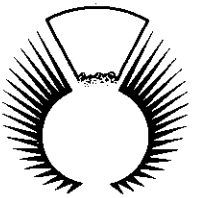

THE ARKLETON TRUST

CAN EDUCATION CHANGE RURAL FORTUNES?

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Report of a seminar on Education, the Farmer and Rural Change, held in Scotland from 7–14 June 1980

THE ARKLETON TRUST

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PREFACE

This report is based on the discussions of a seminar held by the Arkleton Trust at its Seminar Centre at Langholm, Dumfriesshire, Scotland from 7–14 June 1980. The title of the seminar was *Education, The Farmer and Rural Change*.

The seminar brought together a group of people working in rural development programmes in different world regions. It sought to compare the effectiveness of educational provision for rural development programmes in different parts of the globe in order to identify experience that might be of more general application. It is hoped that this report will make the results of the seminar available to planners and practitioners involved in rural development programmes in both developing and industrialised countries and will contribute to the current dialogue on the role of education in rural areas.

Prior to the seminar, a study group of Third World participants visited a number of rural development programmes in the United Kingdom. Their report is published separately under the title *Rural Decline in the United Kingdom — a Third World View*. During the course of the seminar, the Arkleton Lecture was given by Mr J.G. Morris, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Scottish Education Department. His title was *Small is Beautiful in Education Too*. Copies of both the report and lecture are available from the Trust.

The Arkleton Trust wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the following in providing funds for the seminar: The Commission of the European Communities, The Commonwealth Foundation, The Ernest Cook Trust, The Edward Cadbury Trust, The MacRobert Trust and The Walter Higgs Charitable Trust.

The participants in the seminar are listed below. They represented between them a number of national and international agencies in the agricultural and educational fields, but attended the seminar in their individual capacities.

Dr Manzoor Ahmed	(UNICEF) UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa.
Dr Raymond Apthorpe	(Netherlands) Dean of Studies, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.
Prof. G. Barbero	(Italy) Professor of Economics and Sociology, University of Rome and High Commissioner, National Institute for Agricultural Economics, Rome.

Dr B.S. Baviskar	(India) Reader in Sociology, Centre of Advanced Study in Sociology, Delhi.
Mr A.O. Gagni	(Unesco) Chief, Section of Agricultural Education and Education in Rural Areas, Education Sector, Unesco, Paris, France.
Dr Abdul Halim	(Bangladesh) Associate Professor in Agricultural Extension and Director, Graduate Training Institute, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh.
Mr S.V. Joseph	(Dominica) Permanent Secretary, Local Government and Community Development, Office of the Prime Minister, Roseau.
Mr Duncan Kirkpatrick	(United Kingdom) Her Majesty's Inspector, Scottish Education Department, Glasgow.
Dr Hans Meliczek	(FAO) Project Manager, Expanded Assistance to the Agrarian Reform Programme, Manila, The Philippines.
Mr Melchior Mgina	(Tanzania) Institute of Adult Education, Dar es Salaam.
Mr David Moore	(FAO) Human Resources, Rural Institutions and Agrarian Reform Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy.
Mr Carlos Rucks	(FAO) Project Manager, Agricultural Extension Project, San Salvador, El Salvador.
Mr Dunstan Skilbeck CBE	(United Kingdom) Former Principal, Wye College, University of London.
Prof. Karl Jan Solstad	(Norway) Department of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø.
Dr William Reuben Soto	(Costa Rica) School of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Costa Rica.
Mrs Linda Vilakati	(Swaziland) Project Manager, Women in Development, Mbabane.
Ms Elizabeth Woods	(Australia) Institute of Agricultural Economics, University of Oxford, U.K.
1980 ARKLETON LECTURER	
Mr J.G. Morris	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Scottish Education Department, Edinburgh, U.K.

Chairman:	Professor G. Barbero
Vice Chairman:	Dr Manzoor Ahmed
Rapporteur:	Mr David Moore
Secretary:	Mr John Higgs

This report has been prepared by David Moore with the assistance of Duncan Kirkpatrick in consultation with the seminar participants. It looks first at the rural context in which educational opportunities are provided. Secondly it considers general issues of rural development and the ways in which change is influenced. Thirdly it discusses the various types of educational provision which affect rural development programmes and goes on to make suggestions for the types of change that may be needed if educational inputs are to be more effective. Finally consideration is given to the relationship between rural development policy goals and effective educational inputs.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

I INTRODUCTION (p.1)

Although impressive gains have been achieved in agricultural production by current development policy it has often resulted in increased social and economic differentials between population groups. Access to all forms of education has been remarkably uneven. Rural problems have been identified in both industrialised and developing countries and many policies and programmes have been aimed at the rural sector; there has been little analysis of the reasons why some of these have succeeded. There is a serious lack of dialogue between those concerned with rural development programmes and the educational planners. The report looks at the reasons and seeks to highlight the possible common ground.

II UNDERSTANDING THE RURAL CONTEXT (p.4)

As rural economies have become increasingly marginal to national economies they have been given less political priority. Agriculture has attracted investment only when it has become, or has had the potential to become, highly productive and non-labour intensive. The commercialisation of agriculture encourages people to leave for the towns. Yet the world's rural population continues to grow in absolute numbers. The privileged in the rural communities are those whose interests are most closely identified with those of the urban economy. Government services in almost all countries operate sectorally and often with conflicting objectives. Rural people in most countries suffer from isolation and lack a sense of solidarity or the opportunity to influence decision making. The chapter concludes by discussing the experience of a group of Third World experts who made a study tour of rural development programmes in the United Kingdom.

III RURAL DEVELOPMENT (p.9)

Accepting that all rural communities are different the chapter makes an analysis of issues which might assist in the social and economic regeneration of rural areas. A framework for establishing rural development goals would include the following elements: appreciation of cultural and ideological value systems, understanding social and political systems, dissection of administrative and political structures, assessment of resource endowment in relation to population density and recognition of the level of technological sophistication. Proposals are made for a rural development strategy which would extend the benefits of economic growth to the least advantaged. Such a strategy would include, nationally defined goals for rural development, strong organisation at the national level, greater decentralisation at the local level and participation of rural people in planning and implementation.

IV UNDERSTANDING EDUCATION (p.14)

The chapter discusses education in terms of national aims and community needs and identifies the areas of conflict. General objectives are given for education followed by a discussion of the institutions of education including the relationships between formal and nonformal types. Particular attention is paid to nonformal adult education and the role played by extension services. A serious paradox is identified between educational policies focussing primarily on wealth creation, productivity and efficiency and others concerned with the abolition of poverty and the creation of decent fulfilling work. Education in many countries has become a recruiting system for the elite and the problem which this creates for it as a servant of the masses is an unresolved dilemma. The chapter goes on to consider the problem of quantity versus quality noting that only about one third of the primary age group across the world is getting *proper* schooling and the number of young rural people who cannot fulfill their aspirations is increasing. Various forms of production linked education are explored. The problems of training teachers and extension workers are considered with particular reference to the training of those who will work at the field level.

V CHANGE IN EDUCATION (p.26)

Education systems are strongly hierarchical and the promotion structure virtually ensures that the least experienced do the bulk of the fieldwork. A critical problem in looking for change is the extent to which institutions and the professions within them, become self-perpetuating regardless of their current value to society. The examination structure is a major determinant of the shape of national systems. Most countries have school policies but few have firm policies for the nonformal sector. Yet the nonformal sector is potentially the most important in bringing about change in the rural sector. The chapter examines a number of nonformal endeavours in various countries. The gearing of education to the school system and its expectations has led to lack of change in the last thirty years and it is possible that there are different opportunities at the present time which have been lacking in the past.

