developing countries to determine just where the margins of advantage really are as between labour-intensity and capital-intensity in promoting development. For some establishments (for example, industrial firms, major public works) the economic advantage, measured by cost of the desired quality of the final product, may prove to be with the use of large units of plant, equipment, and specialized organization - requiring relatively few employees compared with capital invested. But greater intimacy with the aptitudes and the modest accomplishments of peasant farm families and small-scale, low-capital crafts and industries will reveal, almost certainly, a wider range of possibilities for creating jobs at no great further expense. In many instances it will be discovered that an increasing number of productive jobs and rising output are more harmonious than is commonly supposed. In any case, and as a last resort, one-half of one per cent less in the growth of national economic output - resulting from the spreading of available capital more widely and enabling even further jobs in the immediate future - may prove a small price to pay for social stability in the short-term and a vital advantage to the society and the economy in the long-term.

Any one economy has not one environment, but many. Planning for substantially more employment along with rising output and getting these plans into action - within the constraints set by scarce national and local resources - is a difficult, continuing exercise that requires intimate knowledge of people's responses to various familiar and new incentives.

Transforming the rural areas (where, in most developing countries, from 60 to 90 per cent of the people live) must take high priority. Patterns of land ownership and tenure, of crops grown, marketing arrangements and transport systems, however, are so varied among different parts of the same country (as well as among countries) that it is obviously wrong to characterise the rural situation as if it were everywhere the same.

Strategies for expanding and diversifying agricultural production include the provision of seeds, fertiliser, credit, extension assistance, and some assurance on prices of products. The aim of policies would be to enable agriculture to pay better dividends to more farm families. This would be achieved by raising output per acre while retaining relatively labour-intensive techniques, where this proves to be economically desirable. (The relation of the size of the farm holding to output and employment is a topic largely unexplored in most countries.)

When farm families earn greater returns, then the higher money circulation in the villages creates more jobs off the farm: in trading, transport, on building sites. Small-scale industrialists (processing farm products or working with wood, metal, cloth, leather) have more scope to meet local consumer demand. Efforts also should be made to foster new entrepreneurs through help to the indigenous apprentice system by which young people learn from established master traders, artisans, and small-scale industrialists. And of salient importance: new major industries need to be set up in rural towns or in newly-created rural industrial centres.

These policies will have to ensure that farm incomes are not depressed in the process of expanding output of farm products, that labour is used to the full through the application of low-cost but progressive technologies, that self-help in creating community amenities is encouraged, that capital is saved in order to promote a multiplicity of projects.

The bias, by which cities have shared disproportionately in expenditure for infrastructure, will need to be removed. Public works in the countryside will have to be stepped up on a wide scale: secondary roads, clean water supplies, rural markets, health clinics, schools, meeting halls. Components of self-help will vary according to the situation. In some cases, rural people would undertake the projects entirely themselves, with some help in planning and perhaps with supplementary finance and materials provided by central or local government; labour would be voluntary, making use of slack periods during the farming year. In other cases, the work would be undertaken in more direct alliance with government, perhaps with those who are unemployed providing labour and being paid directly by government. Such projects would require greater administrative activity and more money, but would add to the demand for food and other local products.

So long as the more exciting economic and social activities are clustered exclusively in the cities, young school leavers will continue to trek to the cities and stay away from their home areas as long as they possibly can. Forbidding them to migrate from their villages to the cities,

perhaps by use of a city permit system, is ultimately futile and, assuredly, no effective substitute for well-administered rural development. When opportunities for rural jobs are raised, then young people should be told about them - through the use of mass media (radio diffusion and transistor sets, for example, are increasingly available in villages).

Where there are obstacles to migration based on ethnic, political, or religious differences, then incentives to mobility of labour are required: widely circulated information about job opportunities available and also, in some cases, practical assurances of personal safety and job security. Similarly, restrictions on individual opportunity due to caste or class division will have to be removed.

Relative prices, throughout the economy, for factors of production and commodities alike, will need to reflect more accurately the objectives of national production of goods and services. Central among these prices are those for human labour: the real value of industrial wages will need to be kept in closer correspondence with rewards received elsewhere - particularly with the incomes of the rural community.

