

Chapter One

The Senior Education Administrator in Small States

The Characteristics of Small States

In some respects, small states are not very different from their larger counterparts. They tend to have a colonial past, struggle with weak economies, contain very limited material and human resources and aspire towards improved social goals. Often, they have to rely on the technical know-how, the finance, and sometimes the culture of rich developed countries. The characteristic that distinguishes small states as a category on their own is precisely the scale factor. In this book the arbitrary threshold of two million people is taken, whilst it is recognized that other and more complex definitions exist in the literature. It is also the case that it is the experience of Commonwealth countries which provides the focus for this work (see Table One). The scale factor, in turn, leads to the formulation of a particular social ecology composed of a closely knit, integrated but open community with highly personalized relationships. These special features render small states very different from other larger, developing countries.

Table One

Ministries of Education in Commonwealth Countries with a Population below 2.0 million		
<i>(Independent Countries, Associated States and Dependent Territories)</i>		
<i>Country</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Ministry Title</i>
Anguilla	7,000	Finance, Education and Community Development
Antigua and Barbuda	78,000	Education, Culture, Youth Affairs and Sport
The Bahamas	234,000	Education
Barbados	252,000	Education and Culture

<i>* Country</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Ministry Title</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Belize</i>	<i>159,000</i>	<i>Education, Sports and Culture</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Bermuda</i>	<i>79,000</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Botswana</i>	<i>1,070,000</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* British Virgin Islands</i>	<i>13,000</i>	<i>Health, Education and Welfare</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Brunei</i>	<i>224,000</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Darussalam</i>			<i>*</i>
<i>* Cayman Islands</i>	<i>20,000</i>	<i>Health, Education and Social Services</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Cook Islands</i>	<i>23,000</i>	<i>Department of Education</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Cyprus</i>	<i>660,000</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Dominica</i>	<i>78,000</i>	<i>Education and Sports</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Falklands</i>	<i>2,000</i>	<i>Education (CEO's Office)</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* The Gambia</i>	<i>737,000</i>	<i>Education, Youth, Sports and Culture</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Gibraltar</i>	<i>29,000</i>	<i>Education, Sport and Postal Services</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Grenada</i>	<i>96,000</i>	<i>Education and Social Services</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Guyana</i>	<i>806,000</i>	<i>Education, Social Development and Culture</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Kiribati</i>	<i>64,000</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Lesotho</i>	<i>1,540,000</i>	<i>Education, Sports and Culture</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Maldives</i>	<i>178,000</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Malta</i>	<i>360,000</i>	<i>Education, Environment, Culture and Broadcasting</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Mauritius</i>	<i>1,036,000</i>	<i>Education, Arts and Culture</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Montserrat</i>	<i>12,000</i>	<i>Education, Health and Community Services</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Nauru</i>	<i>8,042</i>	<i>Health and Education</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Niue</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>Education and Health</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* St. Kitts & Nevis</i>	<i>43,000</i>	<i>Education, Health and Community Affairs</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* St. Lucia</i>	<i>136,000</i>	<i>Education and Culture</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* St. Vincent & The Grenadines</i>	<i>119,000</i>	<i>Education, Sports and Youth Affairs</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Seychelles</i>	<i>65,000</i>	<i>Education, Information and Youth</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Solomon Islands</i>	<i>267,000</i>	<i>Education and Human Resources</i>	<i>*</i>
<i>* Swaziland</i>	<i>788,000</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>*</i>

<i>Country</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Ministry Title</i>
Tonga	97,000	Education, Youth, Sports and Culture
Trinidad and Tobago	1,187,000	Education
Turks and Caicos	10,000	Health, Education and Welfare
Tuvalu	8,000	Social Services
Vanuatu	134,000	Education, Youth and Sport
West Samoa	163,000	Education, Youth, Sports and Culture

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1988

The scale factor, coupled with the special social dimension, influences the work of senior education administrators in small states to such an extent that it also becomes significantly different from that of their colleagues in large states even if their official titles and duties appear identical. Their work, like that of medical, social, environmental and other officials, tends to be more diffused yet more interrelated and complex than that of their counterparts in larger countries. Consequently, it deserves special understanding and demands a different approach.

The Multi-Functional Administrator

Regardless of size, education systems require a basic administrative and managerial organization to provide an efficient education service. A state of 100,000 inhabitants, like a country of several millions, establishes a Ministry of Education to handle the same range of functions as their larger counterparts. Small states require a Ministry or Department to deal with personnel management, school administration, curriculum development, overseas linkages, examinations, maintenance and so on. The actual number of people working in each branch, section or unit of small education systems will be fewer, sometimes much fewer than in larger states (see Tables Two and Three). However the difference is not proportional to population or school enrolment. The pressures on personnel expected to fulfil a number of roles and responsibilities are proportionately much higher than those in larger countries.

