

Chapter 1

THE WORKSHOP - OBJECTIVES, STRUCTURE AND BASIC ISSUES

ITS PURPOSE

The purpose of the Workshop was to review the conduct of the several National Youth Programmes and National Youth Service Programmes in operation in the various countries which constitute the African region of the Commonwealth, to examine their scope, and to determine the nature and extent of such modifications as might be desirable in each case in order to enhance its effectiveness in the pursuit of national development.

Each participating country was, therefore, asked to prepare, for presentation and discussion at the Workshop, a paper on its national youth programme and, as appropriate, another on its national youth service programme. Further, in order to facilitate discussion of the various programmes within the perspective of national development, four African scholars were invited to prepare and present papers on the social and economic aspects of development in Commonwealth Africa as well as a critique of the current national youth programmes and national service schemes.

Thus, the four specially invited papers served as a background and provided a stimulus for the discussions. The titles and authors are:-

- i. EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
POLICY ISSUES*
by Professor Philip M. Mbithi
University of Nairobi, Kenya
- ii. AFRICAN HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL
SERVICE*
by Dr. V.P. Diejomaoh
Acting Director
Human Resources Research Unit
University of Lagos, Nigeria
- iii. AFRICAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PERSPECTIVE: PITFALLS
IN PAST AND PRESENT DEVELOPMENT POLICIES*
by Dr. K. Osafo-Gyimah
Acting Director
Centre for Development Studies
University of Cape Coast, Ghana

iv. A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMMES
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
by Professor K.E. de Graft-Johnson
Department of Sociology
University of Ghana
Legon, Ghana

These papers constitute Chapter 2.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

The Workshop was conducted essentially in four phases:

- i. Background
- ii. Examination of Current Programmes
- iii. Perspectives for the Future
- iv. Projection

The background phase was conducted in plenary session and comprised the presentation of three of the lead papers - those by Professor Mbithi, Dr. Diejomaoh and Dr. Osafo-Gyimah - as well as the ensuing discussions. These discussions were focussed on broad principles and considerations of general relevance within the context of overall national development, and, more particularly, of the role of National Youth Programmes and National Service in the process of such development.

The second phase - examination of current programmes - consisted of two parts. The first was conducted in plenary session, and comprised the presentation and discussion of the individual country papers. The second part of this phase consisted of group discussions. For these, the Workshop was divided into two groups - one on National Youth Programmes, the other on National Youth Service Programmes - and, with the lead speakers participating in the discussions, each group directed its attention to the specific subject of its immediate concern. Thus the programmes were reviewed in respect of their purpose, scope and function; and assessments were made of the need for reappraisal and such modification as might be desirable, as well as that for expansion and intensification.

The conduct of the third phase - perspectives for the future - was similar to that of the second. The field of view was outlined in plenary session by Professor de Graft-Johnson, and after general discussion there, the two groups proceeded to engage in separate discussions and examine in some detail the implications deriving from the perspectives for the future in respect of National Youth Programmes and National Service Programmes in the context of national development. Presentation and discussion of the two group reports constituted the end of the third phase, and represented the conclusion of the exploratory aspect of the proceedings of the Workshop.

Summarisation of the various observations and suggestions which emanated from the earlier phases was the concern of the fourth and final phase. To this end, a Sub-Committee, comprising the two Group Chairmen, the two rapporteurs and two other participants - one from each group -

was appointed to study the group reports and draft recommendations for presentation to the Workshop in plenary session. On the basis of this draft, the Workshop made the recommendations which are contained in the final chapter (Chapter 5) of this report.

BASIC ISSUES

It was recognised that, particularly in respect of the developing countries of the Commonwealth, National Youth Programmes, including National Service are but one part, and an important part, of the overall national effort towards development; and there was unanimity in the view that such programmes and their underlying philosophy should evolve from and be consonant with the fundamental national policy.

The need for Youth Programmes and Schemes for National Service to be perceived as constituting an integral part of the development process was emphasised; and the implications of short-fall in this regard were stressed. Special mention was made of the necessity for proper co-ordination in the formulation and implementation of national policy, and in this respect it was observed that rural development is intimately connected with the national wages and earnings structure as well as the existing system of land tenure.

The prominent features of the African region to which Youth Programmes should pay particular attention and which were regarded as basic issues in the context of national development are: poverty, unemployment, rural development, rural-urban migration, the high incidence of illiteracy, the problems of school leavers and early drop-outs from schools, the significantly high proportion of the youth in the total population, the need to develop indigenous technologies and foster the application of these and other technologies in the interest of national development, and the need for intensification in the field of non-formal education.

It was emphasised that the fundamental problem of Africa is poverty, and one of the major challenges to be faced in alleviating the widespread poverty is that of harnessing the potential of the substantial numbers of un-schooled youth.