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POPULATION TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN AFRICA

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Population training and research in Africa

During the period 1980-1981, the ECA secretariat assumed full responsibility for the management of two training institutes, IFORD and RIPS. Discussions had to be held with United Nations Headquarters and the centres concerned so as to effect this decentralization under the best conditions possible. The ECA Conference of Ministers had requested that the Executive Secretary should make all necessary arrangements to ensure the regionalization of the Institutes and to emphasize their African nature.

The decentralization and regionalization have been carried out satisfactorily despite some difficulties and the postponement of the meeting of plenipotentiaries of RIPS. However, the headquarters agreement between the Ghanaian Government and the United Nations is still in effect.

The secretariat asked the two institutions to contribute to the discussion of this agenda item. Participants should refer to documents ST/ECA/PSD.2/26/Add.1 and ST/ECA/PSD.2/26/Add.2.

Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques:
Progress Report and Prospects

A summary of the activities of the Institute over the last few years is given below together with an overview of the prospects for developing these activities.

1. Training activities

1.1. Training of demographers

The main training activity of the Institute consists of a two-year course leading to a master's degree in demography.

The course has four basic objectives:

- (i) To give students a solid theoretical training in demography which will enable them to analyze and interpret demographic data;
- (ii) To give students practical experience in data collection;
- (iii) To help students to understand the interaction between population and economic and social development;
- (iv) To introduce students to demographic research.

The programme gives first place to demographic analysis. Data collection is the second subject matter in the training programme and this is what makes the programme different from others of a similar kind. Each year first year students organize a collection operation and spend almost one quarter of their time implementing and exploiting it... The data collected are analyzed during the second year of the course.

The third subject matter in the programme consists of those disciplines required to master the tools of demographic analysis and basic economic and social sciences to analyze demographic changes and their relationship with other phenomena.

Lastly, the topic of population and development, which deals with the link between demographic and socio-economic phenomena, is the fourth subject area in the training programme.

This is how the course has been organized since the Institute was opened in 1972. Since the 1972/73 academic year, a total of 104 demographers have graduated from the course. That number can be broken down as follows, by year of graduation.

Table 1. Breakdown of IFORD graduates by year of graduation

Year of graduation	Number
1974	6
1975	4
1976	19
1977	13
1978	15
1979	12
1980	17
1981	18
Total	104

These 104 demographers have been made available to the countries in the region to help to meet their needs.

This is a relatively modest result in relation to the immense needs which still have to be met. But it nevertheless constitutes real progress considering the quasi vacuum which existed before at the time when IFORD was opened.

Efforts should therefore be made to ensure a better geographical distribution in terms of admissions.

For the distribution of the demographers who have been trained by country shows great disparities which are inconsistent with the urgent needs since only 17 of the 25 countries served by IFORD, the 104 benefit from the training.

Table 2. Breakdown of IFORD graduates by country of origin

Number	Country
1	Burundi, the Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mauritania, Rwanda
2	The Central African Republic
3	Algeria, the Upper Volta, Chad, Zaire
7	Benin, Madagascar
8	The Congo, Mali, Togo
16	Senegal
31	The United Republic of Cameroon

1.2 Other training activities

As an extension of the existing course, every year IFORD organizes a short introduction to research aimed at new graduates from the Institute or other demographic centres. This course lasts for one year and is intended to introduce young demographers to research by conducting individual research work under the supervision of more experienced demographers and in contact with other research workers.

Since the 1976-77 academic year, an average of four demographers have participated in this course each year.

Other training activities have taken place in order to increase awareness of the importance of the demographic factor in the economic and social development process.

During the last three years, for example a seminar has been organized for English-speaking journalists in collaboration with UNFPA and ESIJY (Ecole supérieure internationale de journalisme de Yaoundé) and two others for agricultural planners with the assistance FAO and PAID (Pan-African Institute for Development).

The first refresher course was organized at IFORD during the academic year 1980-81 for working African demographers, in collaboration with the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population and the French group on African demography.