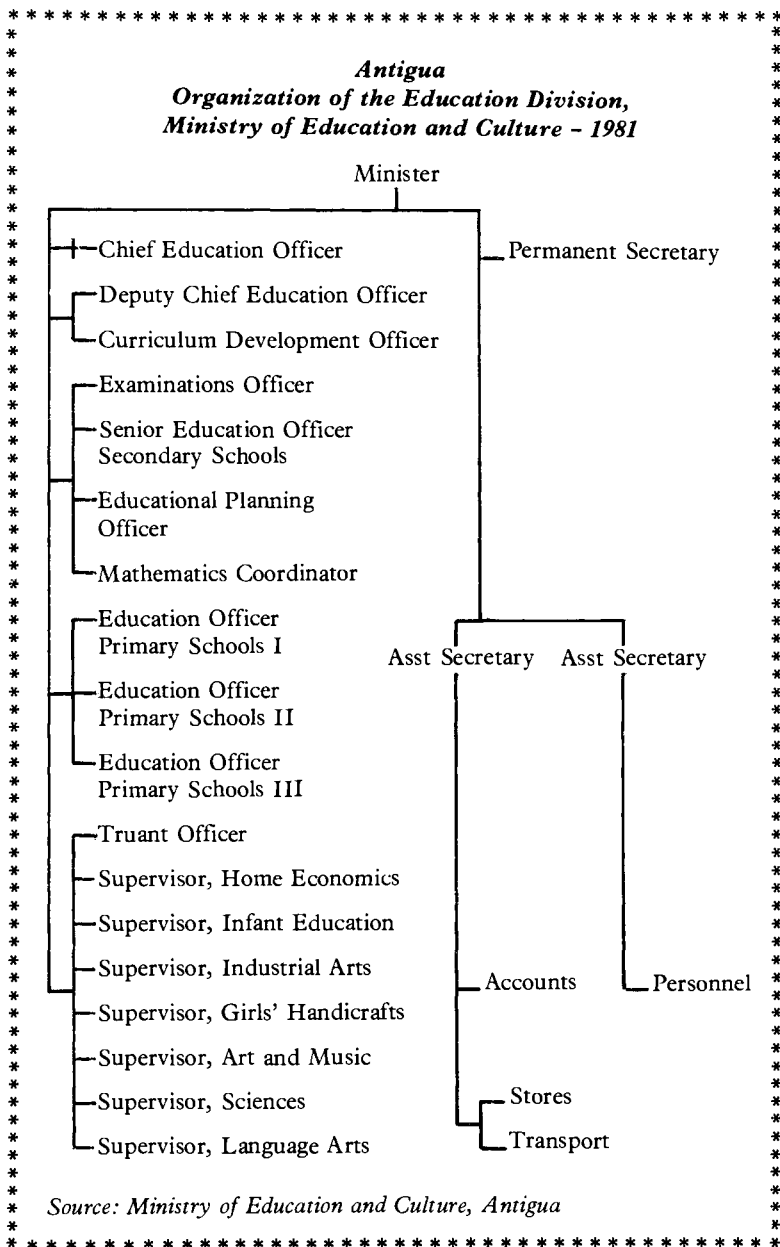
Small states attempt, indeed are compelled, to extend their resources and to lower per capita costs by requiring senior officials to

Table Two

Establishment of Ministry of Education Tonga (Population 97,000)	
<i>(December 1988)</i>	
Minister of Education	1
Director of Education	1
Deputy-Directors	3
Senior Education Officers	3
Assistant Senior Education Officers	4
Education Officers	3
Assistant Secretary	1
Senior Executive Officer	1
Scholarships and Vocational Guidance Officer	1
Inspectors	4
Attendance Officers	1
Area Organizers	5
Supervising Teachers	10
Broadcasting Officer	1
Assistant Broadcasting Officer	1
Tongan Language Specialist	1
Specialist Teachers	4
Printing Officer	1
Accounting Officer	1
Chief Clerk	1
First Class Clerk	2
Second Class Clerk	2
Junior Clerks	4
Short/hand Typists Clerk III	2
Typist/Clerks	5
Drivers	9
Boat Operator	1
Mechanic	1
Caretakers	2
Total	76

Source: Ministry of Education, Tonga 1988

Table Three



act in multi-functional roles. It is usual for a Director-General for Education to be responsible also for Youth, Culture, Sports, Public Libraries and the Museums; responsibilities that in larger countries are often catered for by separate units and groups of officials. Education officers in small states often cover the pedagogical and curricular development of several subjects taught in all the sectors of the education system. Thus he or she may be expected to be responsible for all the languages taught in primary, secondary and technical schools, or supervise all the History, Geography and Social Studies taught in the system. In addition they are likely to be called upon to monitor teachers' work in schools, run in-service courses, lecture in teacher education institutions, prepare budgets, sit on purchasing committees, chair selection and promotion panels, attend policy meetings, meet parents and teach their subject specialization in one or more secondary schools. In addition, senior education officers are constantly on demand to deal with the minor and not so minor crises that originate in schools.

