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**Public Administration, Human Resources  
and Social Development Division**

**REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF  
MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR  
HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT  
AND UTILIZATION  
ON:  
A REVIEW OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES  
FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**October 1990**

## Introduction

At a time when the human race has advanced towards greater heights of knowledge, power and technology, there are very large numbers of people in Africa, particularly in rural areas, who are deprived of opportunities to satisfy basic human and minimum essential learning needs. While this deprivation is heavily concentrated among illiterates, youths, women and out-of-school children, it is increasingly becoming obvious that as long as all educational efforts of African countries are confined to the development of formal education; and to educational resources being primarily devoted to formal education programmes, little will be done to open up educational opportunities to a larger number of people. There are indications that this trend will continue for sometime, and as such, few if any, of the African countries would be in a position to meet the population's essential learning needs.

Indeed, not only is it desirable to prevent economic, intellectual and civic disparities from becoming more acute, in the radically changing Africa, and to see "a certain level of welfare, education and democracy become more accessible to all people; it is something which we can no longer regard merely as a matter of philanthropy, charity, benevolence or loftiness of spirit."<sup>1/</sup>

While conscious of this fact, we should also be aware of the fact that "the fundamental problem of Africa is that of a vicious interaction between excruciating poverty and abysmally low levels of productivity in an environment characterized by serious deficiencies in basic and social infrastructure, most especially the physical capital, research capabilities, technological know-how and human resources development that are indispensable to an integrated and dynamic economy"<sup>2/</sup>

Therefore, to avoid the painful prospect of grievous inequalities, privations and suffering of the African people the region needs to spell out a wide range of measures which promise some support to the majority of the deprived and disadvantaged people, most of which have relevance to education, viz:

- skill-formation and skill-up-grading programmes to promote self-and wage employment to the rural poor, youths, school leavers, women and the disadvantaged;
- resource and income development of vulnerable groups of society through the development of all sectors of the economy - formal, informal agricultural etc.;

<sup>1/</sup> Edgar Faure et al - Learning to Be, UNESCO, Paris, 1972, p. xxi.

<sup>2/</sup> ECA - African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), UNECA, Addis Ababa, E/ECA/CM.15/6/Rev.3, p.1.

- facilitating adequate availability of credit to support programmes designed to assist the rural people, out-of-school youths, school leavers, women, drop outs and those engaged in the informal-sector in urban and peri-urban areas;
- provision of essential minimum needs (such as food, nutrition, clothing, housing, pure water supply, sanitary installations, transport, health, education etc);
- provision of minimum essential learning needs such as "positive attitudes toward co-operation with others; functional literacy and numeracy; functional knowledge and skills for raising a family, earning a living and civic participation; and a scientific outlook and an elementary understanding of the process of nature".<sup>3/</sup> and
- involvement of universities, research, technical and other institutions of higher learning in national development programmes, projects, research activities, and in finding solutions to national problems such as self-employment; and assisting in preparing strategies for the scientific utilization of local resources (material, human and financial).

While it is true that the issues raised so far are nothing new, and therefore no need to melodramatize them, it is to be emphasized that a look at the evolution of educational activity through time, reveals that progress in education accompanies economic progress as well as an improvement in production techniques. Again, it should be pointed out that when economic progress assumes a certain pace, the educational system naturally tends to disperse an increase amount of knowledge to an increasing number of people, since more elaborate process of production requires more highly skill labour which in turn generates new technical improvements thereby releasing a chain of efforts.

Unfortunately, and in spite of progress made in education, little economic progress has been made in Africa, because of the many problems prevalent in the region such as "inflationary pressures, instability of export earnings, balance of payments deficits, rising debt burden and a host of other exogenous factors which have a bearing on economic performance of Africa. All these are the direct results of the lack of structural transformation, the rather unfavourable physical and socio-political environment of the African economies and their excessive outward orientation and dependence".<sup>4/</sup> Yet as far as it is known, the increase in the number of schools, colleges, universities or training institutions cannot provide an answer to the current crisis. Indeed there is much more to it than the more expansion of the education system such as:

- ensuring that there is sustainable funding for educational development in the right measures and at the right time;

<sup>3/</sup> UNICEF - New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth - International Council for Educational Development, 1973, p. 13-15.

<sup>4/</sup> AAF-SAP - opt.cited, page 1.

- that the skills of existing stock of teachers are up-graded to reflect the changing educational needs; and that adequate number of teachers are trained for the expanded system and less use is made of untrained/unqualified teachers;
- that an expanded educational system calls for a reorientation of the curriculum to the learning and socio-economic needs of those who have access to education and that
- even with a fast expanding educational system, there is need for alternative ways of providing education to the majority of the people, who, for one reason or another, do not have or have not had access to education. In other words, in spite of the massive efforts in the expansion of education in African countries, there is a serious shortage of skilled, trained, specialized, technical and technological manpower which can assist the continent in solving the current socio-economic crisis.

