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POSTAL DEVELOPMENT: PROSPECTS AND METHODS IN AFRICA

General

For several years the Universal Postal Union (UPU) has held the view that the assistance it can render postal administrations can have two aspects, namely, conventional technical assistance provided through the services of experts and through scholarships, and the more indirect aspect of providing the administrations with the means of organizing growth, i.e. of elaborating a development strategy.

Before commenting on this subject, the question may be raised whether the problem of developing African postal services should be dealt with as a problem of "public administration" or of "transport and communications".

The reply differs according to whether importance is attached to the legal aspect or to the activities of the service. From the legal standpoint, if reference is made to type of administration or to staff regulations, there can be no doubt that the postal service is a public administration. It should, however, be noted that, in some countries, the postal service is a "corporation", public establishment which has a legal status of its own with financial autonomy and which is not as closely tied to public authority as an Administration.

On the other hand, the activities of the postal service are, just as telecommunications, unquestionably within the sphere of transport and communications. From the standpoint of strategy, however, it is clear that activities take precedence over considerations of a legal nature and that, consequently, the postal service is related to transport and communications.

Strategy for postal development and determination of priorities

The strategy for the various areas of activity during the 1970's calls for improvement and expansion of the postal service as regards both its traditional aspects and its potential monetary and financial role.

The role of the postal service is often limited to that of an institution responsible for carrying written information and, incidentally, goods. Even from that point of view, a great deal remains to be done both to meet the needs of users and to improve the quality of the services offered.

Various recommendations concerning these problems were adopted by the Tokyo Congress in the light of the "Memorandum on the role of the postal service in developing countries" and of the objectives of the Second Development Decade.

From the quantitative point of view, the growth rate of postal volume has generally been found to be higher than that of the gross national product (GNP) of the developing countries, and this is indicative of how much has to be planned for and actually done in the course of the Decade.

From the qualitative standpoint, users base their opinion of a postal service on three criteria: speed, regularity and security. Delivery times between African countries and their former metropolitan countries are relatively satisfactory. On the other hand, they are not nearly as good within the countries themselves and between the various States, especially when the States belong to different language zones. (The traffic generally goes through Europe and this is one of the problems being examined by the expert assigned to the ECA to study the African postal systems). Since the postal service has to use existing communications channels and means of transport, any improvement in the situation depends to a large extent on the progress made in these fields, in other words, on the establishment of certain links between the transport sector and the postal service. Certain internal organizational measures in respect of the infrastructure and the use made of facilities should also, however, be taken. Such measures should be designed to reduce the number of delays, the amount of damage, losses, pilfering and financial irregularities which occur at the present time and which, in several countries, result in a shift of traffic not covered by the monopoly towards other transport enterprises.

The important role that can be played by postal services in money transactions and in the collection of savings in some countries should not be overlooked.

Three types of services can be provided in this field:

- (a) transfers of domestic or international funds can be effected through money order services,
- (b) cheques drawn on postal accounts can replace cash transactions by paper settlements. The funds constituting the credit balance are generally placed at the disposal of the treasury or a development bank,
- (c) the main purpose of the postal savings account service is to mobilize household savings.

These three activities should enable the postal administrations of African countries to play a very dynamic part in development strategy during the 1970's, provided that:

- the legislative measures or regulations necessary to establish and extend services are introduced;
- services are well organized or improved;
- officials responsible for their management are trained.

If postal administrations are to play their part in the development strategy, staff must be trained:

- to operate the postal service;
- to manage the postal service.

The systematic training of staff to operate postal service is vital, in view of the importance of the human factor as a means of production. Depending on the number of staff and, therefore, on their grade, this training can be provided either at the national level, or in the context of a broader multinational or sub-regional framework, in which requirements could be grouped. In the 1970s, the African countries should continue the efforts that have been made for several years to organize the training facilities required in that connexion.