The economies of countries in Africa differ considerably from one another and, thus, the extent and the causes of youth unemployment. While some broad principles of economic reform have been outlined here (and, indeed, these represent the basis for action in many of today's developing countries), it is only through analysis of specific national situations that detailed policies, likely to be successful, can be designed to generate substantially more employment.

6. Make formal education more relevant

A solution to the problem of unemployment among educated youth often put forward is to restrain the rate of expansion of educational opportunities. The reasoning goes that if more and more school leavers are migrating to the cities and towns and remain unemployed, then facilities for primary education (in particular) should be cut back or at least not expanded to match the growing school-age population. The money saved by not investing in primary education can then be used for general economic development or projects providing employment for the fewer school leavers.

This is a logical and compelling view. But it cannot be sustained in the climate of today. Cutting back education means widening the already existing inequalities in societies where education has for a generation or so provided a means for progression by merit rather than by status at birth. The desire for education has already spread among families in rural areas as well as cities. Another benefit of high proportions of children completing primary school is the resulting greater mobility of labour. This competition for available jobs can be a spur to the economy provided, of course, that procedures for selecting merit are given a chance to work.

Cutting back primary education means reducing the number of teachers and leaving many without jobs. While no one would suggest that education should be extended in order to create jobs for teachers, the place of education systems in most developing countries as a major employer of educated young people must be kept in mind. Where primary education cannot be expanded because of lack of finance from the central government, then alternative ways of financing (including direct contributions from local communities) should be thoroughly explored. And in line with established

principles of educational planning, economies throughout the whole system of formal education need to be exacted. For example, the high cost of large numbers of early dropouts could be reduced.

Perhaps the solution most universally argued is the one advocating vocational subjects for primary schools. This suggests that if farming were effectively taught, then school leavers would become farmers and not drift to the towns and cities. In practice, this approach has never been successful. Pupils who complete the primary course should be able to read and write fluently in their own and in the national language, to do a certain amount of arithmetic, to understand enough science and history to interpret the world around them, and to learn sufficient civics to be aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. This does not make pupils into farmers or carpenters or nuclear scientists; it is basic to all these careers. Education is not meant only 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 modernizing 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.

Radical curriculum reforms in many countries may well be necessary to relate schools more closely to community and national life. Often subject content has been developed in a foreign country very different in its cultural and economic background and, not only that, it is drastically out of date. In these cases, obviously, new textbooks and teaching materials are needed. Language lessons should be developed from national life and literature; mathematics might include simple accounts using typical farm and market examples; science studies would start by analyzing elements in the familiar environment; geography and history would begin with reference to the local and national scene. Much more participation in indigenous culture could be encouraged through music, dance, art, folklore. And with these changes in subject matter, methods of instruction must be improved. The rigid authoritarian manner still used in so many schools to scare children into rote learning has its counterparts in nineteenth-century Europe and America, but has little justification for being continued in any part of the world today. When these reforms are brought about (and in many developing countries the beginning steps have been taken), then primary schools will become much more relevant and vital to the life of local communities and for the nation.

Debates have also proceeded on the need for changes in the curriculum of secondary schools. The central issue is whether the employability of many secondary school leavers would be heightened if more of them were qualified in specific skills rather than being prepared solely through an academic course geared for university entrance. Whatever validity there may be in this view for a particular country, much will depend on whether the jobs exist and the wages proposed are related to the expensive education they have received.

Allied to this is another issue: the necessity to merge the skills derived from classroom experience with the realities of the economy. For instance, what is the relation between technical and vocational education and on-the-job training given by public and private establishments? A step-up in technical and vocational education is undoubtedly needed for most economies, but careful attention should be given to what types of training can be done on the job (paid for by industries) and what types need the greater theoretical background given in technical institutes.

A few countries are finding that their university students have to settle for work inconsistent with their specialized training. Difficulties of this kind can be adjusted and there is some prospect that they will be lessened as manpower planning techniques become more refined and thus better able to assist the design of enrolments in different departments - not only as between the arts and sciences but within these broad groupings.

