
SCOPE OF A NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Youth Participation in Decision Making

The scope of a National Youth Policy should make provision for :

- Youth to participate effectively in all major decision-making processes of all levels of government in respect to social, economic, political, cultural and religious matters.
- Government to recognize the importance of contributions by youth to National Development and invite and consult with youth representation in the planning, implementation, operation and evaluation of policies and programmes.
- Youth representation in the forums of government, if necessary introducing legislation in National and State Parliaments.
- Formation of federations of youth organizations at various levels, such as National and District Youth Councils.
- Training programmes and facilities for young leaders.

All too often youth have been seen solely as a source of primary energy in the attainment of national development objectives. Plans and programmes devised by the older generation are in danger of lagging behind the experiences and expectations of the youth. Whereas youth are a valuable commodity and a willing participant in the furtherance of nation-building, we feel governments should take into account the wisdom and justice of continuing to ignore "youth say" in devising national policy. We submit that governments should design the necessary machinery to allow youth to have an equitable role on the input side of nationhood to complement their energy and activity on the output side.

We also note that youth involvement in decision making has been raised repeatedly by meetings of youth leaders around the world and was particularly emphasised by youth leaders of 31 Commonwealth countries in the Commonwealth Youth Declaration which came out of their meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica in 1977. Ghana is one country we would identify that has made provision in its constitution to allow youth say in government. As a result of this pan-Commonwealth

Conference we hope that other member governments may at least move in this direction.

We have considered practical steps governments could take to make provision for young people's participation in all major decisions affecting youth. Participation is a much-abused concept. It has both a content and a process dimension. Delegates to this Pan-Commonwealth Conference are probably aware of the 8-point participation ladder developed by Sherry Arnstein.

LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

8 7 6	Citizen Control Delegated Power Partnership	Degree of Citizen Power
5 4 3	Placation Consultation Informing	Degree of Tokenism
2 1	Therapy Manipulation	Non-Participation

When we are talking about participation, we are focussing on the upper rungs of the ladder.

Participation has to take concrete form at all levels of planning and administration. At the lowest level, youth can participate through village youth groups and village councils. For example, in Papua New Guinea, village youth clubs may prepare project proposals and forward them to the village local government. In India, such proposals may be forwarded to the district level, to the Nehru Yuvak Kendra. In both cases it is commendable that village level youth groups may frame project proposals, but in the absence of a National Youth Policy there is no emphasis given to these proposals. In Malaysia, which has a National Youth Policy, youth have a guaranteed position on the village council, so that at least there is a youth to advocate youth club proposals when the time comes to debate priorities.

Source: Sherry R. Arnstein: "A Ladder of Citizen Participation in the USA", from the Journal of the Town Planning Institute, April 1971, Vol. 57, No. 4.

We attach importance to the development of village youth clubs because in traditional societies young people as individuals are not recognized as leaders or decision-makers. But through collective activity in organized clubs the potential of youth can be seen and due recognition accorded to them. The formation of regional-district associations of village level clubs would not only reinforce the capacity for young people to participate at this level, but would also stimulate the "diffusion" effect of positive project proposals emanating from particularly effective youth clubs.

At the district-regional level it is not customary to find provision for the direct involvement of young people in decision-making. They are usually represented in proxy by a government officer, district youth officer, education officer, or social worker. These professionals have a dual responsibility - primarily to the government agency which employs them, secondarily to the young people and youth groups with whom they work.

In countries which have National Youth Councils it may be possible to provide for youth participation through District/Regional Youth Councils securing representation on Development Corporations' programme review bodies, and by building up links with the District Office of appropriate government departments. For example, Bangladesh and Malaysia have District Youth Councils. While only youth groups registered with the Government may belong to these Councils, they provide nonetheless a mechanism, however imperfect, for youth participation at this level.

There are some interesting models for youth participation at the national level. In Cyprus, the Pan-Cyprian Youth Association (PCYA) has a hierarchical structure of local rural clubs, sub-district and district committees, and a National Committee. Not only does the PCYA have access to Ministers, it also has access to the President. This reflects the political significance and sophistication of the PCYA. The PCYA can draw attention to programme deficiencies at, say, district level. The appropriate Minister will visit that district and examine the situation with the district committee of PCYA. Moreover, the PCYA can propose new programmes to the government. The case of Cyprus highlights the importance of developing sound National Youth Councils, a point made in the Ocho Rios Declaration.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Advisory Board. India has a National Youth Advisory Board, and Australia seems to be considering whether it should have one. Members of Advisory Boards are appointed by the appropriate Minister to give advice either to him directly, or through his Department Head. Terms of appointment are usually fixed to a certain number of years. The scope of these bodies' functions may or may not extend to the sphere of policy. With Advisory Boards it is necessary to examine closely the basis of selection of the personnel when examining their effectiveness in terms of participation. This applies to the question of the accounta-

bility of the members: are they representing organisations to whom they are allowed to report back, or are they selected as knowledgeable expert individuals? The accountability question is closely linked to the value of Advisory Boards as participatory mechanisms.