Lastly IFORD extends its active support to the creation and strengthening of demographic options in bachelor's and master's degrees in economics, sociology and geography and in statistical training programmes. This support so far has taken the form of sending teachers to provide courses in demography, particularly to the Sociology Department of the National University of Benin and the Geography Department of the University of Abidjan.

This support continued early in 1982, by organizing with the assistance of the Statistics Division of ECA, a meeting on the teaching of demography in statistical schools in the region.

1.3 Prospects

In the coming years, IFORD will intensify its training of demographers by continuing existing courses, developing further its other training activities and introducing new ones.

Thus the number of trainees in the existing course will increase. In

addition an attempt will be made to secure a better regional distribution in terms of admissions.

The curriculum of the course will remain basically the same. However, the topic population and development which has been included in the curriculum for the last three years will be developed and intensified.

IFORD will continue to organize activities relating to other aspects of its training mission.

Refresher courses in particular will be organized once every year. They will be offered for demographers already on the job in order to enable them to acquaint themselves with developments in techniques and ideas, exchange experience and discuss among themselves.

Among the new training activities to be introduced, special attention will be paid to intensive introductions to demography and statistics, priority being given to those countries which do not yet take advantage of the Institute's training course. This will be an on-the-job training for persons with middle-level qualifications such as Agents techniques or Adjoints techniques de la statistique in national statistical services.

These intensive courses, which will last for four to six weeks each, will be based on print-outs prepared by IFORD teachers.

2. Research

One of the tasks of IFORD is to promote and strengthen demographic research in the countries it serves.

This involves three types of activity:

- (i) To carry out research work;
- (ii) To issue publications to facilitate the dissemination of information and knowledge on African populations;
- (iii) To organize scientific meetings to make the work done in the region known and promote the exchange of ideas and experience among specialists in the region.

2.1 Research work

IFORD has been given the task of undertaking methodological research and studies at the subregional and regional levels.

IFORD has in particular been requested to undertake research which is above all of an experimental nature which will lead to the development of new data collection and analysis methods which are better suited to the region.

2.1.1 Survey on infant and child mortality

Since the research department in the Institute opened in October 1976, the study of infant and child mortality has been the main research topics.

The study consists of measuring mortality in the first two years of life as accurately as possible and analyzing the differential aspects and relations with other forms of demographic behaviour.

The study is based on a survey using a repeated observation method over a three year collection period.

The survey was first conducted in urban areas and will be extended subsequently to the rural areas.

The urban surveys have covered a sample of six towns, beginning on the following dates:

Yaounde	January 1973
Ouagadougou	October 1978
Lome	May 1979
Cotonou	October 1979
Brazzaville	February 1980

The survey on Bamako is expected to start on 1 January 1982.

The research department, in collaboration with research workers from countries participating in the project and other research workers from outside agencies, has developed the collection methodology.

When the collection period for the Yaounde survey ended in January 1981, studies were conducted in the research department on how to organize the collation of the urban surveys. Then the actual collation of the Yaounde survey and the analysis of some data began in 1981, but the main analysis work will be started during the 1981-82 academic year.

The collation of the other urban surveys and the analysis of data will be given further thought during ad hoc technical meetings which IFORD will organize in 1982.

The rural survey will be launched at a later date. But already a suitable methodology for observing the phenomenon in rural areas has been

developed and tried out in 1981 in Benin, the Upper Volta and Togo.

Moreover, a rural survey using methodology based on that prepared by IFORD is under way in Senegal.

2.1.2. Other activities

Apart from infant and child mortality, two other topics are the object group work in the Research Department:

Demographic concepts adapted to African circumstances;

Analysis of census data.

A large number of subjects are also the object of individual research work mainly on mortality, fertility, age and urban growth.

2.2 Promotion of research

The promotion of research is implicit in IFORD's task of issuing publications and organizing scientific meetings to encourage the dissemination of knowledge and the exchange of ideas and experience among specialists in the region.

To this end, IFORD has organized two meetings in the recent past.

- A meeting of African experts on population policies in Africa held at Lome in March 1979 in collaboration with RIPS and with technical support from the United Nations Population Division;

- A symposium on demography at Abidjan in January 1979 at which more than a hundred demographers participated.