With respect to the management of postal services, greater emphasis must be placed on more rational methods, structural reforms and forecasting. These objectives can be attained only if highly qualified managerial staff are available, capable of understanding the implications of economic and social progress for postal activities, of forecasting its impact in the form of a plan, and of using national and postal statistical data for that purpose.

As very few administrations possess such a category of staff at the present time, their training is one of the objectives to be attained during the Decade. To that end, it is proposed that a series of seminars and courses should be organized to create a sense of awareness among those concerned and subsequently to train them in these techniques.

In order to avoid compartmentalization of institutions, a trend which, in the long run, is against their own interests and those of the public in general, some of the training programmes in question might be carried out in a broader context than that of the postal service.

In short, the development strategy for postal administrations during the 1970's should include the following objectives:

- (a) improvement of delivery methods and operational techniques with a view, inter alia:

- to reducing delivery times between States, on the one hand, and between the capital and offices in various parts of the country on the other;
- to improving the quality of the service offered to users.
- (b) establishment or expansion of financial services and, in particular, of postal checking account and savings account centres.
- (c) establishment of vocational training centres to provide systematic training before employment.
- (d) organization of advanced and special courses for senior officials.

#### Activities of the Universal Postal Union (UPU)

In order to assist postal administrations to achieve these objectives, UPU intends to pursue the following types of technical assistance activities in which it has been engaged for a number of years:

##### (a) Technical assistance missions by development experts

In order to assist administrations in improving and developing their services, UPU possesses a number of "development experts" who, in the case of short-term missions (a maximum of eight weeks), undertake studies of specific problems and propose solutions which in their view are most suitable or undertake on the spot general studies with a view to identify organizational shortcomings or defects and of identifying ways and means of correcting them.

These experts can also assist administrations, at their request, in evaluating their manpower, material or technical assistance requirements, in preparing development plans, or in advising them in connexion with requests for technical assistance.

A list of the missions carried out in Africa since March 1969 is given in Annex I. At the present time an expert is on mission in Senegal, and three requests are outstanding for the year 1971.

##### (b) Expert missions

UPU is responsible for the recruitment and guidance of experts requested by administrations to advise and assist them in the operation of postal or financial services, or in connexion with training activities.

A list of the missions at present underway is reproduced in Annex II, and UPU will continue to support, in UNDP, any new requests it receives by justifying and, if necessary, clarifying them on the basis of mission reports prepared by experts.

(c) Training of instructors

In view of the multiplier effect of activities undertaken in connexion with the training of instructors, UPU has, since 1966, organized 5-month instructor training courses in co-operation with the postal administrations of France and the United Kingdom. So far, most of the fellowships for the beneficiaries have been financed by UPU from a special fund constituted by the voluntary contributions of member administrations. In future, as a result of the implementation of UNDP/SF projects, an increasing number of fellowships will be financed from this source.

The tables in Annex III indicate the number of instructors trained at the Paris and London courses respectively.

As the United Kingdom has agreed to accept a larger number of trainees, activities in this field will be intensified during the 1970s.

(d) Seminars and courses

Like many other specialized agencies, UPU regards seminars and courses as the most appropriate method of providing advanced training for senior staff. For this reason, it has organized many meetings of this kind in co-operation with small postal unions (c.f. Annex IV).

The following are to be held in 1971 :

- A seminar at Eorne on "the major problems of international postal services".

In principle, this seminar can be attended by about 15 African administrations;

- A seminar at Addis Ababa on "problems of routing and distribution".

This seminar is confined to English-speaking African administrations;

- A seminar at Rabat on the "development of postal services in the countries of Arab Postal Union", in which the administrations of North Africa can take part.

UPU is also exploring the possibility of organizing, if possible with IDEP assistance, seminars or courses for the training of a number of statisticians and planners.

(e) Establishment of centres or schools for training in postal procedures

Two Special Fund projects have been drawn up by UPU and submitted to UNDP by this specialized agency (c.f. Annexes 5 and 6). They are :

- a multinational project for the establishment of a regional training

- a national project concerned with postal, financial and training services in Ethiopia.