Yet whatever alterations are set in motion in the quantity and quality of formal education at the primary, secondary, and university levels to accord more accurately with the requirements of the changing society and economy, time is required for them to take place. And there is no sense in talking about providing education that is job-creating and the basis for innovation unless parallel efforts are made to reform the economy.

7. Strengthen out-of-school education

An area relatively neglected by educational planners has been out-of-school education - that is, the array of learning activities going on outside schools and universities. These include programmes of literacy for youth who have had little or no formal schooling; apprenticeships and other forms of on-the-job training; continuing education for those with professional qualifications; extension programmes to assist youth involved in farming or within small-scale industries; and a wide range of educative services designed to encourage community improvement.

What types of out-of-school training activities can provide youth who would otherwise be unemployed with skills to enable them to take up specialized jobs? Or create their own jobs? What part can such education take in intensifying the drive for rural improvement? How can group activities - such as youth clubs and young farmers' clubs - be spread more widely and given greater meaning for generating useful employment?

A main principle in reforming the economy for employment creation is the substitution of labour for capital in new development wherever this is technically and economically feasible. Thus, the necessity to work with the smaller economic units in the countryside and in the city; by encouraging family farms and small-scale industries, helping them to introduce low-cost, progressive technologies and innovations of management. Such assistance requires a high component of on-the-job training and other types of out-of-school education.

It is clear that farmers, artisans, and small-scale industrialists cannot teach practical skills to their children and apprentices which they do not themselves possess. Any assistance, therefore, to raise the technical performance of adults - through agricultural extension or technical assistance given by visitation or short courses - will eventually help these young learners. This is an indirect means of helping youth: to raise the skills of fathers and masters (and to make their work more profitable) is to help sons and apprentices. To help women in their duties in farm or market work means helping daughters and others working with them. Added to this can be such direct means as short courses for young men in particular aspects of farm work or for young women in poultry-keeping or sewing.

Similarly, experiments in introducing "functional literacy" for adults with the objective of combining instruction in literacy and help in heightening productivity in particular lines of work can also have meaning for unschooled youth, either by taking them later as adults or by extending the programme to younger people.

Vocational training for rural school leavers must necessarily differ from that of unschooled youth. Because of six to ten or more years in the classroom and of aspirations linked with acquiring literacy, school leavers have, in some measure, lost the continuity of rural life. They may not have learned the traditional skills which the unschooled youth in their age group have likely mastered through constant practice. In any case, school leavers want to apply themselves to something (however vague in their minds) more modern. Although they may be well aware that wage-paid jobs are scarce in the cities, they do not see any models for building a life's work in their home areas. The problem of helping rural school leavers, then, is not only to provide vocational training but an associated plan in helping to get them established in rural occupations. Eventually, patterns will emerge which school leavers will recognize as the steps for successful rural careers.

Where vocational training has a known outcome with wage-paid jobs in modern rural establishments, there has been considerable success. On completing their courses, the trainees become tractor drivers, mechanics, or technicians on large plantations or in modern rural industries processing farm products. But where training is given without being tied to specific jobs with the intention that trainees find opportunities within traditional family farming and other small-scale rural enterprises, there has been only limited success.

Vocational training of educated youth for rural occupations may be of two kinds: (1) A course of instruction in farm or technical training for one or two years, with or without direct help for settlement into farm or artisan work later. Frequently the course begins some years after the trainee has finished his formal schooling and has gained sufficient maturity and practical experience. Variations occur in the combinations of classroom theory and actual work at farm operations or technical jobs. (2) On-the-job training either on farms or in workshops, supplemented by assistance from extension workers through regular visits or by short courses of a few weeks' duration on specific production or marketing processes.

Where rural school leavers are being trained to become progressive farmers, perhaps on their family land, extension officers encourage them, individually or in groups, in overcoming the obstacles they meet in trying to put improved methods into operation. Small amounts of credit (planting materials, fertilizer, insecticides) are provided as well as advice on techniques. Special groups, such as young farmers' clubs, often provide the basis for this regular help. By using film strips, instruction is given on improved planting methods or the care of new strains of rice or maize. Examples show that in some African countries much can be accomplished under existing land tenure arrangements. In some areas, however, reforms in land tenure are a prerequisite to the emergence of greater numbers of modern young farmers.