VI UNBLOCKING THE SYSTEM (p.30)

Specific policy goals for rural development are put forward for discussion. The operational considerations of pursuing these goals are then outlined. The need for a closer relationship between those concerned with educational planning and rural development planning is stressed.

I INTRODUCTION

The promotion of social and economic change in pursuit of short and long-term goals through direct state intervention has epitomised development strategy for several decades. It has been assumed that even if initially only a minority would benefit, eventually all members of national society would share in the fruits of economic growth. The assumption underlies the *trickle down* theory of development.

In retrospect, it is easy to see that this theory was too optimistic, certainly in developing countries. Impressive gains in agricultural output and in average income per head have often been achieved, but social and economic differentials between population groups have been dramatically widened. With few exceptions, the faster the rate of overall growth the greater have been the resultant inequalities in income distribution. The minority who have greatly benefitted have got richer and their access to, and degree of monopolisation of goods and services have increased faster than the majority who have benefitted little, if at all.

Large differences in ready access to education exist too. The use of information sources and learning provisions has been almost universally restricted to those who are economically advantaged. For example, adult education provisions have invariably been used by the already educationally advantaged. This has been the case, for example, among farmers in Kenya and among city dwellers in Scotland. Adult education in both countries was intended for the educationally less privileged but has rarely been used by them. Where formal school systems have been expanded to assure a degree of equitable access for all, most of those who have progressed through to higher education come from relatively privileged backgrounds. This is as true in France and Britain as it is in Tanzania or India.

The evident disadvantage of the very large number of people in the rural areas of developing countries has made the problems of rural poverty a major international concern. That surplus labour from the rural economy could (and would) be absorbed by an expanding industrial sector seemed justified, but has been shown to have been, at best, optimistic. The greater productivity and profitability of industry would it was assumed, support and uplift the remaining rural population but this too has been an ill-founded assumption. The conditions which enabled mass migration from the land in the industrialised countries have been

repeated in very few developing countries. It is probable that they will not occur in most in the foreseeable future.

It is true that more people in developing countries are better off than they were twenty years ago. The proportion of total populations on the verge of starvation is considerably lower. The absolute number of people living below or close to the economic margin has, however, increased enormously. There are at least four hundred and fifty million severely malnourished people in the world today, the majority in the rural areas. The figure could indeed be twice this and represents an indictment of the failure of past development approaches.

The reasons may appear obvious. High rates of population increase, lack of capital to finance more productive farming systems and increasing demographic distortions as the young have left the land, are all cited. It is also easy to blame the world economic recession and rising energy costs for the lack of industrial growth.

The causes are much more fundamental, however. They concern the structure of national economies and their international linkages. Within countries, rapidly increasing urban populations with high expectations have come to demand better quality food at low prices. They have contributed directly to the poverty of many food producers whose costs continue to increase while the prices paid for their labour are maintained at unrewarding levels. Internationally, terms of trade of many products of developing countries have had a strong bias towards the interests of the industrialised countries in much the same way.

It has become fashionable to promote *rural development* as a response to rural poverty in developing countries. Rural development has often appeared to consist of little more than the creation of as many plans, programmes, projects, rural centres and special development agencies as possible. Little, if any attention has been paid to differentiating between cause and effect, between basic distortions in social, economic and political systems and their very visible symptoms.

Rural problems have also been identified in industrial countries. There has been much talk about the need for rural development. Some governments have merely talked. They have, on the whole been content to allow the continuation of rural depopulation and economic decline which began in Europe over 600 years ago. Where the most visible symptom, that of depopulation, has been especially severe, efforts have sometimes

been made to create new employment opportunities or to find other ways to augment the incomes of those remaining. Rarely has there been a deeper analysis of the reasons why rural decline has been inevitable in, for example, the countries of the EEC.

Superficially, the problems of rural people in developing and industrialised countries are so different as to make any attempt to relate them appear altogether facile. There are however enough empirical similarities to justify the attempt. The underlying causes of rural problems are remarkably similar in all countries. Even apparent differences are in large measure qualitative and quantitative. Many possible solutions to rural problems are as valid in Europe as they are in South America, South Asia or East Africa.

It is necessary to be cautious, however, in making a too explicit distinction between rural and urban. Many urban people suffer from very similar problems to those of rural people. Even where a problem can be identified as being specifically rural or urban, it is often directly linked by cause or effect with problems elsewhere.

In educational policy most countries have rejected such a distinction. They have dismissed the notion of providing specific *rural* or *urban* education in favour of *national* education. The readily understood desire for equitable education (that is, schooling) opportunity for all is an overriding force. Whilst the need for equal educational opportunity cannot seriously be challenged, it does not follow that the method and content of education should be standardised and homogenised whatever the environment and social experience of the pupil. Thus education provided in rural areas is often largely or entirely divorced from the environment of the majority of children. Its informative content stems from the urban milieu which can be at best alien at worst antagonistic to the social and cultural values of the rural environment. Sensitive teaching, which adapts method and content to the environment, aptitudes and experience of the pupil is an essential element of any successful learning process, and far from destroying the principal objective of equal opportunity, in fact enables it realisation. If *urban bias* in the method and content exists, then equal opportunity does not. One can also challenge the reality of the urban image portrayed in educational material; whilst urban children can quickly appreciate the distortions, rural children may simply accept the image of the good life which is portrayed, and education as the passport to it. This may lead to the view among educational planners, parents and eventually

children that rural education need have no *relevance* to rural life.

Educational planners who have adhered to this philosophy live in a different policy world from rural developers, who are seeking to stabilise or expand rural opportunity. They rarely appear to have very much to say to each other. This report looks at the reasons and seeks to highlight the areas in which there could be common ground.

II UNDERSTANDING THE RURAL CONTEXT

Understanding is an essential pre-condition to any affirmative action. It is made difficult because rural problems and their solutions are too often identified by urbanised people. Many rural problems result from urban decisions, from the impact of urban interests or the dictates of technological progress. It may, therefore, be reasonable to hypothesise that the involvement of urban decision makers can only be valid if the causes of rural problems are themselves understood and taken into account. Analysis of the close but often conflicting relationship between rural and urban interests is essential.

The viability of rural economies has fallen further and further behind urban and industrial economic growth in most parts of the world. As they have fallen behind, so rural economies have, or appear to have, become increasingly marginal to national economies as a whole. They have accordingly been given a low political priority. Investment, often sorely needed, has been made where high short-term returns appear feasible. Agriculture has always attracted investment, but usually only when it has already become or has the potential to become capital intensive, highly productive and non-labour intensive. In itself, the commercialisation of agriculture has helped to assure some measure of food security for some nations, but commercialisation has done little to arrest the economic and social marginalisation of the majority of rural people.

Where agriculture has been successfully developed in this way the access to land and other natural resources of the majority of people has been markedly diminished. The enclosure movement in England in the 18th and 19th centuries consolidated small production units into large farms and created a new class of landless labour. During the last 30 years the amalgamation of

farmland, both legally and illegally, into larger units under the control of a rural elite has rapidly expanded the ranks of the rural poor in many developing countries.

The commercialisation of agriculture encourages rural people to leave for the towns and cities which by reason of their avowed physical and social attractiveness complement this pressure. It is often believed, even if it appears patently untrue, that cities offer a better quality of life than villages. Poor city housing, rapid price inflation and little job security is often the reality. Fragmentation of family and community life means that city-living often belies expectations. Nonetheless, the urban economy is usually more dynamic, social relations more fluid and external stimuli more superficially exciting than those to be found in the village. That this is so is incontrovertible.