For similar reasons, the non-education officials of small education systems have to cater for a multiplicity of needs. The few workers in the maintenance unit, for example, are called upon to look after all the facilities, equipment and buildings. Likewise, the small personnel section deals with a whole variety of problems generated by the gamut of blue and white collar workers, whether they happen to be teachers, clerks, janitors, technicians or cleaners. These examples suffice to demonstrate that the demands on the limited number of senior education officials in small states are markedly different from those of their colleagues in large states who are able to concentrate on one job, or one specific cluster of concerns. The job-titles or nomenclatures may be the same but the complexities of the job are significantly different.

Top Executive and Leading Professional

Senior education officials in small states have to act at one and the same time as top administrative executives as well as leading professional educators. As top administrators they manage their office, issue educational and non-educational directives, follow instructions from the Ministry, keep correspondence with agencies and colleagues abroad, compile data, prepare capital and recurrent budgets, keep tabs on staff, control stock, and so on. (See *Job Description*, Chapter Three)

As leading and practising professional educators they are expected

to keep up-to-date with and introduce educational innovations, follow-up projects, advise politicians on academic matters, monitor the progress of subordinates, and provide moral and practical advice to teachers and students in schools. In large educational systems, the administrative and the professional roles tend to be separate, and the various duties within each role are often distributed among various officials. Small states do not have the personnel or the finance to allow the parcelling of duties.

The closely integrated roles have some positive advantages. The varying tasks handled by individuals are bound to broaden their experience and widen their insights into the many facets of the educational system. On the other hand, the necessity of sharing time and attention as well as the need of developing adequate levels of knowledge and skills in various areas, tends to weaken the expertise of the multi-functional official.

Furthermore, the multiplicity of roles can have ill-effects on the mental and physical well-being of senior officials in small states. It is extremely demanding to shift rapidly from one task to the next, or to change from one decision-making process to another, or to deal with varying groups of people with assignments that are totally unrelated.

Information Monitor and Disseminator

Senior education officials are expected to seek and store information on a wide variety of educational and non-educational subjects. This may include:

- a. Government policies related to specific aims in education and the services provided by the local education system to meet them,
- b. Developments in educational policies in other countries which have a bearing on local education,
- c. Innovations in educational theory and practice and their implications for local pedagogy,
- d. Developments in the industrial, commercial, technological and scientific areas which can influence policies and curricula in local schools.

In spite of these limitations, senior education officials are continuously called upon to provide advice, to interpret reports, to comment on policies, to make recommendations on proposals coming both from their superiors as well as their subordinates. Hence, it is essential for them to be well-informed and up-to-date. Most educational systems in small states cannot develop extensive data-

bank support run by specialised personnel. Senior officials themselves are often required to develop a system of data collecting and dissemination. Such work will be routine for most senior education officials in both large and small states; however the peculiar interpersonal communication networks found in small transparent communities introduce a social dimension that has to be taken into consideration.

Interpersonal Communication

States with a small number of inhabitants tend to develop closely integrated societies with an intricate network of personal relationships. These factors facilitate and hasten communication processes but may also obstruct and complicate them. People know each other (or know someone who knows someone whose services they need) so that cabinet ministers, parliamentarians, high government officials, churchmen, influential businessmen and their functionaries are well known and reachable. It is not unusual in these circumstances for people who cannot obtain formal appointments to arrange and get invited to social functions or family reunions where they meet casually the minister or official concerned. In extreme cases, the supplicant would call at the minister's or official's home, which is easily identifiable. Senior education officials in small states form part of this social communication network and consequently can be "met" or accosted through official or unofficial channels. They themselves use established and unorthodox approaches with their superiors.

This type of communication network has both advantages and disadvantages. Ideas, views, requests, complaints and proposals can be communicated easily and quickly and most probably personally to the official concerned. People know the abilities, needs and idiosyncrasies of each other and tend to act or react accordingly. Through close personal contact, people's reactions and feedback to political and administrative decisions can be gauged accurately so that political and administrative decisions are taken and implemented without long delays. Furthermore, because the feedback mechanism is often quick and efficient, policies and decisions which misfire can be re-evaluated, revised, modified, and in extreme cases completely reversed.

The highly personalized societies of small states create problems when the policy making and the decision implementing process cannot remain anonymous. For example, the excise-duty official is well known to any businessman who cares; the chief income-tax assessor is also the president of the sports-club and lives in the next

village; the wife of the Director-General of Education is the Chairperson of the Playing Fields Association and can be met at the monthly meeting. Mr. X and Ms. Y can be “accidentally” encountered every Friday evening at the local super-market. Such informal contacts may be abused. Many necessary decisions and actions can be modified, adjusted and sometimes totally neutralized by personal interventions and community pressures. In extreme cases, close personal and family connections lead to nepotism and corruption.

It is one of the major challenges for education administrators to capitalize on the advantages of these close personal contacts and relationships and at the same time to minimize the potential ill-management they can produce.