It is therefore evident that formal education alone cannot be instrumental in solving this shortage. Nor can non-formal education do so if it is to follow in the footprints of formal education as a complement or supplement to formal education. There is thus the need for a rethink and a reorientation of non-formal education to ensure that its programmes are made more relevant to national needs and to solving some of the pressing problems which cannot be solved by formal education alone.

The primary consideration of this report therefore is to examine the role of non-formal education programmes in the context of providing general education to the majority of people through literacy programmes, continuing education and in-schooling equivalency; examine non-formal education in response to Africa's development strategies particularly from a human focused development approach; and finally in response to the region's commitment for popular participation in development. In essence, non-formal education should be given a greater role in the development of human resources, more so during the period of structural adjustments.

## **II. Provision of General Education Through Non-Formal Education**

One of the major functions of non-formal education is to provide basic and general education through non-formal education programmes. These programmes place great emphasis on the four components of education viz:

- Knowledge and communication skills
- Knowledge and life skills
- Knowledge and production skills and
- specialized and technical skills needed by society for productive services.

Experience has shown that in many African countries, these components of education are provided through four basic modes/categories of non-formal education

programmes according to the focus, objectives, aims and content of the activities undertaken for the benefit of one of the following groups:

- Adults and youths, particularly out of school youths and young people engaged in the informal sector and whose activities and decisions have serious implications for national development and survival;
- Illiterates - both youths and adults, whose participation in national development activities and effort is very much dependent on literacy skills which would have been acquired through participation in non-formal education programmes;
- People at work or out of work, in the formal or informal sectors of the economy; and the left outs/left overs who cannot be accommodated by the formal education system for lack of educational opportunities, but who are desperately in need of second chance education or technical or vocational training and;
- All those who need education for one reason or another such as school leavers at the first and second levels as well as tertiary level, retirees, prisoners, handicapped, disabled, delinquents, farmers, peasants, businessmen, semi-skilled and para-professionals.

The educational needs of these groups of people have and can be satisfied through participation in:

- (a) General education covering a variety of programmes literacy programmes; correspondence education and distance teaching programmes; night schools and evening classes; continuing education and extra-mural studies.
- (b) General programmes of leadership and civic services carried out at local, district or national level involving the participation of citizens as a way of training or educating them for given roles or functions in society, or for their general education;
- (c) Artisanal and vocational training given to the younger and older people as a means of equipping them with knowledge and skills for a meaningful and productive life, or as a means of earning a living; and
- (d) Farming/Agricultural and extension training given to peasants and rural dwellers designed to improve agricultural productivity in rural areas.

These four modes of non-formal education, have been at the centre of providing education and training to many citizens in a number of countries, but with varying degrees of effectiveness. It is with this in mind (the effectiveness) that an analysis is being made hereunder and where necessary propose measures for improving their effectiveness.

(a) General Education

Within the context of general education, we can examine as indicated a little earlier, literacy programmes; correspondence education and distance teaching programmes; night schools and evening classes; continuing education; and extra-mural studies.

(i) Literacy Campaigns and Programmes

As early as 1958, UNESCO had defined an illiterate person as one "who cannot, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life"<sup>5/</sup> This definition was considered incomplete, and therefore twenty years after the first definition a more complete and complex one came up: "A functionally illiterate person is one who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development."<sup>6/</sup> While this definition may sound and appear more appropriate to Third World countries, it should be pointed out that in the light of the development of science and technology, such a definition should not be considered as good for all times, because there are those who have been to school but cannot function effectively in a technological world for lack of appropriate knowledge and skills.

It seems appropriate to argue therefore, that literacy in Africa should be considered as a continuum, whose definition ought to be constantly reviewed by Africans in the light of changing circumstances. It is important that each African government should decide its own literacy demands and needs, taking into account the social, educational, cultural and technological consequences of functional illiteracy within the context of national development.

Taking the foregoing into account, the world in general has now realized that illiteracy is not confined to the Third World countries, or primarily to developing countries only. There is a group of "new illiterates" who have actually attended school, be it in developing or developed countries, but are unable to read or write properly; or those who can read but not with enough understanding to exercise some critical judgment. In this context, functional illiteracy is not confined to developing countries: it is every where in the developed, developing and least developed countries.

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<sup>5/</sup> UNESCO: Prospects, Quarterly Review of Education Volume XVII No. 2, 1987 Extracts in: Towards International Literacy Year - Illiteracy in Industrialized Countries: Situation and Action, Paris 1989 p.5.

<sup>6/</sup> UNESCO: Prospects, Vol. XVII No. 2, 1987, opt. cited, p.6.