In addition, a broad project, consisting of three sub-projects, is being drawn up in co-operation with ITU with a view to providing the countries of East Africa with facilities enabling them to offer training at all levels for staff in the postal, financial and telecommunication services.

(f) Studies

Independently of these various "operational" activities, UPU will continue to prepare, under the auspices of the Advisory Council for Postal Studies, any studies which are requested or suggested by member administrations and connected with the development or improvement of postal services. Specifically, one of these studies now underway concerns the "planning of training activities in Africa".

Annex 1. MISSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS

Country	Date	Aim	Results	Language of report
Ethiopia	March 1969	Study of accounting system and financial services of Ethiopian Administration	Preparation of a request to UNDP/SF for assistance for: - reform of the accounting system - creation of a postal savings system - UNDP has authorized UPU to undertake certain pre-project activities	English
Togo	March-May 1969	Survey of general situation of services	- Various recommendations for remedying the deficiencies observed and definition of the objectives to be attained in all branches of the service: legal structure, counter service routing, sorting, urban and rural delivery, postal cheques, postal savings, vocational training  - Preparation of a request to UNDP/TA for the assistance of a training expert in establishing a Postal School for training working staff (the expert has been recruited and is now at his post)	French
Mali	Aug.-Sept. 1969	Study on reorganization of Postal Studies Division <u>Various tasks:</u> Preparation of a small study on certain problems of the financial services (money orders, postal cheques, postal savings)	Recommendations for the reorganization and strengthening of the Postal Studies Division and determination of its functions. A request to be submitted to UNDP/TA for the recruitment of an expert to help in launching the work of the Division has been prepared	French

Country	Date	Aim	Results	Language of report
Senegal Ivory Coast Dahomey Togo Niger	April 1969	Definition, at request of UNDP, of initial phase of project for establishment of a regional training centre at Abidjan.	Report to UNDP. The initial phase of the project was approved by UNDP in January 1970	French
Niger	Nov. 1970	Determination of organizational principles of a UPU section - Drafting of a plan for rational classification of UPU documents - Development of a rational method for collection and utilization of statistical data - Study of traffic, staffing and organization at main collector's office at Niamey with a view to assembling necessary data for preparation of plans for a new building	A report containing recommendations on these various points has been sent to the Administration of Niger	French
East Africa	June 1969	Analysis of region's training needs	Preparation of a joint ITU/UPU request to UNDP/SF	English
UPU Seminar at Nairobi: Participation of an expert as:				
- organizer				
- lecturer				
Central Africa	May-June 1970	- General study on situation of the service and various recommendations on postal routing, urban delivery and counter service - Preparation of recommendations for developing postal cheques system and ending certain irregularities in postal savings. Organization of central and external services; improvement of methods of work and training of staff; improvement of operating facilities; improvement of mobile inspection; operational statistics and accounting	Suggestions on postal savings, counter service, urban delivery, establishment of a second postal cheques centre, acquisition of an electronic unit. Request for two experts for one year each (postal and financial services) had already been included in the UNDP/TA programme for 1971. It is for the International Bureau to support such a project.	French