Spokesperson and Liaison

Lack of full-time or well-manned information agencies in small states make it necessary for senior officials to act also as spokespersons for their superiors. They are called upon to represent the Minister of Education or the Director-General of Education at official functions. They may be required to pronounce on policy, to present plans, to provide details and explanations regarding new educational ventures. Their multi-functional role demands that senior education officials are requested to make representations, pleas and requests on behalf of their subordinates to the higher echelons in the hierarchy. In this capacity the senior officials act as bridges between higher authority and the personnel in their charge.

They interpret policy, issue instructions and ensure that these are properly followed-up. At the same time they promote the interests of the employees in their section, bring to the attention of superiors the achievements of their staff and where necessary shield them from the wrath of temperamental superiors who may be within extremely easy reach. The spokesperson role can be a most rewarding one in small states, as it brings the persons concerned in close touch with a variety of people in an integrated community. At the same time, it can be most demanding since facts, figures, opinions, passing remarks and rumours that may cause minor ripples or pass unnoticed in large states, can develop into sensitive and divisive issues in the highly personalized atmosphere of micro-states. The degree of sensitivity intensifies when the issues concerned have religious, ethnic or political connotations.

Developed and Underdeveloped Societies

... theorists like Bert Hoselitz concluded that there was a broad difference in kind as between developed and underdeveloped societies; that there were clusters of pattern-variables, not just random mixes peculiar to this society or that. Underdeveloped societies, which they call 'traditional', were typically particularistic, ascriptive, and functionally diffuse; developed societies were universalistic, achievement-oriented and functionally specific. Ascriptive, diffuse roles, such as those of kinship, therefore, were unsuited to modern situations calling for personal responsibility and clear-cut, objective managerial decisions.

To bring about development, 'modern' values needed to be implanted, especially in the young. Government officials should not favour their relatives (particularistic behaviour), but treat all clients alike (universalistically)... The ambitious should be given a chance to achieve, and not be restricted to a limited range of ascribed roles governed, say, by their sex, age or social rank.

Worsley, Peter (ed.) (1987) *The New Introduction to Sociology*, 3rd ed., Penguin, Harmondsworth.

— Do you agree that such differences between developed and underdeveloped societies exist? Do you agree with the advice on bringing about development?

Social Cohesion and Social Tension

Small communities can develop strong social cohesion. Once the social unity is ruptured, however, the divisions that ensue run deep and take many years to heal. Minor issues which are lost or are easily absorbed in larger states, assume national dimensions in small states. Minor divisions that are allowed to spread eventually pervade other sectors of the population. In communities where practically everyone knows everyone else, where individuals' utterances and actions soon become public knowledge, it often happens that once a position is taken people find it difficult to retract. This is especially so in communities where the close personal interactions belie long-held suspicions or age-long feuds that exist between different groups, or among family clans. In such circumstances, once rival positions are taken and become public it becomes extremely difficult to avoid the polarization that ensues. Furthermore, disagreement on one issue often extends not only to related matters but also to totally unrelated

issues. When this happens, friendships, family loyalty and community pressures can interfere with the decision and implementation process. When this happens, the integrity, competence and will-power of public figures, including senior government officials, can be sorely tested.

In extreme cases, divisions in closely integrated societies lead to serious community rivalry or even civil strife. In most cases, this extremity is not reached, but the effects on the social, economic and political structure of the small state can still be far-reaching. For example, rivalry between sectors in small communities lead to open or subtle boycotts by one group against a rival group's ideas or projects, regardless how good or useful they are. As a result, only a fraction of the available talent is utilized and only a section of the population benefits. Furthermore, rivalry leads to duplication of efforts and costs and a wastage of the limited human and material resources available.

Perhaps a more pervasive outcome of this rivalry is the way it undermines local initiative and makes the small community reliant on outsiders, thus perpetuating the normally already marked external dependence evident in the inhabitants' greater trust on ideas, products and projects that originate overseas. In the field of education this tendency usually results in the neglect of local initiatives and the disparagement of indigenous instructional programmes in preference to imported pedagogical content and methods even when these are peripheral or alien to local needs. For example, the rivalry between the primary and secondary schools divisions, or between the state and private education sectors, or between the few curriculum experts available in small states could sabotage the production of local books, substitutes of which are then imported from overseas. Boycotts of the government-run broadcasting media can stop the production and the dissemination of locally made television and radio educational broadcasts which in turn are replaced by foreign productions. In these circumstances it becomes a major challenge for education administrators to liaise between rival sectors and bridge the rifts.

Resource Allocator

Limited human and material resources are a constant source of worry to senior education officials in small states. The demands of equally deserving projects competing for limited personnel and restricted funds are perennial problems. Such worries are compounded by personal pressure from politically powerful individuals and influential colleagues who carry great weight in small communities and who

would know very well where to put the pressure. The persistent ones can sorely test the fortitude and integrity of education officials who have to distinguish between the peripheral needs of the powerful or the clamorous and the more urgent requirements of the silent sufferers.