This type of activity will be continued in the immediate future with the national seminar on population policies in Mali scheduled to be held at Bamako in 1982.

Only one publication is issued by the Institute on a regular basis: the Demography Liaison Bulletin. This bulletin is supposed to provide a link between demographers working in the region or on the region. It describes recent works, movements of demographers, recent publications and meetings.

The bulletin was launched in January 1979 and there have been three annual issues.

Another bulletin, IFORD Annals, was launched nearly seven years ago, but

only five issues have come out. The IFORD Annals are intended for the publication of various works and documents. Because of the lack of financial and human resources, it has not been possible to publish more issues of this journal.

A project relating to a third bulletin called "African Population" which is intended for articles, has yet to materialize.

2.3 Prospects

IFORD's activities in the field of research not only started later than its training activities but still have not been as well developed as the latter.

This is to be explained by the priority accorded to training so far and by the lack of resources available for research.

It should be pointed out in this regard that financing for research activities and the promotion of research has come almost entirely from outside, which hardly guarantees the harmonious development of these activities.

In the future, the development of IFORD's research activities should be given greater priority. In particular, the promotion of research should be developed to enable the 150 demographers working in the region served by IFORD to make progress by coming out of their isolation.

To develop its research activities proper, the Institute must be given more personnel.

In any case for each one of these two types of IFORD's research activity greater financial resources will be needed. Not only should they increase in volume terms, but their share in the regular budget should constantly increase to avoid having to rely on external financing for the major part of these activities.

With regard to research work itself, the collation and analysis of the urban surveys on infant and child mortality will constitute the main activity of the research department in the coming years. At the same time, the rural survey will be launched.

Other topics will be included in the research programme as and when new personnel are made available to the Institute.

THE REGIONAL INSTITUTE FOR POPULATION SUBJECT: ITS
PAST ACHIEVEMENTS AND HOPES IN THE DECADE OF THE 30s

The Regional Institute for Population Studies was established in Accra in February 1972, some ten years ago, with the long term of aim of promoting research and training in demography and related fields in mainly the English speaking countries of Africa. Since its inception, it has not only carried out training and research but has also given advisory services to Governments and institutions as well as provided information on population to institutions and research workers.

The Institute provides three basic courses of study at Accra, leading to the Graduate Diploma, Master of Arts and Ph D degrees in Population Studies of the University of Ghana. The 12 months graduate diploma course of study consists of intensive training in Technical Demography, Mathematics and Statistics, Substantive Demography and Economics and Sociology. Students also receive training in the planning and carrying out of field surveys and are taught how to carry out research. The Master of Arts in Population Studies course of study, to which persons with a Graduate Diploma or an equivalent qualification are admitted, is done through course work and research. It lasts at least twelve months, while the Ph.D degree course takes at least two years and is available only to persons with a proven ability to conduct research and who have the degree of Master of Arts in Population Studies or an equivalent degree.

As of now some 253 students from 21 English speaking African countries and Papua New Guinea have been admitted to the graduate diploma course of study. Of this number, thirty-nine students are still in training. Of the two hundred and fourteen (214) students who have already passed through the Institute, seventeen (17) did not complete the course of study. Out of the one hundred and ninety seven (197), who completed the course of study, one hundred and eighty three (183) have been successful and have been admitted by the University of Ghana to the Graduate Diploma in Population Studies.

Sixty six (66) of these successful students and two, who had studied elsewhere, have been able to go on to work for the Master of Arts in Population Studies degree. Out of these sixty eight (68) students, thirty five have successfully completed the examination. Four other theses have been completed and are now being examined, while work is going on on twenty-two (22) theses. The seven theses left over can be regarded as having been abandoned. It is of interest to note that out of the 68 students, who have done work for the Masters degree in the Institute, some fifteen have already gone on to do work for the doctoral degree - two at the Institute and thirteen elsewhere.

In the last six years, the Institute has completed some eighty six research

projects, while as of September 1981 there were some thirty four on-going projects.