Despite these trends the plain fact is that people continue to live in rural areas and the world's overall rural population continues to grow, especially in the poorest countries. Afforded low priority, regarded as unavoidably poor, rural people cannot play a dynamic role in their nations' destiny. Very large numbers cannot even determine the course of their own futures. The option of migration is for many of little real advantage, for it is a recourse of last resort when all else has proved fruitless.

The concentration of population in towns and cities, relatively high incomes and even higher expectations mean that public utilities, services (including education), investment capital and decision making have been concentrated in, and largely designed for urban and cosmopolitan centres. Their use has been monopolised by the more advantaged sectors of the population. Where services have been extended to rural areas, usually at great cost, their use has often been dominated by the better-off or the more powerful, to the partial or complete exclusion of the rest.

The privileged in the rural community are those whose economic interests are most closely identified or integrated with those of the urban economy. Similarly, the generally better-off rural areas are almost always those whose economies are closely linked with and most readily able to respond to the needs of urban interests. This is not always simply a result of geographical proximity, though transport and communications are important factors. In the industrialised countries the rising costs of transport have made areas distant from the cities extremely fragile economically. Even in the case of the north of Scotland, whose products such as Harris Tweed and hand knitted garments are of high quality and in considerable demand, enormous

transport costs alone can make the difference between profitability and bankruptcy for individual entrepreneurs and for whole communities.

When government agencies have tried to compensate for the social and economic disadvantages caused, for example, by distance from markets, they have often failed to achieve their objectives. There are many examples throughout the world of the failure of such projects. Perhaps the solutions offered have failed to respond to the view of reality of those they seek to help. For many rural people the land is more than simply a productive asset; systems of primary production are more than just a means of exploiting an asset; social structures and rural culture have a decisive influence on how people view the possibilities for change. All are closely interrelated. Change in one has profound implications for the others, but this has been recognised rarely in policy.

To propose that traditional farmers change their technology, without a clear understanding of the social importance of existing practices — for example in terms of the division of labour in a family or social group — is irrelevant, and likely to be resisted by them. Technically logical and economically beneficial changes in land occupation patterns, for example, may fly in the face of traditional inheritance laws or conflict with income distribution patterns between men and women. The introduction of schooling may be at odds with existing forms of learning. The school teacher may appear to threaten the traditional role of the older generation. What is taught may conflict with the customs, language and culture of a social unit which has evolved over centuries.

Governments, hard pressed to boost exports in order to augment foreign earnings, have a natural wish to encourage farmers to increase production of export crops. This may directly undermine the quality and quantity of food grown by and immediately available to rural families. Their wellbeing may become dependent on international market fluctuations beyond the power or influence of their governments.

At the point of delivery to rural people, government services in almost all countries operate in a series of sectoral bites. Agencies usually have different and even conflicting objectives. They are unable to relate to each other or to the realities of rural life. The same is often true in urban areas, of course, but rural people have almost always been more isolated, lacking in a sense of positive solidarity and insufficiently organised to influence

decisions. Rural trades unionism is, with exceptions, rarely strong. Until rural organisations are strong it is difficult to envisage more than a series of ad hoc humanitarian or emergency responses in times of rural stress.

The Situation in an Industrialised Country

A group drawn from Third World countries and sponsored by the Arkleton Trust studied three different rural development projects in Britain in 1980.* It concluded that a considerable number of problems in the areas of rural Britain studied are similar to those found in developing countries.

The inability of institutions to respond to rural circumstances in a rational and integrated manner was surprising, to the visitors at least. In north-east Staffordshire each agency involved tended to identify problems from its own point of view. The agricultural extension and advisory service viewed its role as being to promote farm amalgamation and mechanisation. If effective, it would be encouraging the further decline in the number of people actively engaged in the rural economy. As a partner in a project designed to reverse this trend the contradiction for its field staff appeared to be unrecognized.

The agricultural advisory services in the East of Scotland appeared to make no attempt to reach the smaller and less viable farm enterprises. The technical prescriptions being promoted were irrelevant to people occupying relatively small holdings, lacking capital and suspicious of borrowing for investment purposes. No attempt was being made to adapt technical prescriptions to suit such people, even though they constitute perhaps a third to a half of all farmers in the area. It goes without saying that they have more severe problems than the more viable and better-off farmers, yet the specialised advisory service states bluntly that they are of no concern to it, that they are an *embarrassment*. If their businesses fail, and this is often the case, they will perforce leave the rural areas. Their land will become available for amalgamation.

Rural depopulation has been of concern to the British Government for several decades yet it appears to be of no interest to the Ministry of Agriculture other than when it leads to scarcity of agricultural labour. For thirty years the Ministry of Agriculture has actually been encouraging depopulation in

**Rural Decline in the United Kingdom — a Third World View*, available from the Arkleton Trust.

promoting what is claimed to be the most efficient agricultural *industry* in Europe.

Increasingly limited access to viable agricultural land and other natural resources is a major political issue in many developing countries. This is not the case in Britain, although in some areas concern may be expressed in local resentment at those who can afford to buy farmland for recreational purposes. The study group wondered whether the unwillingness of any British government in the last thirty years even to consider regulating land ownership and use, other than when it has been needed for urban development, had not contributed significantly to the kinds of rural social and economic problems which are now admitted to exist.

If rural problems are to be tackled effectively some measure of land reform may be necessary in Britain as is the case in many developing countries. This would probably diminish the overall efficiency in terms of labour productivity of domestic agriculture to some extent and for at least an interim period. A different measure of efficiency based, say on land productivity would be more appropriate in any case when levels of unemployment and underemployment are considerable. If such a measure were applied now the self proclaimed efficiency of British agriculture might not in any case compare quite so favourably with other countries where smaller farms predominate. The study group questioned the validity of using labour productivity as the main criterion.

The study group was surprised to discover that there is widespread apathy and lack of participation in local and regional government affairs by rural people in the project areas. There also was a severe lack of access to information about local affairs, about the rights and opportunities available to rural workers and about the situation elsewhere. This phenomenon is believed to be prevalent in developing countries, but has rarely been considered as being a British or European malady.

The Government appeared to be disinterested in achieving a balance between local needs and national objectives. Agricultural policy on the use of rural and natural resources was one example cited. The rationalisation and centralisation of services and planning mechanisms in the interests of bureaucratic efficiency was another. The latter has removed effective decision-making from the lower levels of government. These are, of course, the levels at which popular participation might be expected to be most widespread. Recognition of lack of real local institutional

authority may be a reason for public disinterest.

Even where rural development agencies were active, it was observed that a large proportion of their resources was devoted to employing technicians and administrators from urban areas who rarely took up residence in project areas. Few, if any jobs were being directly created which could be gained by the target population. As in developing countries, few of the agencies studied appeared to be directly answerable to the target population. Local participation in decision-making was rarely possible other than at the most mundane level.

Depopulation of and demographic change in rural areas in Britain may be highly visible, and in that sense constitute a problem. They are hardly the basic issues, however. Similarly while malnutrition in developing countries is clearly a problem in its own right and a useful means of measuring poverty, it is merely a symptom of a much more fundamental distortion in national and international social, economic and political structures. Attempts to solve the problem of hunger by providing free food fail just as surely as do attempts to solve the problem of depopulation in a free market economy by artificially creating jobs in depressed areas without taking into account local aspirations and potentials.