As senior executives in an important state service, top education officials are often called upon to advise or take direct action in resolving conflicts caused by scarce space, finance, materials and people. In small, centralized systems of education, high officials are drawn into decision-making that in larger states is the realm of junior functionaries. Also, since minor sums of money often constitute a significant proportion of the education budget, top officials are, of necessity, drawn into minor decisions which in small states take on major proportions. Furthermore, small centralized bureaucracies tend to evolve systems where problems are “passed upstairs” rather than solved at the lower level where they occur. In small, personalized systems, it is easier to run to “Joe” or “Angela” than it is to resort personally to the Senior Finance Officer or the Chief Education Officer in bigger systems. Consequently, senior education officials in small states have to guard against being burdened with minor problems that can and should be dealt with by their subordinates.

Educational Entrepreneur

The entrepreneurial role of senior education officials in small states is extremely important. They have to ensure that the section for which they are responsible in the organization remains vibrant and dynamic. As the country’s leading educators they have to originate ideas, encourage others to do likewise, and facilitate the implementation of innovations. In the role of leading educational entrepreneurs, senior officials have to originate and lead educational projects. They have to keep abreast with educational developments in other countries in order to adapt them to local needs. Again, this function is extremely important in small states which do not possess the human and material resources to carry out extensive educational research and development projects specifically directed towards local requirements.

Small countries with volatile economies depend on restricted internal markets and the vagaries of multi-national cooperation cannot support the elaborate and expensive administrative structures required by an enhanced educational system that most states strive for. Senior education officials become quite expert at overcoming

resources and financial limitations with a pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit. This often means that they have to extend their resources and lower per capita expenditure by evolving systems whereby individual officials and single units fulfil multiple roles and functions which in larger countries are performed by several officials with adequate facilities. Such requirements create conditions that are characteristic of and often unique to small states.

- * * * * *
- * **The Provision and Development of Educational Services** *
- * The policies which will determine the nature of education provision in *
- * small states should: *
- * a. Relate directly to the identified needs of the community, the *
 - * education service and its users; *
 - * b. Be readily perceived by all the participants in the process; *
 - * c. Be judged on the extent to which the education services meet the *
 - * community's needs; *
 - * d. Draw upon the best practice in the service and encourage and allow *
 - * practice to develop and flourish; *
 - * e. Be framed within present and foreseeable resources but make due *
 - * allowance for the introduction of change. *
- * The development of educational services in a small state will: *
- * a. Call for careful use of all resources both human and material; *
 - * b. Depend upon the effective use of INSET (In Service Education *
 - * and Training) focused on defined local needs. So far as possible, this *
 - * should be delivered locally; *
 - * c. Require mutual respect and confidence between the political and *
 - * professional leadership of the service and the confidence of the *
 - * practitioners in that leadership. *
- * Rodhouse, John (1987) "Problems of Policy and Development" in *
- * Bacchus, Kazim and Brock, Colin: *The Challenge of Scale,* *
- * Commonwealth Secretariat, London. *
- * — To what extent do these observations by John Rodhouse apply to *
- * your country? Are they special to small countries? *
- * * * * *

Personal Pressures and Demands

The complex interpersonal relations described earlier, the multiple roles of senior education administrators, together with often poor economic returns for demanding work, exert great pressures on the personal lives and professional development of these officials. They

require special administrative styles and managerial strategies to cope with them.

The requirement to sacrifice personal expertise in order to deal with multifarious responsibilities and the need to switch continuously from one assignment to a totally unrelated one, are demands that have been referred to earlier and will be discussed in detail in later chapters. For the moment one can stress that the shortage of high officials often leads to restricted or blunted personal and professional development. For example, the varied and multifarious responsibilities create difficulties when they are away from their jobs to attend conferences or courses abroad, or simply to take their leave entitlement. They soon discover that if one or more assignments are not too pressing, several others are.

Furthermore, long working hours lead to mental and physical stress and occasionally to personal and family friction. As a result, many senior education officials in small states find it difficult to devote time and mental energy on complex development projects. Instead, they can be tempted to spend most of their time dealing with many mundane ad hoc chores that have to be resolved 'now', and postpone the more thought-provoking problems to 'quieter moments' which never seem to materialize. In the long run these conditions are detrimental to the personal wellbeing of the individual concerned and to the corporate growth of the education system.

International Commitments

Another demanding role specific to senior officials in small states emerges from their country's commitments as members of the international community. In addition to their domestic duties the few high officials available have to deal with their country's international obligations, a dual role that weighs heavily on a small country's limited human resources. At the same time, to abandon or even neglect international contacts would result in the loss of one of the small states' major assets, namely a say at international fora. It is precisely their participation and voting power in international organizations that brought small states and their special characteristics to the attention of the larger, more developed ones. It is essential for senior officials of small nations to attend international meetings not only to make their contribution but, equally important, to state their case. Many small states have to fulfil their commitments as members of regional universities, regional examinations councils, regional UNESCO networks and development organizations, and have to

sustain their links with overseas institutions, and pay visits to aid agencies. Contacts with their overseas counterparts enable senior officials from small states to widen their professional and personal vistas, to keep in touch with developments in technologically more advanced countries, and to establish working relationships and friendships that they can draw upon when necessary.