Country	Date	Aim	Results	Language of report
Somalia	June-July 1970	<p>To carry out study of Administration's needs in respect of postal training, with a view to giving new impetus to postal school established in 1968</p> <p>To analyse organization of Administration and its various problems in order to identify priority tasks which could be entrusted to an expert</p> <p>To advise Administration on establishment of a house-to-house delivery system at Mogadiscio</p>	<p>Intention of country to apply to UNDP/SF for assistance in establishing an efficient postal training system (International Bureau suggestion: 2 experts/2 years and 1 expert/2 years)</p> <p>International Bureau suggestion: recruitment of training expert (UNDP/Technical Assistance)</p> <p>Report containing suggestions concerning initial steps to be taken in the field of postal organization and operation</p>	English
Tunisia	End April-beginning May 1970	Preliminary studies of administration's requirements in field of vocational training in order to estimate international assistance required in this field	Preparation of a draft training programme. Recommendations concerning teaching staff and material required	French
Libya	May 1970	Establishment of contact to determine nature and amount of assistance needed by this country in respect of vocational training and postal operation	Suggestions that two postal officials should be sent to attend an international accounting course and one or two others to attend the Paris teacher training course so as to provide the vocational training centre with qualified instructors	French
Cameroon	Sept.-Nov. 1970	<p>Within framework of a general study of the service, re-organization of financial services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Money order service</li> <li>- Postal cheques</li> <li>- Postal savings</li> <li>- C.O.D. shipments</li> <li>- Accounting</li> </ul>	<p>Various recommendations and preparation of specific proposals concerning the organization and operation of the services in question</p> <p>Outline of a plan for postal development</p> <p>Recommendation concerning recruitment of an expert/1 year</p>	French

List of African countries at present receiving technical assistance through experts

- UNDP/Technical Assistance national projects

- Regional and inter-regional projects

Country or region of mission	Name and nationality of expert	Initial scheduled duration and nature of mission	Date of missions Beginning	End
MALI	DEMANCE Jean (France)	24 months: training	1.8.69	30.9.71
SOMALIA	ROSSI Bruno (Italy)	12 months: postal administration	11.1.71	10.1.72
TOGO	CAZABAN Paul (France)	24 months: vocational training <del>★</del>	12.9.70	11.9.71
AFRICA, ECA REGIONAL	JANJATOVIC Janko (Yugoslavia)	24 months: postal transport	19.3.70	18.3.72
INTERREGIONAL APU	1 expert/12 months in postal organization		Not yet approved	

Note: Amount allocated by UNDP for national projects: US\$ 24,000

regional and inter-regional projects US\$ 27,000

★ An allocation of \$US 5,000 has been made to this country for material.

P.S.: In addition, 5 experts have been assigned to Abidjan and Addis Ababa respectively under Special Fund projects.

List of African students attending French teacher training courses

ALGERIA	9
BURUNDI	1
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	2
CONGO (Brazzaville)	1
CONGO (Kinshasa)	2
IVORY COAST	5
DAHOMEY	1
GHANA	1
GUINEA	2
LIBYA	1
MADAGASCAR	3
NIGER	2
UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC	2
SENEGAL	3
SOMALIA	1
CHAD	1
TOGO	2
TUNISIA	3
	<b>Total: 42</b>

Students attending English courses

BOTSWANA	1
ETHIOPIE	3
GHANA	3 (of which 1 United Nations)
KENYA	1
LIBYA	1
MALAWI	2
NIGERIA	8
SIERRA LEONE	2
SOMALIA	1
ZAMBIA	3
	<b>Total: 25</b>

Annex 4. LIST OF SEMINARS

Brazzaville Seminar - UPU/UAMPT -

(10-24 June 1967)

- General theme: General organizational problems of the postal service staff problems
- Topics:
  1. General problems of development
  2. Postal administrations: their role in the economic and cultural life of developing countries
  3. International postal organizations  
Main principles of postal legislation
  4. Organization of work in postal administrations
  5. Productivity in postal services
  6. Labour morale in postal services
  7. Improvement of output - Practical measures - In-service training
  8. Measuring volume and efficiency - Postal statistics  
Postal break-even charges - General procedure - Utility of international comparisons and of uniform procedure within UAMPT
  9. Structural problems of large administrative and technical units -  
The postal administration as a public service and an enterprise
  10. Respective advantages and disadvantages of the two systems of management in use: Central and office administration
  11. Postal staff regulations - Comparison with civil service regulations for office staff  
Conditions affecting the use of postal staff - Recruitment - Promotion - Personnel management - Social services
  12. Problems connected with the establishment of a postal training centre  
Problems connected with the organization of multinational courses