When the micro-economics of local communities are allowed simply to decay they cannot readily be artificially recreated. Analysis of the underlying causes of the decay is necessary if solutions are to be found. Where such causes are external to the rural economy, then they must be tackled. Many causes appear to stem from within the rural community, and this may often be true. Just as often it is entirely beyond the power of that community to solve them. Such powerlessness parallels the inability of developing countries to influence price fluctuations and terms of trade in the international market. The study group report is influential in pinpointing the underlying similarities that exist in developing countries and in at least one industrialised country. There is no reason to suppose that the circumstances in other industrialised countries are greatly different.

III RURAL DEVELOPMENT

What then can, should or might, be done to assist in a

regeneration of those social and economic entities which are based in rural areas?

Rural communities are all different. Communities are rarely homogeneous internally. They are socially and economically stratified. A community development model, based on simplistic notions of removing or protecting the economy from the principal external constraints, even if supported by sensitive government institutions and with a degree of active participation by community members is no magic formula for success. Deeper analysis of particular situations is required if the means of tackling specific rural problems are to be established.

Rural, just as much as urban people live in a dynamic rather than a static situation. Change often happens quickly and unexpectedly. Rural people are no more nor less stupid or capable of inventing solutions to problems than any other groups in society. They are often more conscious of the historical context of their lives than other population groups. Acquaintance with natural rhythms and cycles provides an acute sensitivity to the possibilities of failure. This attitude is often held to be synonymous with fatalism. In reality it is a shrewdness bred of experience; a cynicism towards external values which are often feared and resented.

An analytical framework for establishing rural development goals would have a number of elements:—

Appreciation of Cultural and Ideological Value Systems

The part which value systems play in social behaviour must be understood if valid rural development goals are to be established. The way in which a rural community orders its priorities stems from its cultural and ideological values. These in turn stem from historical experience. These values help to explain the more describable or quantifiable aspects of a community's circumstances and individual and group responsiveness to external stimuli. They determine the nature of responses to external agencies.

Understanding Social and Political Systems

The social structure of a community, the nature and extent of social stratification, the degree of class and group consciousness, the role of vested interest in determining perceptions and aspirations are crucially important. They must be understood in a dynamic frame. The nature and role of political leadership

within the community and its links with *higher* levels of political and administrative power must be understood. The use of patronage is a crucial element.

Dissection of Administrative and Political Structures

The nature of the administrative and political structures bearing on a particular community require dissection. The extent and quality of decentralised decision-making and the interaction between administrative and political structures must be examined. A realistic appraisal of the representativeness of administrative and political participation and the feasibility of bringing about desired changes are of the utmost importance.

Assessment of Resource Endowment in Relation to Population Density

Assessment of the resources available to a rural community has both quantitative and qualitiative aspects. Access to and control of cultivable land and other natural resources cannot simply be framed in terms of hectares of land or millions of tonnes of water. Qualitative considerations bearing on altitude, drainage, potential for improvement, slope and soil quality must be taken into account. The nature and historic origins of land-use systems or ownership and employment patterns have a most important bearing on what people see as being feasible or desirable. They are often a major constraint to change.

Taking these factors into account in assessing the potential for improvement in the use of natural resources requires that they be related to such factors as population density and settlement pattern. Experience of land reform in many countries, shows that the mere apportionment of productive assets equally to individuals or families can destroy hitherto productive activity without creating new enterprise. In assessing resource utilisation full account must therefore be taken of the possibilities for vertical and horizontal integration of activities and for establishing a new, more productive and equitable division of labour.

Apart from assessing natural resource endowment, a clear picture of capital and skill resources is required if they are to be as fully utilised as is possible.

Recognition of the Level of Technological Sophistication

The temptation to reinvent the wheel or to promote a technological quantum leap must be avoided. Existing techno-

logy might, on close examination, provide a highly efficient balance of labour, raw materials and ecological wisdom. It is necessary to assess its level and nature and to understand the role which it plays in community life and in productive activities. It is an important factor in determining what is possible, at least in the short term. If it appears to be inappropriate in the light of proposed technical innovations, the first thing which must be questioned is the appropriateness of the innovations themselves.

Rural Development as a Strategy

A strategy intended to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people must extend the benefits of economic growth and social change to the least advantaged of the group. This unexceptional statement is dialectically at odds with the orthodox assumption that by concentrating on the most dynamic or advantaged in a group all will ultimately benefit.

Rural areas with labour, land, skill and capital in relative abundance exist even in industrialised countries. If mobilized effectively their resources could be used to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life. The fuller use of all existing resources is fundamental to the strategy. To do so may often require the application of external resources and skill such as the introduction of new but appropriate technology and the creation of new types of organisations and institutions.

Improved food supplies and nutrition, provision of basic services such as health and fresh water supply, directly improve the physical wellbeing and quality of life of the rural poor. They also indirectly enhance their productivity and their potential to contribute to the national economy. Most industrialised countries have already achieved these basic steps, but the potential is often latent.

The nature and goals of rural development programmes will reflect the political, social and economic circumstances of the particular country, region or district. Their planning and implementation will require adequate regional planning, strong central coordination, and effective local level organisation and participation. These key factors seem to be lacking in most countries, though for many and varied reasons.

Strong coordination at the centre is necessary even if it appears superficially to contradict the goal of local participation. The need stems from the political nature of many of the decisions that must be made, not least of the need to coordinate the activities of ministries or departments organized along sectoral lines. It is

ironic that for decentralisation to be effective strong centralised coordination is essential.

Fundamental change in social, economic and political terms cannot be brought about unless it is understood by, and has the involvement of those whom it is intended to benefit or who desire to benefit. Participation is thus a means of ensuring effectiveness. By being involved in the process of change and by being decisively involved in planning, implementing and evaluating activities people can exert control. Participation liberates social forces and in this sense, is itself a goal of rural development, as well as a means of achieving it.

The level and degree of participation is determined by the level of importance that change has to the lives of those involved, as perceived by them. It also depends on the degree of social stratification in the group. The school has an important potential role to play since it is often the main, or only, place in the community where educated people live and work. The teacher can serve as a major positive or negative force.

Powerlessness is often synonymous with the absence of viable institutions which represent people. There is a strong case, and a possible need for institutions of the rural poor. It must be recognised that these are often the first to be suppressed when they challenge vested interests locally or nationally. Learning to be powerful is a fundamental part of the underlying struggle.

Participation in institutions which originate from without the community is time consuming, often costly and can lead to apathy if results are not achieved. The correct balance between bureaucrats, politicians/leadership and people must be developed. Participation in such institutions is essential, however, and modes of decentralising authority and power, especially fiscal authority, have to be developed. It is very important to identify points of contact and overlap between top-down and bottom-up institutional forms. The problem of interaction between elected representatives and appointed officials has never proved to be an easy one.

Local control of local affairs provides the flexibility needed for the proper integration and timing of activities and for modification of programmes in response to changing conditions. Sustained growth is facilitated by local control of resources.

Effective planning and implementation requires therefore:—

1 nationally defined goals for rural development. Supporting national and regional policies and local financial arrangements are essential;

2 strong organisation at the national level to coordinate vertically-organised sectoral government departments;
3 greater decentralisation, with effective machinery at the regional and local level to coordinate the sectoral activities of national departments;
4 participation of rural people in the planning and implementation process through local government, project advisory committees, cooperatives and other forms of group organisation.

So far, the role of education in its broadest sense as a process of social and economic change has hardly been discussed. Indeed, if the question of whether education has any role in changing rural fortunes is to be answered it is first necessary to understand what education is both in theory and in practice.

IV UNDERSTANDING EDUCATION

Higher level academic institutions, especially the universities, dominate the organisation of learning even though they directly serve only a minority. They appear to be of little, if any value to people wishing to stay and work in their own communities. The domination of schooling by academic subjects needs to be questioned, if for no other reason than that the development of knowledge is most beneficial if it begins with the familiar. The reverse is the general rule. Traditional education, nonformal in nature and emphasising cultural continuity and vocational training has been thwarted in many countries by the introduction of western traditions of education.