Socio-Economic Pressures

Ironically, however, interaction with foreign counterparts can become a major source of frustration. Senior officials from small states soon discover that their salaries, fringe benefits, prospects for promotion, work-loads, supporting staff and services compare poorly with their colleagues' from more prosperous countries. Here again the poor economies of most small states come to the fore. Personnel in the education sector often constitute the largest single category of civil servants and a small salary increase can cause a considerable proportion of the national budget to be diverted to education from other deserving national projects. Furthermore, salary rises for senior education officials would lead to similar claims by others, claims that weak economies cannot sustain. As a result, even when the politicians and the inhabitants of these states recognize and wish to reward education personnel for their valuable work to society, the economic state of small countries dictate otherwise.

In the special circumstances of small states, other socio-economic factors have to be considered, such as the question of salary relativity between grades in the civil service and employees in the private sector. In transparent societies, salaries and one's placing on the salary scale extend beyond the question of income; they reflect also social status, official recognition and appreciation of one's work. People who have grown and studied together and who are familiar with each other's capabilities and limitations inevitably compare their placing in the social hierarchy, not always without prejudice and envy. In the closely interrelated systems some officials subtly refuse to acknowledge the new seniority of a former colleague whose promotion they consider unmerited. By contrast, social status does not feature so strongly in larger and more developed countries as it does in small states. In larger states, the ill-effects of personal pique are minimized by the extent and diffused nature of the civil service and the impersonal and anonymous process of decision making. In small states, salary improvements and the related social status need to be carefully evaluated for their socio-economic implications within an overall and

finely balanced incomes and prices policy.

In these circumstances, officials who understand and appreciate the social and economic factors that influence and sometimes control their work are more likely to accept and tolerate them. This awareness mitigates the personal disappointments and professional frustrations of senior officials when they compare their working conditions with those of their colleagues from bigger and often more prosperous nations.

Promotion Prospects

Promotions need be considered with similar understanding. The limited size of education systems in small states seriously restricts promotion opportunities so that many capable young men and women in the service feel that their ambitions for professional growth and personal economic improvement are seriously stunted. Better opportunities in larger, more developed countries bring about a brain drain and the loss of valuable, often highly scarce expertise. Alternately, limited employment opportunities may encourage people in small states to seek work within the security of state employment rather than in the better paid but sometimes volatile jobs of private industry. Consequently, state or para-statal employment in small poor countries tend to be inflated. Limited state finance causes the peculiar phenomenon of a skewed organizational structure with large numbers of employees at the lower range of the salary scale, but tapering off sharply at the top end where salaries are higher. As a result, junior officials at the broader end of the pyramid have to compete vigorously for the few positions at the top. Their keen competition leads to friction among colleagues, their impatience to move to the top causes conflict with their superiors, both conditions leading to frustration and stress, that become more intense in small communities than in larger impersonal bureaucracies. Furthermore, unlike their counterparts in larger states, the limited geographical scale prohibits employees from seeking better openings in other districts or neighbouring educational authorities in the same country.

The frustrations caused by professional limitations are strongest among officials who have been on scholarships abroad, where opportunities for research and academic fulfilment seem more promising and where career advancement and monetary rewards appear more attractive than in their own country. The frustrations become exacerbated when scholarship holders return to their previous posts only to find senior positions blocked by older, perhaps less qualified, officials. In such circumstances, many small states find

it difficult to retain the services of the younger, better qualified officials. Even if they do, small educational systems cannot always guarantee the full commitment of young aspiring officials, especially if their superiors are politically powerful but undeserving appointees.

 * **Intellectual Dependence** *
 * Inhabitants of small states often unwittingly undermine regional or *
 * local initiatives through the ex-colonial mentality that gives greater *
 * credence and value to activities and institutions of a foreign origin, even *
 * when local courses and projects produce better results. *
 * And perhaps that is one of the major handicaps facing small states. *
 * They tend to have a strong national and cultural identity; and yet *
 * feeling small and vulnerable, they remain intellectually dependent on *
 * larger states. They see themselves as miniature models of the larger *
 * nations and attempt to emulate them without fully realising that as *
 * small states they have an ecology of their own. A general policy for the *
 * professional development of educational personnel in small states must *
 * reflect an acute awareness of the benefits and limitations of being small. *
 * A lack of this basic awareness often leads to rejected transplants. *
 * *
 * Farrugia, Charles (1987) "The Professional Development of *
 * Educational Personnel in Small States" in Bacchus, Kazim and *
 * Brock, Colin, *The Challenge of Scale*, Commonwealth Secretariat, *
 * London. *
 * *
 * — Would you say the above observations apply to your country? If *
 * so, can you provide examples? Can you provide instances where *
 * the colonial mentality has been overcome? *
 * *