This may explain why the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-third session in 1985 wanted to proclaim an international literacy year, the observance of which would contribute to a greater understanding of the problem of illiteracy in the world. This decision subsequently led to the United Nations General Assembly proclaiming 1990 as the International Literacy Year.<sup>7/</sup>

This concern stems from the fact that illiteracy is not only the concern of developing countries, but developed countries as well, because current evidence shows that Europe is showing an increasing number of adults who are illiterate, even though this number is very small compared to developing countries. According to latest figures available, illiteracy rate in Africa stood at 56.8% in 1985 as compared to 37.3% in Asia and the Pacific and 17.3% in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is far in excess of what it is in developed countries where it stood at 2.0% during the same period. (Tables 1 (a) and (b)). From this evidence, the phenomenon of illiteracy affects not just Third World countries but developed countries as well. In this regard, the term "illiteracy" needs to be defined from time to time to take into account changing circumstances. In Europe, for instance, the inability of an individual to "understand a 'situations vacant' advertisement, to fill in a form or 'to place 35 people at 6 tables' not to mention the 'inability to recognize family relationships' are questions of functional illiteracy and not of illiteracy as such."<sup>8/</sup>

In Africa, this may explain why many non-formal education programmes have focused attention on rural communities most of whom are illiterate. Yet one must accept the fact that inspite of their illiteracy, rural people have elementary wisdom about their living conditions, social institutions, crops, soils and ecological conditions. They know about their needs and priorities and how to use available resources for a productive life. However, as the Charter for Popular Participation states,<sup>9/</sup> literacy rates constitute an index of the capacity for mass participation in public debate, decision making and general development process. In this regard, Africa with the highest rate of illiteracy cannot be expected to grow at a pace comparable to other regions of the world. It is therefore no wonder that the largest number of least developed countries is in Africa. Indeed, while there are exceptions to the rule, illiteracy goes hand in hand with poverty. However, it can be argued whether illiteracy is a cause or a consequence of poverty, but there is a strong linkage between education and economic well-being. In Africa, those who went to school appear better off than the illiterates, and the higher one went up the education ladder the more better-off one is expected to be economically. This linkage between illiteracy and poverty is clearly demonstrated in Table 2 of this

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<sup>7/</sup> UNESCO - Information Document, June 1989 on 1990 International Literacy Year.

<sup>8/</sup> UNESCO - Prospects, Vol. XVII No. 2, 1987 opt.cited p.6.

<sup>9/</sup> African Charter for Popular Participation Development, ECA, Addis Ababa 1990, p.31

**Table 1: Regional Data On Education**  
**(a) Illiteracy Rates According to Region**

	Illiteracy rates %	Gross enrolment ratios (%)					Number of third level students per 100,000 inhabitants	
		Education at the first level		Education at the second level			1975	1985
		1975	1985	1975	1985	1985		
WORLD TOTAL	27.7	94	100	44	46	981	1 165	
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	2.0	99	102	86	91	2 481	2 683	
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	38.0	93	99	32	38	435	681	
WHICH:								
AFRICA	56.8	63	77	14	29	211	374	
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	37.3	98	104	34	38	359	597	
CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN		17.3	98	107	36	50	1 588	

Data on enrolment ratios and on third level students do not include the People's Democratic Republic of Korea and South Africa. Countries and territories with less than 250,000 inhabitants are also excluded.

**(b) Numbers of Illiterates Per Region**

Region	Population		Illiteracy		Education at the first level		Education at the second level		Education at the third level	
	Total (000's)	% 6-23	Number of illiterates (000's)	% F	Number of pupils (000's)	% F	Number of pupils (000's)	% F	Number of students (000's)	% F
WORLD TOTAL	4 836 000	37	888 700	63	579 151	45	271 823	43	55 690	43
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	1 187 000	28	18 200	63	104 654	48	87 562	51	30 985	49
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	3 649 000	40	870 500	63	474 497	44	184 261	39	24 705	37
WHICH:										
AFRICA	522 600	41	158 900	61	67 469	44	20 615	32	1 944	28
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	2 698 000	40	666 400	64	335 135	43	140 014	39	15 995	33
CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	405 000	40	43 600	56	70 438	48	21 273	51	6 416	45

Source: UNESCO Office of Statistics: World Education at a Glance 1987.

paper where it shows that the higher the literacy rate, the greater the gross national product per capita and the lower the literacy rate the smaller the gross national product per capita.

Table 2: The Rate of Illiteracy Compared to Gross National Product Per Capita

Region	Illiteracy Rates 15 Years Old and Over, 1985			Gross National Product Per Capita in US\$
	Both Sexes	Males	Females	
World	27.7%	20.5%	34.9%	\$2,557
Developed Countries	2.1	1.7	2.6	8,324
Developing Countries	38.2	27.9	48.9	656
Africa	56.8	43.3	64.5	629
Asia	37.3	25.6	47.4	960
Latin America	17.3	15.3	19.2	1,671
Least Developed Countries	67.6	51.9	78.4	195

Source: UNESCO Office of Statistics, Information Document, June 1989 on 1990 International Literacy Year (ILY).