Youth programmes of a social and cultural nature should be considered a form of out-of-school education with meaning for youth employment. Some of these group activities derive from traditional social organization, such as a dance group formed by a particular age-set of young women to perform at local festivals. Others are contemporary modifications of traditional associations: for example, social clubs among city youth based on extended family or ethnic relationships. Others still are comparatively modern in origin and purpose, perhaps related to schools or churches or mosques. Some have international or regional affiliations.

The objectives of these associations vary widely, but they have certain effects in common: they foster a feeling of belong to a group, give a sense of direction and purpose, provide experience for youth in organizing their own activities, develop discipline and a heightened sense of self-respect. Some clubs encourage the improvement of domestic skills for young women, such as home-making, 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 cities where so many young people are displaced from their home communities, but also in rural areas where traditional forms of recreation and association have disappeared and no new forms have taken their place. They are significant for boys and girls in their early teens (from 13 to 15) as well as for older youth. Those organizations which are relatively low-cost may need encouragement to become self-perpetuating and self-multiplying. They are worth extra administrative attention from voluntary organizations and from governments.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

A. PREPARATION FOR OCCUPATIONS

- courses for those with little or no formal schooling (literacy and numeracy, civic, and vocational education)
- courses which extend general or pre-vocational schooling (post-primary or post-secondary instruction in secretarial schools and technical workshops; military technical training; pre-work training provided by commercial firms or voluntary organizations; correspondence courses)

B. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

- apprenticeship training in low- or intermediate- productivity enterprises (in crafts and small businesses located in towns and cities, such as carpentry, mechanics, tailoring, building trades, printing)
- apprenticeship training in high-productivity enterprises (in agriculture, industry, and services, run by governments or private concerns)
- courses for junior workers, usually short-term, which extend pre-vocational education and/or apprentice training

C. EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

- group activities out of school (youth clubs, young farmers' clubs, apprentice guilds - which, in addition to social objectives, promote leadership and awareness of civic responsibility and may also be aimed towards vocational improvement)
- national youth service programmes (providing general, civic, or technical education while allowing for organized, disciplined contributions by youth to national development through community services, chiefly in rural areas)

- educative services to encourage self-help for communities (provided by governments or voluntary organizations working through central village authorities or groups based on kinship, religious affiliation, or occupations; includes training in planning and execution of projects, such as market stalls, community halls, access roads, maternity homes and clinics)

8. National youth service programmes

Largely a phenomenon of the 1960s, these special training and work programmes have come into being as experimental measures in time of national urgency and represent a distinct break with customary methods of meeting the requirements of youth for civic education and specialized training. They are administered separately from systems of formal education. They do not have much in common with the familiar boys' and girls' clubs. Most of these national youth service programmes provide facilities whereby trainees can make a disciplined contribution to national development through work projects which may take a few months or stretch over a period of one or even two years. In some, the service to the community arises from leadership, chiefly in rural areas, after a period devoted mainly to training. Almost all the programmes are rural-oriented. A few only cater for young women.

Why are these special programmes considered necessary? One commanding reason is the existence of jobless youth, particularly school leavers. Another related reason is dissatisfaction with the capacity of usual classroom education to produce well-disciplined youth devoted to the nation's cause, who can demonstrate a new spirit towards work and society. Again, where university students are involved, it is considered that those who receive higher education paid for largely by the masses of the people should in turn learn at first hand, through some form of community service, the nation's problems of illiteracy, poor health, and lack of economic development.

The following explanation was given in response to questions posed for a meeting of national youth service programmes held in Denmark in 1968 by the U.N. and I.L.O.:

Zambia: "There is need for an agrarian revolution in Zambia and the youth service graduates can help to spearhead such a revolution. The rate at which our youth can be absorbed into the agrarian society depends on the ability of the rural economy to produce a monetary return equivalent to wage-earning in urban areas. We still have a problem of how to take a young man whose contact with urban life has inflated his desire for the things that only money can buy, and re-integrate him into an agrarian society which still lives at a depressed economic level not far above subsistence."