Intrinsic Rewards

Once again, it can be argued that the problems identified above are not exclusive to small states. Many senior education officials in larger states often find themselves in similar situations which require careful handling and wise administrative decisions in order to balance an individual's personal aspirations with the needs of the nation. However, in small states the impact of policy decisions is more rapid and more potent, the social implications are more far-reaching and the per capita loss can be much greater. Thus, the wastage of valued, sometimes unique, manpower and expertise would be more far reaching in small states than in big ones. Senior education officials in small states find it difficult to maintain a harmonious working relationship amidst social, economic and political forces striving to

unbalance it. They face a major challenge to co-ordinate the work-force in a manner that encourages initiatives and hard work when the rewards are often intrinsic rather than extrinsic. Such rewards are often limited to a word of encouragement, to opportunities to be creative, to the satisfaction of working in a dynamic team and to the pleasure of professional achievement and positive influence on the education system.

Small Can Be Beautiful

The special characteristic of small states can be conducive to positive orientations. Their limitations and handicaps are many, but their problems should be viewed in proportion to their size. A realistic evaluation of the variables involved places the problems of small states in their true perspective so that the solutions need not be as prohibitive as they may appear initially. One needs to remember that the number of people, the geographical dimensions and the finances involved are not so high as to present insurmountable difficulties. For example, the size and population of a small state are normally equal to those of small or medium-sized towns in larger countries, the entire education budget is often equivalent to the cost of purchasing a sophisticated aircraft, and all the personnel employed by the Ministry of Education may number less than the workers in a medium-sized factory in a large industrialized country. Yet, for many senior education officials in small states such arguments provide little consolation; to them their problems are real and sometimes overwhelming and they require special skills to meet their particular needs.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity One:

Know Your Organization

Find the necessary information to answer the following questions: (You may wish to bear in mind Tables Two and Three for guidance)

- a. What is the total number of people employed on a full-time basis by your country's Ministry and Department of Education?
- b. How many of these are teachers, office-workers and manual workers?
- c. Which are the major sections of the Ministry and the Department of Education? Do you know the names of the head of each section and how long they have been in their post? How many people does each section employ?
- d. How does the Ministry of Education compare in size with the other ministries? How does the budget of the Ministry of Education compare in size with that of other ministries?
- e. Would you say that the current Minister of Education is a highly influential member of the Cabinet? How can you tell?
- f. Which are the three largest private or para-statal industries in your country? How many people does each of them employ? If you can find out their annual budgets, how do they compare with that devoted to state education?
- g. Draw the student path-flow of your country's education system from kindergarten to post-secondary provisions.
- h. Draw an organizational chart of the Ministry of Education and another chart of the Department of Education.
- i. What are the salary scales operating in the posts identified in (h)?
- j. If there is a private education sector in your country, find the following information:
 - the number of pupils attending each level of education;
 - the number of teachers employed in each level.

Activity Two:

Major Educational Developments

- a. In chronological order, identify the major landmarks in the development of education in your country. If possible, ask two or more colleagues to do the same and compare notes.
- b. In schematic form, outline the major local and foreign forces that influence or have influenced the development of education in your country. Again, it may be useful to ask one or more of your

- colleagues to assist you in this exercise.
- c. Write a memo of approximately 200 words to a visiting foreign education consultant about the main obstacles to the rapid introduction of educational innovations in your country.

Activity Three:

Case Study: The Planning Unit

The Planning Unit is in shambles; well, almost! It employs three well qualified people who, until recently, produced excellent results. Lately, however, the Unit is beset with personal and operational problems that have wrecked its excellent record. Its internal squabbles are effecting adversely various sectors of the educational system. As the Director-General of Education you have to do something about it.

The Planning Unit is a very important branch of the small country's educational system. It co-ordinates curriculum development, organizes in-service courses for teachers, holds parent-teachers conferences, and liaises closely with the Test-Construction and Examination Unit. These "academic" activities of the unit are the responsibility of Liza N., a thirty-two year old who obtained a Master's degree in curriculum development at an overseas university. Liza's major task is to ensure that the small educational system does not isolate itself from the educational developments taking place in other countries, and at the same time to encourage indigenous developments.

Samuel B. is forty-one years old and holds a Master's in Administration which he obtained as an external student with a highly reputable foreign university. Samuel ensures that the correct number of teachers are at the right school teaching the expected number of pupils, with the proper equipment, and with the necessary support when they need it. Samuel's major worries are to make limited, often meagre human and material resources meet the growing demands of the ever expanding educational system.

Senior Education Officer Matthew L. heads the Unit. After several years teaching, Matthew was awarded a one-year bursary in educational planning, to be followed a few years later by a UNESCO scholarship at the International Institute of Educational Planning in Paris. He co-ordinates the work of the Unit but his major concern is to safeguard the Unit's interest from attempts by colleagues running other branches (such as Supplies, Finance, Personnel, and Teacher Training) from swallowing up his outfit. He knows that other SEO's

are after Liza, Samuel and the budget allocation that goes with the Unit.