Many efforts have been made to introduce education for self-reliance, to de-emphasise books and utilise the environment as a learning medium. Experiments in education based on farming, with schools becoming farms have been widely attempted. External forces, notably university entrance requirements, have caused many of these experiments to fail. Recent research has shown, for example, that over the past ten years only one of the more than three hundred rural primary schools for self-reliance in Tanzania has come anywhere near to achieving its goal. Perhaps not surprisingly this is a school whose pupils come from relatively privileged backgrounds.

National Aims and Community Needs

The achievement of national goals for education, by way of producing a managerial and technical elite, seems always to have resulted in a failure to meet the particular needs of certain types of community and especially of those in rural areas. A problem for educators seeking to achieve local relevance is the difficulty of establishing curricula which do not require the subjection of local to national goals.

Educational philosophies seem to emphasise the needs of the nation as a whole or of the individual student. They tend to ignore some of the essential intermediaries between individual and nation, such as the family, the community or the environmental context whether it be urban or rural. The subjection of education to national goals has been deliberately pursued. There has often been a total disregard for the fundamental need that education should encourage an extension of perceptions and provide information on which to base decisions. The content and perceived role of education and training has often not corresponded to the essential needs of its recipients. For example, in many agrarian reform programmes peasants have been trained in farm technology but not in farm organisation. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to management training in such situations. Even in countries with advanced commercial agricultural systems, management training is often subordinate to technical training.

If educational philosophies are to contribute directly to rural development, then it is essential to define what is meant by a *desirable* community or society. Education for rural development should try to respond to the negative circumstances in which people live and give them the tools by which to change them.

Equality has been a universal slogan in educational development. Attempts to achieve equity in schooling have varied. In some systems efforts have been made to achieve equality of opportunity through application of standard exams and IQ tests. Elsewhere, solutions have been sought by providing the same curriculum for everybody. In a few cases what has been taught has been varied to suit the backgrounds of students, but has been planned to lead upwards to the eventual achievement of uniform educational goals.

The first two approaches have led to many problems. Standardisation of curricula and exams have usually meant adoption of urban models. Centralisation of control has usually

meant removal of students from rural communities. Such standardised education is of little help to people who want to develop their own communities. It can result in the refusal of education. Research among the Lapps in Northern Norway, for example, has identified the *physical presence only* syndrome in schools. Compliance with the law is the main reason for attendance. Almost total rejection of what is taught as irrelevant at best, and alienating at worst, has become widespread.

The third approach has stressed the local environment (whether urban or rural) as a starting point for learning. It has generally accepted that equality in some form is essential. While individuals must be enabled to develop and adjust to their local situation, this should not mean that knowledge which they acquire cannot be applied elsewhere.

Variation in education does not mean adoption of a separate rural curriculum. It does mean that ultimate goals are reached through teaching methods and subject content which are directly relevant to the immediate environment of the student. It is the only option if education is to contribute to rural development.

General Objectives for Education

Basic education should broadly ensure:

1 functional literacy and numeracy;
2 a scientific outlook — established in varying degrees but inculcating fundamental concepts such as cause and effect relationships;
3 a positive attitude towards further learning;
4 preparation for family roles;
5 preparation for civic and community roles;
6 preparation for an economically productive life (but rather as a matter of orientation than as functional training).

These generalisations apply to all basic and later levels of education, though in the latter case with different emphases and the addition of, for example, specific skill training.

Education in its truest sense is a life-long process. At the adult level, community, civic and family roles are particularly important elements. They have to be taken into account along with skill development when conceiving educational approaches.

At present, primary schools in developing countries (and probably in industrialised countries too) are only geared to some of these basic objectives. They often appear to concentrate on

literacy and numeracy to the exclusion of other aspects which could, justifiably be regarded as important.

Against this, it is necessary to qualify the general objectives themselves. The preparation of individuals for family, civic and work roles can be easily interpreted in a narrow and negative sense. The socio-cultural and political context within which they are viewed will invariably have a profound effect on their practical impact. Cultural continuity, in terms of historical, religious and ideological values can be regarded as being important, especially in rural and more traditional societies. In certain contexts, though, use of such apparently important and seemingly neutral criteria may mean, for example, the continuation of women's subjection or of forms of economic exploitation. Political and civic education can easily be used as a means of ensuring exclusion from political involvement.

Different institutions and interest groups would usually make varied and often conflicting interpretations of the meaning of each of these basic goals. They are valid as a general framework to be used in analysing the nature of educational policies. They are also useful when related to goals for rural development. They can only be given full meaning when set against the social, economic and political goals intended for a community or society. Similarly, the effectiveness of education could be judged, but only in part, by the extent to which these broader objectives are eventually achieved.

The Institutions of Education

In all countries education has a well established institutional system with deeply rooted and well developed vested interests. It is necessary to dissect the system itself if the potentials for and constraints to change are to be understood.

The Parts of the System

It may be useful to conceptualise educational systems as being learning networks and opportunities available to individuals. This may be more useful than the conventional approach which divides them neatly into school, vocational education and so on. In practice the various parts of the system are integrated at the level of the individual. It is from the individual client's viewpoint that education should be analysed.

Formal educational provision is the most identifiable learning network. It is everywhere based on universalist principles.

Nonformal education provisions are often in fact, if not in theory, made with a laissez-faire approach which discriminates against those who most need to use it. In these terms formal and nonformal stand as opposites and not complements to each other. This is often the reality.

Levels of formal provision affect the type and scale of nonformal provision. It is necessary to work out balance, methods and objectives in relation to each other. The balance can be easily disrupted where formal systems are relatively poorly developed.

For example, in several developing countries the World Bank is placing a heavy emphasis on nonformal education. The resulting imbalance with formal education has resulted in confusion, if nothing else. New institutions have been created but integration of their aims with those of existing but weak institutions of formal education has not been worked out. A correct balance between formal and nonformal provisions can only be achieved over a period of time during which complementary goals are established.

Higher education is often markedly elitist. In many developing countries the university population is drawn from an already privileged minority of the population. This is not unknown in many industrialised countries, either. The elitist nature of universities, their domination of school curricula and their distance from society emphasises the general problem of the role of secondary schools.

The conventional way of dividing education systems makes it difficult to establish rural primary schools as learning centres for all members of the communities in which they are situated across both age and subject ranges. There is a general lack of recurrent education which would facilitate the local recruitment, training and education of adults. This would help to meet the need for alternative types of provision to suit the wide range of types of post-elementary school learner.

At the school level nonformal approaches and methods are also required. This may be achieved through modification of conventional methods or by alternative means. At the post-school level nonformal approaches or methods refer to the focussing of educational resources on immediate and individual needs and should lead to self-determining education. If one assumes a *right to knowledge* then nonformal methods are an essential means of enabling people to get their rights. *Second-chance* education may also require a largely nonformal approach.

In adult education and agricultural extension a laissez-faire approach aids the better educated. They in turn shape the nature of what is provided to suit their own needs. This eventually defines the terms within which the professionalisation of those who provide it are established. For example, the high technology emphasis of British agricultural advisory services determines who is able to utilise them. This both justifies the emphasis and requires further intensification, leading to ever more highly specialised field workers.

In all countries the basis of policy for agricultural extension and advice may vary, but in practice it has rarely met the needs of poor farmers. It has appeared to be geared more to meet government ambitions for increasing gross national product. Is it feasible to suggest that both needs can be met through the same extension service? One basic problem is the range of needs with which one system would have to cope. It is doubtful if systems have so far demonstrated the flexibility required for this purpose.