Cotonou Seminar - UPU/UAMPT -

(16-30 September 1967)

- General theme: Operational problems in African countries

- Topics:

1. Labour morale in the postal services: general factors affecting morale, adaptation of staff to their task, need to be considerate.  
Role of supervisory staff: discipline, training of junior staff, comments on the rules
2. Philately: concise information on stamp manufacture from the point of view of quality, production and cost. Choice of philatelic counters, face values. Programme of new issues - Distribution, sale, withdrawal from sale.
3. Postal statistics: practical methods of estimating volume - methods of determining staff needed at post offices and adjustment of staff to hourly, daily and seasonal fluctuations in volume
4. Organization of work in postal services: rules and regulations, advice to staff, documentation and classification - Study of work methods and rational organization of the various sections (examples: counters, delivery....)
5. Organization of domestic postal routing: efficiency and range of optimum profitability of the various procedures
6. Methods of checking and accountancy for cash receipts and supplies of stamps to tax collectors and counter staff - Security of cash and bonds held or transported by the postal service (handling, safeguarding, transport)
7. Claims - Responsibility - Lawsuits
8. Organization of deliveries: counter or house-to-house delivery - Urban and rural delivery: determination of postal districts, zones, postmen's routes
9. Financial transactions by post. Comments and criticism of the technical agreement. Financial transactions between African States belonging to different currency areas
10. Postal cheques and banks: comparison of the two services - Quality of services offered by these two institutions. Need to promote wider use of postal cheques
11. Postal savings - Their role in the economy - Investment of funds
12. Money items: handling supervision

Abidjan Seminar - UPU/UAMPT -

(16-29 September 1968)

- General theme: Training problems in African countries

- Topics:

1. Economic development and training of staff
2. Careers in the postal service: pay, fringe benefits, promotion, social advancement
3. Recruitment: scope, possible procedures in relation to level, difficulties, solutions
4. Training in Africa:
  - Background, analysis of present situation, critical assessment
  - Adaptation of teaching to national or regional requirements (development plans, governmental, administrative and social structures, amount of human and financial capital, other plans or programmes, openings, future prospects, etc.)
5. Aims and methods in the organization of vocational training: training on the job or at training centres
6. Determination of training programmes in the light of staff duties: importance and necessity of this procedure, practical method
7. Practical organization of a course: drafting of the programme, proportions to be allocated to general education and vocational instruction, theoretical courses and practical work, written and oral examinations, grading
8. Teaching techniques and material:
  - audio-visual media
  - textbooks: drafting, up-dating
9. The instructor: qualities required, recruitment and training, attitude and relation to students
10. Changes in teaching methods

Bangui Seminar - UPU/UAMPT -

(26 July to 9 August 1969)

- General theme: Financial management and accountancy in a post office  
in a postal administration

- Topics:

1. Major importance of financial management and accountancy in a public service
2. Public treasury and postal monies
  - Organization and operation
  - Reciprocal relations
3. Postal financial movements, postal monies and the country's monetary policy
  - Balance of payments
  - Co-operation between the postal administration and the central bank
4. Basic principles of public accountancy
  - Computers and accountants - responsibility and supervision
  - Book-keeping of receipts and expenditure
  - The comptroller
  - The auditor
  - National accountancy system, harmonization of postal and national accountancy systems
5. Preparation and execution of the budget
  - Role of the director and the accountancy agency
6. Accounts in post offices and postal cheque centres
  - Principles
  - Centralization
  - Reform of post office accounts in France
  - Principles of organization and management of the Belgian postal cheques office
7. The accountancy agency
  - Organization and functioning (organization chart - typical example of an accountancy agency)
  - Centralization and supervision of accounts of post offices and postal cheque centres
  - Relations with treasury and banks
  - Operations personally performed by the accountant
  - Entries of the accountant
    - Cash accounts
    - Quantity accounts
    - Analytical accounts
    - Investments, loans and reimbursable advances
    - Financial accounts
  - Relations with the auditor