This may explain why a number of countries such as Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia have put so much effort, energy and resources - human, financial and material into their literacy programme. Illiteracy in Ethiopia had fallen from 93% in 1979 to 25% in 1989, and in Zambia and Zimbabwe it was as low as 24.3 and 26.0% respectively according to the countries' latest figures in 1985<sup>10/</sup>

The emancipation from poverty, ignorance and disease is very much dependent on making the majority of African population literate. People need literacy skills to follow simple instruction about new agricultural methods and production techniques; about health, food and nutrition; and about civic duties such as voting by secret ballot. Literacy programmes, therefore have played and continue to play an important and vital role in national development affairs in African countries.

(ii) Correspondence Education, Distance Teaching Programmes, Evening Classes and Extra-Mural Studies

This is one form of non-formal education on which greater attention should be focused. Programmes in this category provide general education and training to youths and adults outside the formal education system leading to academic

<sup>10/</sup> UNESCO - Information Document, June 1989 on 1990 International Literacy Year.

qualifications in a variety of subjects including adult education itself as a field of study. Correspondence education or distance teaching is provided to both youths and adults as a second chance education which must lead to same/equivalent educational qualifications as those provided at the first second or third level institutions.

Instruction is often by correspondence courses or lectures; distance teaching using radio or television; extra-mural studies, evening studies or night schools teaching. In essence, this is often considered as an alternative route to formal education to all those participating in such programmes or activities.

Correspondence education, distance teaching as well as night schools and extra-mural studies may be termed as an in-school equivalency because both in content, focus and emphasis the programmes keenly follow the pattern of formal schooling or education. For instance, the Malawi Correspondence College offers secondary school education in various subjects to all those who cannot find a place in the regular secondary schools. According to the current Education Plan, 1985-1995, secondary schools would provide education to 34,000 full-time secondary students while an additional 44,000 active correspondence enrolments would be provided through the Malawi Distance Education Centres all over the country. This number is 10,000 more than those in regular secondary schools. It is vital for the country's supply of human resources for national development. The role played by correspondence education and distance teaching in Malawi is absolutely vital.

A second example relates to the Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) which grew out of giving assistance to private secondary schools and to students who were not at schools. To-day, MCA caters for the needs of students all over the island whether in private schools or not. Radio and television lessons are given to primary, secondary students and to primary school teachers in a variety of subjects such as English, mathematics, science, biology etc. There is also the adult education television coverage focusing on family planning, health and women's education, nutrition and agriculture programmes, as well as lifelong education, commercial subjects and social studies. The college also specializes in the production of education software such as the making of short television films, audio and visual materials for use in schools.

In schooling equivalency is not only provided at the first and second levels of education, but also at the third levels of education. At this level, credit programmes are offered in adult education, arts, humanities, law, social sciences etc. at diploma, degree or post-graduate levels through correspondence, radio, television, part-time study or evening classes. Examples of such programmes are to be found in the Addis Ababa University Extension Studies Programme which offers diplomas and degrees in the humanities, law, and social sciences in its evening classes programmes. The institute of Adult Education of the University of Botswana offers certificates, diplomas and degrees in adult education through full or part-time study. Similarly the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies of the National University of Lesotho; the Division of Extra-Mural Studies, Swaziland; the Department of Adult Education in the University of Zimbabwe, to name but a few, all offer diplomas, degrees or certificates in one field or another.

Indeed there are many institutions within the continent which offer certificates, diplomas and degrees, particularly in the arts and social sciences. These are done on a part-time basis but are intended to have the same academic status or qualifications as those of formal education and should yield commensurable benefits to those possessing them - from formal or non-formal education. In effect then, programmes falling under this category have been a major avenue for providing second chance education to a number of people and for improving academic qualifications by those who aspire to higher qualifications than those already possessed. They have been very effective in preparing national cadres for middle and high level administrative, technical and managerial positions in the public and private sectors; in providing training to ensure that more nationals occupy key positions particularly in private enterprises and multinational corporations; and in providing opportunities for professional advance and self-employment.

#### **B. Programmes for Community, Civic and Leadership Services/Skills**

Programmes for community, civic and leadership services tend to emphasize the provision of a general form of education to the population in a variety of fields such as sanitation, health, food, nutrition, environmental education, family planning and education, civic and leadership duties, community services and self-help activities. In most of these activities emphasis is placed on providing essential learning needs, and on skill formation or upgrading of knowledge and skills for a meaningful and productive life. At the same time such programmes tend to provide knowledge and skills to the population as a way of insulating them against possible misery and disasters.