Nonformal adult education is primarily concerned with meeting immediate learning needs. A significant proportion of it should be focussed on the needs of particular groups of people who are in various ways disadvantaged. The question of who defines needs has no simple answer. It is doubtful whether the definition of needs and the decisions on consequent provision as presently done by the educational elite could ever be broken down. This has importance for the individual educator or extension worker who is often cast, or casts himself, in an omniscient role and fails to see that in many instances it may be the poor farmer who has the greater knowledge from which he should be learning. This touches on a basic issue for post-industrial societies and developing countries. How is the balance to be struck between policies focussing primarily on wealth creation, productivity and efficiency but affecting a reducing proportion of the population, and others concerned with the abolition of poverty and the creation of decent and fulfilling work? This is becoming a problem for an increasing proportion of the world's population. The role and effects of welfare policies are problematic in this context. It is at this point that educational provision has the opportunity of making a critical impact on development. Too often the link is missing and the opportunity is missed.

Perhaps, as had been implied by many recent initiatives,

nonformal education should be the priority for developing countries. The rationale being to meet immediate needs as effectively as possible, relegating the creation of formal basic education to a long-term goal. On the other hand, it can be argued just as strongly that both types of education are equally needed at the same time. The essential concept which must be introduced in both the short and long-term is that of life-long education.

The providers of nonformal education who operate from within educational structures should recognise the educational roles played by other organisations. In agriculture in many countries commercial supply and marketing companies feature strongly. It has been claimed in the UK that it may be this sector which is not only thicker on the ground but which is also providing general as opposed to high technology advice. In Norway, the farmer's union magazine has become something of an agricultural educational journal in its own right. This illustrates how extremely difficult it is to draw boundaries between formal and nonformal education.

The Hidden Curriculum

The shape of education systems both reflects and determines social structure and stratification within a society.

Repressive regimes usually recognise the libertarian roles of education and try to eradicate them. In colonial situations education filled the needs of the external rulers. Macauley remarked of colonial education in India that it was intended to produce *people to think like Englishmen in spite of being brown in colour.* Gandhi's national schools and colleges attempted to counteract the philosophy and practice of colonial schools by basing education on the environment. They became centres of recruitment to the nationalist movement.

At a later stage India developed a scheme of Rural Institutes at the post-school level but the only people who attended were those who could not get into the city colleges which, under pressure for paper qualifications had returned to the conventional European model. The products of Rural Institutes were cut off from city employment.

In many developing countries possession of good English or French places people in an advantaged position. Whereas much contemporary educational policy in India has been geared towards providing education in the mother tongue, policy

makers send their own children to English medium schools. In the green revolution areas rich farmers do likewise. In modern India, caste has become less important as a qualification for teachers than the possession of good English.

The function of education as a recruitment system for the elite and the problems which this creates for it as a servant to the masses is an unresolved dilemma in almost all countries. This assumes of course, that the former is undesirable. It may simply be inevitable. Education's recruitment function can, of course, only be effective in so far as it is used for that purpose. When a society uses other recruitment systems or when, as is often the case in rural areas, there is a simple absence of institutions looking for recruits, then the recruitment function of education is at best irrelevant. It is often maintained, however, despite a lack of job opportunities for its products.

Can elitism be avoided? The educated elite plan education for the nonelite. Some very positive efforts to build rural schools have failed because curricular modification without institutional change has been found to be inadequate. There are many examples of such failure, the Agricultural High Schools in Afghanistan and Swaneng Hill School in Botswana rank among them.

Sponsorship of Education

Education systems are by virtual definition Government sponsored. Where policy is weak the role of non-governmental organisations, including religious institutions, can be crucial. It is usually — though not always the case — that Government policy is relatively weak in the field of nonformal education. By and large the role of NGOs can be expected to be particularly important here. Where this weakness is combined either with neglect of, or deliberate discrimination against, the interest of the poor then the need for NGOs is further heightened, especially in community organisation and socio-economic extension.

Costs

In developing countries as a whole only about one third of the primary age group is getting proper schooling. This quantitative issue is tied to the qualitative problem, namely that conventional elementary education is of doubtful value to a very large proportion of the poor people who receive it. The qualitative and quantitative issues have to be drawn together in order that more

of something better may be established. So far the conflict remains, *more* usually means *lower quality*. We have not found the solution to providing relevant schooling of an acceptable quality and in rural areas at least the number of young people who cannot fulfill their aspirations is increasing.

Given the present almost absolute lack of resources, present models of elementary education provision cannot be expanded much further. There is little alternative but to find models for educational provision which pay for themselves, to a greater extent. It is both likely and desirable that any such models will encompass the greater use of community resources in education. The use of local resources and the environment in order to save money coincides, ironically, with much current educational thinking which believes this to be the key to raising quality in education.

The requirement that schools should pay for themselves does very much more than simply require that new ways be found to provide for the teaching of old skills. It transforms the institution into one fundamentally concerned with self-reliance, enterprise and an entirely new relationship with local problems and resources. It creates the possibility that the school might become a community learning centre and possibly a centre for community development and a base for other community services.

The linkage of education and production is conceptually relatively easy. In practice it has proved hard but not impossible to apply. The difficulty should not be a surprise. It is obviously easier to make an institution work by reducing its effective interaction with its environment rather than go for maximum involvement with the environment. The latter sets in motion complex but extremely important processes which, if nothing else, challenge the institution's vertical linkages.

Experiments along these lines have been tolerated in some government schools, for example in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In Cuba, the *schools in the countryside* are based on farming units and work on a two shift system of work and education. Many children attending are from urban areas so that they gain their first experience of agriculture at school. Recent research has shown that performance is better in these schools than in conventional ones. It is possible that this has more to do with the fact that they are boarding schools than that they are production linked units.

Patrick van Rensburg has given a detailed analysis of the process of establishing such units in Botswana. He has pointed

out that the system can only be successful in the long term if the nation as a whole chooses an approach to development which moves radically away from the conventional concentration on minority wealth in a tiny commercial and administrative sector. He claims that this more usual approach not only unfairly divides the nation, but also creates in the minds of the poor majority the belief that a worthwhile life can only be had through entry into the tiny elite at the top. In this way the approach is congruent with the conventional and highly competitive educational system.

Learning linked to production should not be considered only from the financial viewpoint — it also has an ideological and a methodological element. To learn about the environment it is best to produce from it.

Higher education is a particular problem from the viewpoint of financing. Firstly, it is extremely expensive. Secondly, in many countries there is the imbalance of educational and employment opportunities for graduates. Thirdly, higher education is state-subsidised and the majority of people participating in it come from the more affluent sectors of society. This means that national taxation is subsidising the already wealthy. This has an important parallel with the impact of technological development in widening existing differentials between the rich and the poor.

Teacher and Educator Training

In most countries school teachers are trained in virtual isolation from everybody else. Why should this be so, when there are other employees in education and there are other educators in the community? The training of teachers, especially when they go straight into training from school or university, reinforces the separation of the education system from the national as well as the local environment.

Should all teachers be required to have a work qualification as well as an academic qualification? What training would be required of teachers, working in the kind of production-linked education units which are being implicitly proposed? The first requirement must be that teachers are able to teach well. The time may be right, when the role of *teacher* needs redefinition in order to be clear about all the roles which are fulfilled by such a professional. This applies in particular in rural areas where teachers are often expected to perform a range of functions for the

community, in addition to teaching its children, but for which they are neither prepared nor paid.