Those having specific arrangements for agricultural settlement include, for example, Action de Rénovation Rurale of Congo-Brazzaville and the Malawi Young Pioneers. Training for both farm and non-farm activities in rural areas are provided by, among others, the National Youth Service of Kenya, the Liberian National Youth Organization, and the Training Production Programmes in Tunisia. Highly educated youth take part in the Ethiopian University Service.

For African countries as a whole, the total youth in national service of these kinds is not considerable. Leaving aside the university students' service, what is the validity of helping limited numbers at considerable cost in public funds within training-service or training-service-settlement programmes? One answer is that service youth later become demonstrators or initiators; they provide leadership in their home communities. They set examples which make follow-up policies, designed to help others, easier. The vast numbers of youth without the benefits of such training will then have a set of models of what can be aimed for.

A great difficulty, however, in general statements about national youth service programmes is their diversity. A meaningful typology would be difficult to achieve and probably of no significance when completed. Differences exist in age and education on entry; in the length of education/training and service periods; in methods of civic education and training; in the style of community service; in arrangements (if any) for settlement later.

Again, too little time has passed to enable realistic assessments to be made. Many of these programmes were hastily set up in emergency conditions to help meet the problems created by unemployment among school leavers and the exceptional flow of rural young people to the cities. Because of the urgency, the plans often started off large-scale with no time taken for pilot experiments.

On economic grounds, many of these programmes are open to criticism for their high public cost and their diversion of scarce capital and administrative talent from more urgent development tasks. From the point of view of the youth concerned, there is difficulty in offering the specialization and rewards for work done which help to spur self-improvement. Also, certain questions are still open: What happens to the youth once their courses of training and work have finished? Have the conditions of these camps or special schools made them better able to meet the competition of the job market? Are those from rural families more or less willing to undertake farming or other work in rural areas? Only after some of these answers are known can the effectiveness of these programmes be realistically evaluated. Against these economic appraisals should be weighed the less measurable social gains of improved personal discipline and attitudes towards society and of practical expressions of patriotism.

At the present time 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.

9. New approaches to educational planning

It is evident that reforms within formal education, alone, cannot solve the problem of unemployed youth. Even though imaginative changes are made in methods of instruction and content of courses at varying levels of education, still young people eventually will confront the harsh realities of the employment market. Unless more farm, artisan, and professional jobs are generated in the rural areas and unless the rest of the economy is able to absorb more educated youth, then the numbers of unemployed will continue to rise. Of first priority, then, are significant - even drastic - modifications in the functioning of economies.

Development policies for the 1970s in African nations will undoubtedly emphasize the provision of jobs for many more people. Education, as an integral part of the processes of social and economic development, will have its important place in this new emphasis. In the efforts to mesh education more closely with the newer economic strategies, educational planners will take on a wider role.

Adjustments within formal education will be necessary according to national objectives. Improvements in teaching, for example, could enhance the spirit of initiative and adventure and thus the employability of youth as they address themselves to the world of work. The search for economies in the use of public and private expenditures on education, while maintaining or improving quality, must be a continuing exercise in every nation.

The less charted area, where educational planners must now give greater concentration, lies beyond the schools and universities. This is the field of out-of-school education which substitutes for or extends formal classroom learning. While attention has been given to specific types of out-of-school learning processes (by governments, voluntary agencies, United Nations specialized agencies), little attempt has been made to look at out-of-school education as a whole - to discern its dynamics in meeting needs of changing societies, to see its complementary links with formal education at all levels, and thus to bring it within a comprehensive design of educational planning for the nation. Analysis along these lines would result in a firmer understanding of the relations among formal education, specialized training, and on-the-job experience. It would help, also, in aligning classroom learning with the needs of the employment market of the future.

Education has multiple functions to perform: passing on cultural values, developing critical minds, training specialized skills. But the promise of education cannot be fulfilled if school leavers (and university graduates) become dissatisfied, disillusioned, abject because they cannot put their abilities to work.

The conspicuous misfortune of economic performances in the countries of Africa during the 1960s has been the failure to provide adequate employment opportunities. Although strenuous efforts are being made, for most countries the problem cannot be fully solved during the 1970s. Educational planners can contribute by reducing the discontinuities between education and the growing economies.

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