Radio and television programmes are given to the public covering topical issues on health e.g. the dangers of aids and how to prevent it, on family planning and on farming. In countries where self help programmes and projects are common, and in those countries where mass participation is considered as an effective tool for national development, public education and information through radio and television play an important role in the lives of the people. In essence, therefore, community, civic and leadership services/skills may be learned through participation in radio and television programmes; and in countries where open forums, media debates and discussions are held, issues of concern to the public are brought to the forefront. Indeed countries like Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal, Benin and Burkina Faso, to name but a few, are doing a lot of community development activities for the benefit of the people either through co-operatives, youth clubs and associations, extension work and services, and community participation in self-help schemes. Some of these countries, also use the radio and television for public education.

#### **C. Artisanal, Vocational and Industrial Training Programmes**

Artisan, industrial and vocational training programmes as well as apprenticeship schemes exist in a number of African countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia and Burkina Faso. In these countries, industrial, vocational and apprenticeship schemes have been at the forefront of preparing the out-of-school youths and adults for self-or salaried employment by equipping them with necessary knowledge and skills in various trades such as carpentry, wood and metal works, brick laying, motor mechanics, leather

works and tanning, plumbing, electrical wiring, building and construction, blacksmithing, draughtsmanship, tie and dye, radio repairs, textiles, retailing, book-keeping, typing, accounting, commercial studies etc.

There are many institutions, programmes or centres of activities for technical, industrial and vocational training in which emphasis is put on improving the knowledge and practical skills of trainees in the trade or field of specialization. In countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Libya and Zimbabwe, industrial training programmes are designed to assist trainees (on full time or on the-job-training) to adopt, adapt and use indigenous materials in the design, construction and production of products, particularly for local consumption. Many such industrial training programmes are sponsored by employers from the private sector, parastatals, agencies, organizations and corporations and government ministries connected with works or supplies.

In others, industrial, technical and vocational training range from the well-publicized movements and programmes such as the Young Pioneers of Malawi; the Brigades of Botswana, the Village Polytechnics of Kenya, and other rural training schemes projects, to programmes undertaken at rural training centres such as the Burkina Faso's Centres for rural education; Ghana's National Women's Vocational Training Centres; Senegal's Rural Training Centres; Zambia's Youth Self-help Projects; and Lesotho's Self Reliance Projects.<sup>11/</sup>

All these and many more have been at the centre of providing knowledge and skills for a more productive and fruitful life. Unfortunately such efforts often appear too little in a continent seriously short of technical and industrial manpower. The consequence of inadequate training opportunities in technical and industrial trades particularly at the supervisory and managerial levels has been the continued dependence on industrial countries for manpower at this level. There is therefore the need for more financial resources being committed for technical, industrial and vocational training even at village or local level.

#### **D. Farming/Agricultural and Extension Training Programmes**

With the emphasis on food self-sufficiency, almost all countries are involved one way or the other in farming/agricultural and extension training programmes. There are land settlement or farming/agricultural schemes, programmes and projects designed to prepare youths as well as adults and equip them with essential knowledge, skills, attitudes and techniques for production and meaparticipation in national development.

In Benin for instance, a number of ruralization schemes and project designed s have been in operation for the last eighteen years or more. These schemes range

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<sup>11/</sup> ECA - Non-Formal Education Programmes in National Development - ECA/PAMM/HRP/88/6/5.2 TP.1 pp 15-27.

from youth clubs with emphasis on "back to the land" concept i.e., that youths should cultivate an interest in agriculture and farm work and should be ready to go to rural areas for work, be it farm or other blue collar work. The Department of Agriculture of the Government of Benin provides extensive services throughout the country for those engaged in farm or agricultural work. Such services cover training, extension work and provision of necessary information about agriculture techniques, pest control, planting, harvesting or food storage.<sup>12/</sup>

The Department has also established ruralized schools with great emphasis on agricultural methods and techniques, growing, maintaining, harvesting and storing cash crops and how to market them effectively. The Government also runs integrated crop and livestock farm projects where emphasis is placed on the use of the plough for increased production. In addition, these rural projects and schemes provide for training in marketing for farmers, carpentry, and black-smithing.

The Botswana Brigades though not specifically an agricultural programme gives priority to activities which serve the needs of women in various trades and to the out-of-school youths. In accordance with the peculiar geo-politico-economic problems of the country, the training also emphasizes the development of skills in marketing distribution, and agricultural production so as to lessen the country's dependence on South Africa, both industrially and economically.

In the case of the Malawi Young Pioneers, the moment was founded as an agency for the training of youths in farming and agricultural methods and techniques in the country's pursuit to achieve self-sufficiency in food. Training bases and settlement schemes were established all over the country at which youths were taught how to grow various crops, particularly cash crops such as tea, tobacco, cotton, coffee, maize and groundnuts. So successful was the training of youths at the established bases and settlement schemes that the government introduced the movement's activities in formal secondary schools as a means of preparing the youths for a productive life upon leaving school. Such training together with other government measures and strategies for improving agricultural productivity have contributed to Malawi's success story in food production and attaining food self-sufficiency.