You know that your subordinates individually are three good people, although Liza and Samuel have always had difficulties working together. Lately, their relationship has deteriorated and their behaviour has become increasingly despondent. A closer analysis of the problem reveals a most worrying situation.

Matthew is 55 years old. He has been at the helm since the Unit was established twenty years ago. He was working extremely hard, first accepting any premises for the Unit, gradually moving to a more habitable place. He improved this into a small model office complex which became the envy of many older, better placed officials. Matthew has a way of getting things done. With his jovial manner, a pat on the back, a resounding laugh and his endless repertoire of jokes, he manages to charm anything out of people. He even persuades the lazy handyman to fix anything that needs to be done. Any piece of equipment or material his Unit needs, he obtains from the tight-fisted stores officer. The classical case was the time he procured the electronic typewriter which had been intended for your secretary's office. You are still not certain how he persuaded you that his secretary needed it more than yours!

His charm works wonders in other directions as well. He can set up working teams when other officials fail. He can organize conferences in a few weeks when others take months. He can soothe the anger of senior officials in other ministries when everyone is preparing for a big blow-up. If only he could solve the problem in his own Unit.

Matthew had handpicked his two assistants, first Samuel, later Liza, and trained them. Until recently, and perhaps he still does, he had held their respect and complete loyalty, even if the two are as diverse in character as their duties.

Liza is the no-nonsense type who wants things done well and speedily. She works very hard and expects everyone to work at the same rate and level of accuracy as she does. Her expectations, occasionally verging on intolerance, scare many officials who do not keep the same high standards. Some are particularly apprehensive at the thought that Liza might be promoted to an Education Officer post, possibly higher. You would support her as she is among the most qualified and competent officials. It is a pity that her work-style, which most interpret as arrogance, irritates people to the extent that many at Head Office find it difficult to work with her. Her foes, including Samuel, snigger that if only Liza would get married she would direct her aggressive energy elsewhere. She senses the hostility

and is under great stress. Lately, she has been to your office several times complaining about what she calls boss Matthew, whom she accuses of siding with Samuel.

Liza holds great respect in the schools. She is known as a master of her job, understands the teachers' problems and finds solutions to them. Her work with the 'curriculum groups' has meant that in spite of the limited resources of the small country, your educational system has been able to keep up-to-date with the major educational developments overseas in a manner that does it credit. The acrimony that Liza generates at Head Office seems to evaporate as soon as she gets to the field, and you would dearly love to keep her there. However, the short distances involved and the working proximity of the education community would mean that Liza would still continue to be in constant and often close touch with the officials in town. You have spoken to Matthew about the problem, but in his usual unflappable way he dismissed it, claiming that as long as Liza delivers, he can handle the waves she creates at the base. Matthew does not seem to appreciate that the waves created by Liza threaten to down him as well. The Minister has told you confidentially that if he gets any further complaints about Liza and Matthew, he will disband the Planning Unit.

The Minister is kept well informed by Samuel who is an active member of the ruling party and the Minister's personal friend. However, it was not these credentials which got him the job at the Planning Unit. He is a very competent logistician who worked very closely with Matthew right from the time the Unit was established. Indeed, he has learned a great deal from his mentor and is able to stretch the very limited resources of the system to the full. He has an innovative mind and can work wonders with the budget, getting the best material for the best possible price by tender, re-cycling outdated materials and equipment when others will want to throw it out. His resourcefulness becomes extremely valuable when funds, equipment and people are in short supply. You know through the grapevine that other ministries have been enticing Samuel with promises of promotion and better facilities.

His greatest asset is the ability to distinguish between real and phony needs. He can establish where the priorities lie and will go to great lengths to satisfy the needs of the remotest school with the least influential of headteachers. He has a mild-mannered disposition; he hates being rushed, wanting to know all the angles before reaching a decision. The cynics at Head Office, including Liza, hint that he needs the time to consult with the Minister to abide by the latter's wishes.

You know that this is not true. Samuel has always worked to a slow but sure approach. However, you find Samuel's relationship with the Minister irritating; he keeps his powerful friend informed, but not always accurately. You have spoken to Matthew about this, but, as usual, the Senior Education Officer does not seem unduly worried. His attitude is that ministers come and go, but hard workers like Samuel are not easy to replace.

But you are worried. The constant bickering between Liza and Samuel is wearing not only the people directly involved, but is telling on a wider circle of personnel. For instance, many people in Samuel's opposite political camp are using his friction with Liza to gain political mileage, hinting at favouritism and discrimination. Liza's enemies are using Samuel's new found power to get back to her. Someone has just told you "to clip her wings". You know the situation cannot go on like this: you have to take action regardless of the restricted working environment, the limited personnel, past service (however commendable) and the influence of powerful friends. The problem is to decide what to do, and do it quickly before the Planning Unit disintegrates. What are your options? What actions would you prefer and on what basis would you justify them?