8. Practical methods of checking and keeping books
  - Checking of post office accounts
  - Book-keeping and checking of books at the accountancy agency
9. Principles governing the organization of accounts of the Swiss Postal Administration
  - Techniques of accountancy
  - Auditing
  - Book-keeping
10. Responsibility of accountants and post office staff
  - Accountants
  - Tax collectors and heads of centres
  - Operational staff
11. Summing up.



Nairobi Seminar - UPU -

(8-21 July 1969)

- General theme: Problems of management, organization and operation

- Topics:

1. General development problems: role of administrative staff
2. Study of future development of postal services in the new countries
3. Main principles of international postal service and role of UPU technical assistance
4. The postal service: as a public service and as an enterprise
5. Financial management of the postal service: the postal administration's budget and the State budget
6. Staffing of post offices: determination of needed staff, adjustment to fluctuations in volume
7. Productivity in the postal service: means of improvement, possibilities and limits of mechanization
8. Problems of routing and delivery of mail
9. Post office accountancy and security of funds
10. Organization of the post office, counter service

Cairo Seminar - UPU -

(6-18 April 1970)

General theme: Forecasting and planning in the postal field

Topics:

1. Role of planning in development of postal services in United Arab Republic
2. Postal service and economic development in the new countries
3. Basis and scope of planning
4. Planning structures
5. Preparation of postal development plans
6. Postal planning
  - Internal resources
    - financial resources (general budget, postal receipts, loans)
    - human resources (recruitment and training policy)
7. Postal planning
  - External resources
    - bilateral assistance
    - multilateral assistance
8. Problems connected with the implementation of postal development plans
9. Postal development planning on an African scale
10. Planning of postal training activities on an African scale

Fort Lamy Seminar - UPU/UAMPT -

(13-27 October 1970)

- General theme: Forecasting and management

- Topics:

1. Forecasting - planning - programming - general concepts
2. Statistics: purpose and nature: management statistics, forecasting statistics, processing
3. Costs and earnings of services
4. Costing methods
5. Short- and medium-term forecasting: purpose and methods
6. The concept of economic strategy, and programming methods: the Pert method (programme evaluation and review technique), dynamic programming
7. Preparation of postal development plans
8. Outlook for the postal service from the point of view of volume, operating methods, type of ~~services provided~~, mail tariffs policy, ...)
9. Outlook for the postal cheques service (from the point of view of volume, operating methods, services provided, financial system)
10. Outlook for postal savings

Abidjan: REG 137: Regional Training Centre for Postal Inspectors

(approved by UNDP in January 1970)

I. Description of project

- Experts

- Project Director: 2 years 4 months (Mr. Bourtayre: France)
- Postal operations expert: 2 years (Mr. Mignot: France)
- Financial services expert: 2 years (Mr. Kempf: France)

- Trainees

- Instructor training: 4 trainees for 6 months each
- Inspector training: 33 trainees distributed between the 2 sessions

- Equipment: \$40,000

- Counterpart contribution: \$302,175

- UNDP contribution: \$343,200

- Duration of project: 2 years

- Participant countries: Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Upper Volta

Ethiopia: ETH 28: Establishment of a Postal Savings System  
and Extension of Postal Services

(approved by UNDP in June 1970)

I. Description of project

- Experts

- 1 project director: 3½ years: Mr. Dunn (United Kingdom)
- 1 teaching expert: 3 years
- 1 accountancy expert: 3 years
- 1 postal savings expert: 3 years

- Trainees

- Specialized: 6 trainees for 3 months each
- Instructor training: 4 months

- Equipment: \$18,700

- Counterpart contribution: \$192,000

- UNDP contribution: \$439,900

- Duration of project: 3½ years

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