### **III Problems, Failures and Successes of Non-Formal Education Programmes in Response to Africa's Development Strategies**

In spite of the many non-formal education programmes undertaken in African countries, there are a number of problems encountered in the implementation of such programmes. The list of such problems is long; one can only cite a few:

First, there is lack of effective co-ordination and collaboration among government ministries, voluntary organizations and international agencies and

<sup>12/</sup> ECA - Non-Formal Education - Programmes in National Development opt.cited pp 25-27.

parastatal bodies involved in non-formal education programmes. All these spend substantial resources on their uncoordinated and sometimes duplicated projects and programmes all of which are designed to serve national needs. A lot of effort and energy are wasted because of this lack of co-ordination. It should be emphasized that effective co-ordination would ensure that scarce and limited resources are judiciously utilized in the implementation of non-formal education programmes for national development.

A second aspect, closely associated with the first is that many extension services programmes are manned by poorly trained and poorly rewarded extension workers or agents. At the same time, these ill-equipped and poorly trained extension workers and agents operating at grassroots level, rarely communicate with their counterparts or plan their activities in consultation with each other. Also, the flow of information up and down the extension services ladder is often slow and disjointed, and coupled with the centralized nature of programmes and projects, particularly those under the auspices of government ministries, extension workers are usually at a disadvantage to implement projects effectively.

More important still is the tendency for extension work even agricultural extension to exacerbate poverty by concentrating government efforts through the services of extension workers on the progressive minority in rural and peri-urban areas i.e., the focus is on the enlightened rural or peri-urban dwellers at the expense of the majority of rural illiterates or poor inhabitants. In this regard the majority of rural dwellers - the poor and the illiterates, are not given the technology, methods and farming techniques needed to improve production in rural areas and make farming a more efficient activity.

Third, there is the tendency in some countries to launch or initiate non-formal education programmes using external resources - material, financial and human resources to implement such programme. Little account is taken for providing such resources whenever external resources dry up. As a result many well conceived programmes have collapsed or fallen in quality of service as soon as external resources (human or financial) have disappeared. It is disheartening to note that even a training workshop or seminar for say ten working days for some 20-25 participants has to be financed by external donors to the tune of say \$4-5,000. To this end, many programmes continue to suffer from lack of financial resources in spite of the immense effects and impact such programmes may have on the life of the people.

Four, many non-formal education programmes tend to prepare trainees for the modern sector and not for the rural sector where the majority of people live. Participation in a programme is associated with an escape route from the rural to urban or peri-urban areas. To this effect, a programme may be considered effective depending upon its success in preparing people for the modern sector. This may explain why non-formal education programmes which give certificates equal in value to those issued by the formal education systems tend to be more popular than those which only issue attendance certificates of no professional, technical or remuneration value.

In general it should be emphasized that there is too much wasteful fragmentation arising out of diverse sponsorship of non-formal education and lack

of collaboration and co-ordination amongst the many sponsors of such programmes, and reminding one of the old proverb that "too many cooks spoil the broth". Indeed one can even say that programmes suffer more for having too many so-called professionals, semi-professionals, and laymen engaged in various non-formal education programmes, projects and activities but lacking a clear understanding of what the educational needs of their clients are, let alone an understanding of what rural development is, and is about.

Given the foregoing problems, how is non-formal education going to respond to Africa's development needs which have been prioritized by African governments as: (a) improvement in food and agricultural production and security; (b) development of other sectors in support of the agricultural sector (i.e. industry, science and technology, transport, communications, trade and finances; (c) adequate response to and minimization of the effects of drought and desertification; and (d) human resources development.<sup>13/</sup>

These priorities presuppose that Africa will be in a position to develop its own human resources through its educational systems and institutions in adequate quantity and of the right mix in knowledge and skills. In this regard, education, training and staff development systems and programmes will have to reorient their activities in response to the priorities dictated by the African crisis and the recovery measures being pursued, whereas there is no argument regarding the necessity for educational reforms; the difference in opinion lies on the question of "to what direction and to what degree" these educational reforms should take and for what purpose they should be made.