Most teacher training institutions are urban in location and in style. Extensive effort to prepare teachers for rural work are the exception rather than the rule. The methods by which teachers are trained appear by and large to be those concerned with classroom teaching. Even within that limited context an approach based on text books and other centrally provided materials prevails. There appears to be very little effort to train teachers in the use of the local environment — in conventional elementary education this could mean the development of children's education from their own familiar backgrounds. In secondary education it could mean that adaptation of subjects to the local context and demonstration of their application.

The preparation of educators other than teachers is even less optimistic. At one end of the educational scale, university lecturers are often accused of being notoriously bad teachers. In nonformal education and extension it is usually the least experienced and the less highly trained who actually do the work in the field.

The basic problem in extension is the definition of skills in which people need to be trained in order to be good at the job. The difficulty of describing objectively what good extension work is makes it easy to claim precedence for the high status areas of skill, knowledge and technology, regardless of their relevance to the real needs which could be identified. The process of professionalisation requires specialisation and high technolgy skills so it is in the interest of the extension workers to concentrate on this area. At university level in UK agriculture there is neither reference to, nor training in extension skills.

Who decides what is good extension work? The decisions are likely to rest in the hands of senior academics and the politically powerful agricultural lobbies. The scale of the educational task required of the extension service in the UK is illustrated by the fact that only 30% of farmers watch TV farming programmes and only 20% listen to radio farming programmes. It is the larger and richer farmers who are most likely to take the farming journals. The extension service sees itself increasingly as being relevant only for this latter group.

Just as schools limit the roles of teachers, so extension services limit the roles of extension workers. They usually receive instructions from above on what to implement below. They are rarely trained to find out what people already know and need to

learn and how to help them to learn from each other. Extension workers are often very formally trained themselves, so it is difficult to expect them to operate in an informal manner. Also they are often over-trained and move on fast. There are few systems anywhere which facilitate the local recruitment of para-professionals in this field along the lines of bare-foot doctors. The development of such systems is a generally desirable principle and basic to the whole idea of rural development.

In many developing countries women play a crucial role in all aspects of family decision making, yet most extension workers are men. For social and cultural reasons they cannot make effective contact with women. This is a very common situation. It is essential to define the nature of the service within the existing cultural context and to train staff appropriately.

New Technology

The advent of new technology, such as TV and videotape, and their application for distance learning during the past fifteen years was hailed by many as contributing to a revolution in teaching practice. Imminent new developments especially in the industrialised countries, are being greeted with guarded optimism. None of the new technology helps to resolve the fundamental dilemmas and contradictions confronting education. Much of it threatens to heighten them.

Television, for example, is an essentially uni-directional medium which can easily be used for propaganda rather than education. It can too easily be used to reinforce centralised control of educational method and content. It is no substitute for face-to-face contact. When used sensitively by a skilled teacher it can supplement his or her capacities.

A further problem is the use of over-sophisticated technology. How can a TV transmission help people to overcome the pain of using an ox plough when they have already learned through the same medium about the capabilities of tractors?

In industrialised countries the teaching profession may well come to resist the introduction of new technologies which could aid rural areas because they either threaten to undermine the teacher's role, or to become a substitute for it.

Determining Factors

In some, but very few countries, manpower planning determines the nature and output of the education system. This type of control is only possible in a highly organised society. The problem, therefore, is how to combine the needs of society with the freedom of the individual and his or her parents. Some recent trends in industrialised countries, for example a recent rapid fall off in applications for teacher training in the UK, may indicate that young people are very sensitive to likely career opportunities. This may imply that a basic problem is that of getting good information to young people at the stage when they are making choices with regard to higher education, rather than with trying to direct the system in particular ways.

Higher education is very expensive. As has already been suggested, governments tend to subsidise the better off sectors of the population who participate in it. The problem of lack of suitable job opportunities for graduates is becoming universal. In themselves these factors, as well as major demographic changes in Europe may encourage the process of change in the planning of higher education.

Countries vary in the extent to which education has been professionalised — in Scotland the process has gone as far as anywhere with the teaching profession itself controlling entry into teaching. Professional groups are strong maintainers of the status quo and this is one of the ways in which educators play a decisive political role whether they recognise it or not. By their nature institutions tend largely to decide what needs are to be met by them. Within institutions professionals are dominant in influencing such decisions.

Education systems are generally strongly hierarchical and the promotion structure virtually ensures that the least experienced and qualified do the bulk of the fieldwork. Criteria for promotion and measurement of people's ability and qualification for promotion are also established hierarchically. This tends naturally to operate against change in the system. The internal structures of a system and the willingness or ability of the top echelons to help fieldworkers — to support their ideas, knowledge and opinions — are of major importance in shaping the overall system. The extent to which institutions, and the professions within them, become self-perpetuating regardless of

their current value to society, is a problem when considering how to bring about change.

Most countries have school policies and to only a slightly lesser extent policies for other sectors of the formal system. There are relatively few cases, however, of firm policies for the nonformal sector. This is especially unfortunate, for the nonformal sector is the most flexible part of education. It is most easily related to people's immediate learning needs.

At a very general level, the values held by a society are reflected in the education system. Thus the strength of the private education sector, attitudes to teachers, teachers' salaries, extent of national commitment to continuing education and so on, derive from societal views often expressed through political passivity. At a slightly less general level ideology can have a direct effect on the shape and content of systems.

The conventional model of formal education is an accurate reflection of a highly competitive society in which the major rewards go to a small percentage of the total population. Large numbers are told that they are failures and that their life expectation should not be particularly high by the time they leave school. A rather different but major influence on education systems comes from the large scale — normally commercial — publishing houses. These usually cater for large numbers and their orientation tends therefore to be urban. The extent of their influence on curricula is seen most radically in developing countries which still import textbooks from elsewhere. The cost is highly significant in restricting the expansion of educational provision, even if the content is irrelevant.

There are a number of small scale educational publishing enterprises aimed at local needs. A study of their operations could be very valuable. One example is Acair in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland which was formed by the Western Isles Islands Council, the Highlands and Islands Development Board and An Comunn Gaidhealach. It is producing early reading material in Gaelic, education material to support the Bi-lingual Education Project in the Western Isles and a number of books in both Gaelic and English which are of general relevance to the Islands, their society and history. Promotion of such publishing operations appears a useful avenue to explore, especially in countries where teachers have some flexibility in developing curricula.

A major determinant of the shape of systems is the examination structure. National examination systems and

university and college entry systems have a massive impact on what is taught in schools. They establish a firm set of expectations and demands among parents who want to be sure that their children are getting as good a chance as anybody else's. Examination structures can have international effect in cases where newly independent nations continue to use examinations set in the metropolitan power.

Introducing Change

At a general level it is essential to build self-evaluation into the system. In this context the establishment of agreed education goals as summarised earlier is an essential pre-requisite if evaluation is to be effective. It is instructive to note that in the preparation of *New Paths to Learning** the authors corresponded with many governments requesting a definition of the goals of their education systems. Of the minority who replied hardly any were able to provide a convincing statement.

Drastic change in education seems to have taken place most often only after a similar order of change in national circumstances. Since this is relatively uncommon it is essential to consider development and educational change within existing systems. Some parts of the education system appear more flexible than others, and there seems to be value in concentrating resources on the most amenable parts — or at least be clear about the strategies to be used, and the timescales involved in attempts at change at all levels. Nonformal education appears in all countries to be the most flexible part. It is also so diverse and complex that it can hardly be called a system. Nonetheless, it is perhaps in nonformal education that a process of social change can be promoted. This, in turn, might lead to change in schooling. The problem is essentially one of securing adequate resources for nonformal education in the first place.