Part of the research carried out by the Institute has come about as a result of the advisory services which it has had to offer to Governments. Such advice has been offered to the Governments of Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Nigeria and the Sudan as well as international organisations like the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

In the field of information dissemination, the Institute publishes three newsletters and one abstract journal. The first of these newsletters is the RIPS Newsletter, a bi-annual which gives information on the work of the Institute. The second newsletter 'African Demography', is a quarterly which gives information on work going on in the population field all over Africa. The third newsletter, 'PIDSA Newsletter' appears irregularly and reports on developments in the Population Information and Documentation System for Africa (PIDSA) established by the Institute. This system, which was established in October 1978, tries to make available to the population community in Africa, published and unpublished articles and reports on work in the population field in Africa, beginning from 1970. The system publishes a bi-annual abstracts journal 'PIDSA Abstracts', which contains in each issue some three hundred bibliographic abstracts in English and French.

In view of the increasing demands being made on the Institute by countries for training, it is proposed over the next five years to increase the number of persons admitted each year to the Graduate Diploma course of study to some thirty-five (35) students while entry into the Masters course of study will be stabilised at about fifteen (15) students per annum. It is also hoped that within the quinquennium, the experimental Ph.D course of study will become a regular one, to which five (5) persons will be admitted at any one time. To support the anticipated increase in the volume of research and the necessity to use documents produced in French, plans have already been taken in hand to teach French to all staff and students.

There are plans for increasing the out-reach programmes of the Institute. It is hoped each year to conduct, in the countries, two courses for the training of middle or lower level support personnel, as well as another two courses for population experts, which will deal with specialised fields of population. It is anticipated that each course of study will bring together some twenty-five (25) persons. The specialised courses will be supplemented by one workshop or seminar each year to be held at Accra.

The Institute also intends over the quinquennium to intensify its publications programme. As a first part of this programme, some twenty of the thirty five

completed theses are to be published in a monograph series. There are also plans to bring out within the next three years, in view of the paucity of textbooks with African background, some 12 textbooks on demography as also 10 workbooks and readings in the field.

Apart from the difficult economic conditions in our host country, which the Institute, its staff and students have had to contend with, three major problems face the Institute.

The first and foremost of these is the lack of a mini-computer facility at the Institute. We are only too aware of the need to train budding population experts in the use of computers and our not having one has hampered our teaching and research. Thus, to take only one example, our research on simulation models of fertility and mortality using African data has been greatly hampered by the fact that the Institute does not have a mini-computer. And such a facility would only cost between one hundred and fifty thousand (\$150,000.00) to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00). The Institute would greatly welcome the Conference supporting its wish that a computer be made available to it.

The second set of problems arise from the level of funding and support which the Institute now receives. The goal which we have set ourselves in training, research and advisory services require a certain level of professional staffing, equipment and funding. Over the last ten years the Institute has had to make do with around six professional teaching staff each year. With the load of teaching, research, publishing, advisory and information services increasing, we need at least twelve professional staff to cope adequately with the tasks, which have been thrust on us. And maintenance of such a number of professional staff is dependent on the level of funding, which we receive from the United Nations, through the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and the African Governments. The Institute would therefore appreciate it, if the Conference would draw attention to our need for increased resources, if we are to match and keep up with other centres of excellence in population, in other regions of the world.

Thirdly our courses have been designed as intensive courses of study and we have very tight work schedules. We have experienced considerable difficulty in the past due to the lateness in the nomination of candidates by Governments. Such lateness leads to prospective students not being adequately prepared and forewarned by us of the conditions which they will meet in their host country. It also leads to their arriving late for lectures and they then have not only to cope with the intensive course of work but also to catch up on work that has already been done. We would appreciate it if Governments and institutions would make it a point to ensure that nominations reach us at the latest in July. By so doing you will give us a sufficient margin of time to prepare the students for the intensive work and difficult conditions they will be meeting and enable us to give them of our best.

Lastly we would wish to thank all of you, Governments and institutions, who have shown so much confidence in our work by nominating students in such large numbers to train at the Institute. We are appreciative of your support and will continue to strive to meet your needs.