It is therefore to be postulated that education, particularly non-formal education for African recovery and development should focus on the following:

(i) **Increased investments in education particularly in higher education as well as in literacy programmes and primary education. But for third level education to effectively respond to national development needs, it should have requisite support at the second level particularly in the sciences and technical subjects.**

In view of the fact that investment in technical subjects and in the sciences demand a lot of high quality human resources and massive financial resources, a call for increased investments, to education at the second and third levels does not auger well, nor is it the kind of priority advocated by funding institutions such as the World Bank,<sup>14/</sup> even though there is a lot of talk about the shortage of trained and skilled manpower in the sciences, technical, technological and managerial fields. In view of the fact that these are crucial areas requiring immediate attention if Africa is to move away from the present crisis, investments in non-formal education through the teaching of technical,

<sup>13/</sup> A detailed analysis and description - appears in the Lagos Plan of Action.

<sup>14/</sup> The World Bank - Sub-Sahara Africa - From Crisis to Sustainable Growth - A long-term Perspective Study, Wahsington D.C. 1989, Chapter 3.

mathematics and scientific subjects on television of which many African countries have, might be an easier solution out of the shortage of skilled manpower in these fields. Television in Africa is mostly for entertainment, and it is high time that it should be used for the much needed education and training for technical and scientific fields. After all, the offer of external degrees by African universities does not constitute a major component of university activities. Greater use should be made of television for non-formal education purposes as this may be cheaper than building new institutions.

- (ii) The search for relevance of non-formal education to national development needs. Hitherto, non-formal education programmes have been confined to literacy campaigns and functional literacy programmes encompassing correspondence education, distance teaching, night and evening schools, extension and extra-rural studies, often undertaken as a second chance education to those who need it; to leadership and civic services; to artisanal and vocational training programmes; and to extension work, and farming and agricultural training programmes. All these programmes and activities have been, in one way or another designed to provide nationals with knowledge and skills needed for a productive life in society. But experience has shown that these programmes have either been small drops in a pool of water as to make little impact; or that they have not been responsive enough to the changing needs of society.

For instance, many school leavers possess neither the knowledge nor skills for salaried or self-employment. In any case, even if they possessed knowledge and skills, there is not enough room in the formal sector of the economy to absorb them. Most of them would have to find room in the informal sector for their livelihood. Given the multifarious nature of skills required in the informal sector in the economy, non-formal education programmes should seriously reorient their activities to the knowledge and skills needed for operation in the informal sector. After all, it is strongly believed that non-formal education should complete the unfinished business of the school.

In the extension and agricultural training programmes, attention should be focused on, say, livestock and poultry farming, and on improving agricultural production through the use of locally made manure in the absence of chemically made fertilizers. Distance teaching through television should concentrate on the teaching of technical knowledge and skills specifically designed to answer to the critical national needs rather than teaching English, French and other related subjects.

- (iii) Closely related to (ii) above, is the need for rapid multiplication of knowledge and skills, particularly technical and technological knowledge and skills at the middle and higher levels of operations. It is now an imperative necessity that knowledge and skills should be expanded fast to enable a larger proportion of Africans to have the capability to regain control over their environment and national economic affairs. With the advancement of science and technology even those Africans who were educated in their universities ten years ago have become obsolete in their operations, because many activities to-day require some scientific

and technical operations. Computers and informatics are very much in use, and one needs to know how to use them. There is thus the need for most of us to go back to school, but not necessarily back to the classroom. Hence the important role of non-formal education programmes in this rapid expansion of knowledge and skills.

- (iv) The need for a change of attitudes to society and by society and to work. Present African attitudes tend to look down upon agricultural, blue collar jobs and manual work; and that the best place is a job in the civil service. After all, civil servants appear better off materially than many nationals engaged in agriculture, manual work, or in the informal sector. At the same time, governments do not seem to give adequate support to rural farmers, peasants, self-employed persons and those engaged in the informal sector through the provision of credit facilities, provision of infrastructure in rural areas and adequate amenities and services; as well as marketing of their products.

The public should also be prepared to change their attitude to work: that blue collar jobs are not necessarily dirty jobs, and that not every one of us can find a place in the civil service. Change of attitudes requires that there should be public education and this can be effectively done on the radio or television.

- (v) Lastly, a point that ought to be greatly emphasized is that popular participation in development as spelt out in the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development at both the levels of the people and their organizations, and at that of the governments, calls for the promotion of education, literacy skills training and human resource development as a means of enhancing popular participation <sup>15/</sup> by the people. Much of this education and literacy skills training can be provided through non-formal education through evening and night schools, distance teaching and literacy education classes specifically designed to provide functional literacy to the people. For this purpose, government efforts should be deliberately geared towards making people functionally literate if they are to participate in national development programmes more effectively.

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<sup>15/</sup> ECA - African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, E/ECA/CM.16/11, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, 12-16 February 1990, pp 22-31.

Undoubtedly this calls for the provision of more resources, both human and financial, which are not easily got in Africa. However, governments must make sacrifices through a deliberate shift of resources from other sectors of the economy to education and social welfare. No suggestion is being made as to where such cuts or shift of resources should come, but a look round the sources of government expenditures shows such shifts and cuts can be done for the good of education and training of the people, depending on the will of governments to do so. For without the commitment and will to educate and free people from ignorance, very little can be done.