It is useful to examine instances where there has been radical change in education. In Tanzania, for example, the initial major change in education was the introduction of the colonial system and the consequent loss of traditional methods. In the post-colonial era a national lead has been given to an education which, in both method and content, is more directly relevant to the country's circumstances. The importance of the national leader and of having a Minister of Education with an adult education

**New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth*, Philip H. Coombs with Roy C. Prosser & Manzoor Ahmed, UNICEF/ICED 1973.

background has been important. Education for self-reliance has put the environment, not books, at the base of education. Schooling and farm production have become integrated. However, education for self-reliance has had a hard, and not altogether successful, struggle against the traditions of Western education and the direct influences of external exams and imported text books.

A system of workers education units has been established in Tanzania. National policy requires firms to allow employees four hours per week for education or skill training. All employing bodies of any size have a Workers' Education Council, normally chaired by the head of the firm. This system is not effective with small employers, and does not of course reach unemployed people or those engaged in the informal economy. Women's education remains therefore largely problematic.

The massive costs of a conventional education system constitute a major spur to change in developing countries. It is worth noting that in the UK and other industrialised countries, a different type of cost constraint is leading to new educational developments which are, to a limited extent, reminiscent of the education/production units arising in the developing countries. Youth unemployment in Britain has led to youth employment schemes with a built-in educational component. A large proportion of young people in the UK now enter the Youth Opportunities Programme and considerable work is being done to try to cope with their educational needs.

There is an urgent need for senior officials and policy makers to learn about educational alternatives and development needs. In several countries politicians have been sent on extension work courses and have been made responsible for development programmes in their own villages, though how effectively this can be implemented is open to question. When senior government officials have been directed to work for short periods in rural areas the reactions of the recipient villages have not always been very welcoming. In the Western Isles of Scotland senior officials and politicians have been appointed as members of Project Consultative Committees in the field of Community Education. This has proved a valuable exercise. Such ideas which have often been tried out tentatively require further study.

Self-evaluation in education must mean both diagnosis and action. Having established the basic aims, it is essential to examine all institutions and methods in order to identify the points at which change is needed. The problem remains of how

to achieve stated objectives and define appropriate methodologies when this can only really be done in relation to specific contexts.

It is not knowledge of educational alternatives and objectives which is now lacking but rather the will to achieve them. How to create the will is the major issue.

Expectations of Schooling

One of the major constraints to change is the expectation which people have of schools. It is important that people learn not to expect too much from school. It cannot correct the errors of society. Nor should people expect too little. School need not be limited to putting a minority of pupils through a national exam. There is a need to define in each country what can and should be expected from school by society and parents.

Many things are required of learning institutions other than the goals of rural development. Where does rural development fit realistically into these goals?

Opportunism

There are few ideas about education which are new. Some aspects, such as professionalisation, go some way to explaining the lack of change in education over the last 30 years. A largely unanswered question is whether or not circumstances now are so different that opportunities for change exist which have been lacking in the past?

VI UNBLOCKING THE SYSTEM

The ultimate goal of rural development is the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Contributory objectives include growth with equity, national self-reliance (especially in food), ecological harmony and the conservation of natural resources. The participation of those it is intended to benefit in the process is as important as the material results which are achieved. Rural development thus embraces economic, social and political factors and concerns all aspects of human life at all levels.

Specific policy goals can be identified which, in varying

degrees are appropriate in most situations, including many industrialised countries where the rural population is proportionately small. In order for these goals to be meaningful it is necessary to establish a specific definition of social and economic poverty in each country. Policy goals which might be identified are interrelated. They cannot be considered in isolation from each other since progress towards one has an affect on the status of another. They include: —

- ensuring equitable access to, and development of land, water and other natural resources, particularly for the small farmer and, in many countries the landless;
- expanding employment opportunities with fair wages, especially for the landless;
- improving productivity levels of small farmers, forest dwellers, fishermen, artisans and other self-employed groups;
- eliminating conditions of severe under nutrition, where they exist, in the quickest possible time;
- achieving food security for the poor through increased food production and fair distribution arrangements;
- fulfilling the needs of the rural poor for housing, wood and fuel by means which serve the ends of resource conservation and renewal;
- providing in rural areas minimum levels of public utilities and services, such as safe drinking water, family planning, primary health care, housing, education (including primary and secondary), access to roads, communication and energy in order to produce the necessary conditions for improved family life and rural industrialisation;
- establishing equality of legal and social status for women;
- reducing rural-urban and rural-rural income differentials.

Some of these goals may appear frankly inappropriate to many industrialised societies in which welfare systems continue to act as a cushion against the effects of social and economic deprivation. Welfare systems have certainly been effective in the past but they have contributed little to social and economic self-reliance. In present day circumstances of severe recession they are being questioned on many grounds most notably that of cost. There are alternative ways of using the enormous amounts of national resources which they absorb. They have to be openly discussed and explored if the latest energies which could be unleashed are to be given a chance to break out.

Operational Considerations

In order to achieve such goals it is necessary to identify the main considerations which would influence operational approaches to rural development programmes and projects. Such *integrating elements* help to ensure that policy, institutional and socio-economic facets of rural change are dealt with in a logical and realistic manner. The main considerations include understanding the socio-economic meaning of *community* in any particular situation, the nature of and potential for participation and the principles of institutional development.

As a coalition of shared and conflicting interest the *visible community* is a dynamic entity. A community which is to develop must have a series of group or individual aspirations which project beyond present preceived reality. An analysis, along the lines of that outlined earlier would be a pre-condition for action. One or more sub-groups within a community which share similar occupational, social or political interests will need to be identified as *targets* for rural development. Positive discrimination in their favour may be required in terms of institutional development, investment policy and even legal terms. Other sub-groups which may be affected positively or negatively by change would need to be identified and their interests analysed.

Target groups thus identified may not necessarily be from the same socio-economic stratum, though this is often the case. Vertical secondary and tertiary groups such as processing, marketing and distribution systems may be included in the target simply because they already deeply affect the community. On the other hand, they may need to be established. Formal and nonformal decision making structures must be identified. All analysis must be aimed at identifying commonalities of interest for they are the base on which rural development can be built.

Communal linkages and communication with other communities should also be identified for they provide a basis for the sharing of experience and knowledge. The nature and impact of informal, nonformal and formal education processes within the community must be assessed.

There is all too little evidence at present that those concerned with rural development planning in most countries, have any effective dialogue with those responsible for educational planning. Very few of the specific policy goals for rural development, listed above, enter into the educational planners view of what is taught in the educational sector — or indeed how it is taught.

Some reasons for this have been given in the course of this report. At the same time it is clear that whether the concern is schooling or nonformal education there is a very real need for close association between the various groups involved if effective improvement is to be sought in the rural sector. Education alone may not create rural development but without access to education, not just in the primary school but on a life-long basis, the chances of rural people playing an adequate and full role in local and national development is slender indeed.

Many sections of this report relate specifically to the developing countries. Other sections relate equally specifically to the industrialised. It is evident, however, that a broad range of problems are applicable to all countries in any consideration of education for rural development. If many Third World nations are seriously troubled by the problems posed by their rural sectors, it is also true that the problems of rural disadvantage are now very much to the fore in Europe and in North America. The weakness of the rural voice may mean that the problems are not yet adequately considered by politicians. In all countries, however education has a vital and pre-eminent role to play in contributing to the solution of rural poverty and backwardness. As already emphasised, all rural communities are different and there can be no universal remedies but in every country more effort is urgently required to provide education for rural people which is in accord with the needs of each community.

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