(vi)

#### Conclusion

Among the conclusions that may be drawn from the foregoing analyses is that non-formal education programmes in many African countries operate at the periphery of national development priorities as evidenced by the meagre financial resources made available for their implementation. Many such programmes have been initiated by voluntary agencies, charitable or religious organizations, although it has to be admitted that industrial, vocational, distance teaching and literacy programmes are often undertaken at the initiative of governments. The low priority is evidenced not only in the little financial resources made available for implementation of non-formal education, but also in the material and human resources devoted to such programmes. For instance, personnel engaged in extension and community work are often untrained, if not poorly trained. Any one who can read and write or school leavers and unemployed voluntary persons are used for implementing literacy programmes without any specific training or induction for undertaking such programmes.

Indeed, it has also to be admitted that one of the problems for making a fair assessment as regards their utility, effectiveness and impact of non-formal education programmes in national development is the lack of in-depth evaluation to provide data and information for decision-making by policy makers. Non-formal education programme evaluation is greatly affected by lack of well trained and qualified programme evaluators as well as the lack of funds for financing evaluation research and conduct programme evaluation. It should be emphasized, therefore, that there is urgent need for evaluating non-formal education programmes as a means of judging their practicability and utility for enhancing national development effort.

At the same time information and data yielded by evaluation would make it possible for other countries to learn a lot about the many programmes operating in Africa, but as of now, there is very little information on which decisions can be made about trying those programmes elsewhere. Indeed the problem as regards non-formal education programmes in Africa is that little has been done to assess the internal efficiency i.e., the cost-effectiveness of a programme as regards its effects, benefits and impact in relation to the investment made, or the cost benefit relationship of programmes; so that other countries may try such programmes in their own localities.

A second conclusion is that in spite of this lack of evaluation, there is the need in many African countries to relate in a realistic manner non-formal education programmes to employment opportunities in the formal and informal sectors, and to rural and urban areas. However, it has to be emphasized that realigning non-formal education programmes to employment opportunities would not by itself create employment. Other factors have to be taken into account such as investment opportunities, credit facilities, educational and economic policies etc. Education or training per se is no guarantee for employment; because other factors come into play. For this reason each programme has to be seen in the light of national development policies and the social economic, political and educational policies prevalent in a given country.

A third conclusion is that training which leads to a certificate of comparable value and remuneration with certificates from the formal education system tends to attract more participants than training which does not give a valued certificate. Indeed because of the importance attached to certificates irrespective of the actual skills, knowledge and competence exhibited or possessed by an individual, many non-formal education programmes tend to suffer from being disregarded as of no professional or educational value if they do not lead to the acquisition of a certificate at the end of the programme. It is difficult to prescribe a solution to the paper qualification syndrome in Africa, because there are cases where Africans are appointed to posts simply on the quality of certificates and curriculum vitae submitted, irrespective of whether they are competent enough to do what they claim to know.

A fourth conclusion relates to costs i.e., how non-formal education programmes are made to operate at low unit costs and thus hiding the real cost of non-formal education in Africa. There is ample evidence to show that non-formal education programmes have low unit costs as compared to formal education programmes. But this does not make the former more efficient and effective than the latter. The reason for this low unit cost lies in the fact that - non-formal education programmes use untrained, non-professional less qualified and ill-equipped personnel; poor quality instructional materials; fewer teaching aids; and the use of volunteers in programmes such literacy and community work and services. To this effect therefore, the use of volunteers, part-timers and less qualified persons tends to hide the true cost of non-formal education and thus its cost-effectiveness.

A fifth and perhaps a more important observation is the need to develop at the local level basic managerial and administrative skills required for inter-sectoral linkages, community and extension work, and social services. Such basic managerial and administrative skills are:

- knowledge about improving economic services to farmers in the form of better transport, credit facilities, extension, marketing and processing services and facilities;
- leadership and supervisory knowledge and skills in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of projects;
- knowledge of incentives and how to motivate farmers, peasants and youths to make use of land for productive activities and to ensure that those who

have been trained through non-formal education programmes use their knowledge in rural areas; and

- knowledge and skills in rewarding rural communities with better services for their labours such as better health and educational services, better prices for their agricultural produce etc.

Finally it should be pointed out that non-formal education programmes have not gained in importance as a means of preparing youths and adults and improving the knowledge and skills of those at work, to ensure that they operate more productively in society. Unless top priority is given to the education and training of nationals in various skills, knowledge and with the right attitudes and frame of mind, and providing functional literacy to the majority of the people, little can be expected to come from all the efforts put into the implementation of non-formal education programmes. In this regard, governments should ensure that adequate resources (human, material and financial) are made available for such programmes, particularly functional literacy programmes.