In Malaysia there is a model which we would commend to the attention of this pan-Commonwealth Conference. Once again it depends on the existence of a National Youth Council. The Malaysian Government in 1971 established the National Youth Consultative Council (NYCC), comprising:*

- all members of the Supreme Council of the Malaysian Youth Council who are currently representing its affiliated organisations;
- six office bearers from the Executive Committee of the Malaysian Youth Council consisting of the President, three Vice-Presidents, the Secretary and the Treasurer; and
- ten appointed by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, consisting of people he thinks can contribute to the Council. These include civil servants. Importantly, the agency concerned with the national planning is represented.

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports is the Chairman. The Deputy Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is the replacement Chairman if the Minister is not available. The Council is required to meet three to four times a year.

The functions of the NYCC are:

to deliberate on the problems of youths and act as adviser to the Minister on the formulation and review of youth programmes;

to act as a consultative and advisory body for all National Youth Organizations in Malaysia;

to co-ordinate programmes and activities of youth organizations in Malaysia;

To channel youth enthusiasm and energy for national development; and

to work towards instilling loyalty to the nation and creating a sense of national identity among the youths.

* Source: The information on the NYCC has been obtained from the publication "constitution of the National Youth Consultative Council".

When the Council was first formed it had a smaller membership. At the time it was also recognized that only 11% of Malaysian youth actually belonged to youth organizations. The Ministry therefore set a target to increase membership of youth organizations to 25% over a five year period, by generating more interest in the youth movement, improved youth programmes and planned expansion of youth clubs.

This NYCC was specifically founded by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports with the aim of encouraging the growth of a strong, dynamic and responsible youth leadership. This seems to us to be a preferable forum for dialogue between youth and government than an Advisory Board, in terms of youth participation in decision-making.

As we said earlier, participation has a process dimension. A number of countries have experimented in this area and we would like to offer some comments.

In Western Samoa, the new Ministry of Youth Affairs has twice now conducted annual 'seminars' or consultation forums with youth groups. These seminar-forums are convened by the Ministry. The agenda covers not only review of programmes, but also the broader issues of youth's needs and aspirations. This annual "stocktaking" is highly commendable in itself, but from the point of view of youth participation there are other desirable features. Resolutions from these seminars are referred for action to the Ministry for Youth Affairs; it acts on those falling within its competence and refers others to appropriate Ministries. Our information is that the Ministry lobbies for these proposals with other Ministries. Since Ministries in Western Samoa have "youth" components in their overall budgets, this whole process of consultation-referral-lobbying is a meaningful form of participation at national level.

The United Kingdom attempted a type of national consultation process, called 'Towards 2000'. It brought together hundreds of people involved in youth work, as well as politicians and community leaders. Although concerned to articulate futures for youth, the process has been seriously questioned not only on cost-effectiveness grounds, but also on the representativeness of the participants. By its nature, it would appear to have attracted the more articulate young people who feel at home in the large conference-workshop atmosphere.

In one Australian State, Victoria, an effort has been made to develop the necessary infrastructure which would eliminate this sort of criticism, criticism which comprises the legitimacy of the consultation process. The Youth Council of Victoria (YCV), in conjunction with the State Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation has sponsored a multi-level, State-wide consultation process over a number of years under the label, 'Youth 2000 Series'. The most recent of these annual consultations dealt with youth participation in local government. The YCV has set out to identify and weld together a comprehensive network of youth leaders, youth groups,

individuals and community organizations at local, regional, and State levels who can be harnessed around a public consultation process on issues of policy. Details of this approach are given in an Appendix to this paper. (Appendix 2)

Governments interested in developing the process dimension of participation should be aware of the considerable investment required in identifying and building a network infrastructure which will make consultation meaningful. The Victorian example is an indication of what can be achieved at the sub-national level - the State and district-regional level. We note that once again it requires the involvement of an autonomous Youth Council. The auspice of Youth Councils in linking youth and governments successfully towards common goals will hopefully have become obvious, and the stimulation of these Councils should find a place in a National Youth Policy.

EMPLOYMENT

The scope of a National Youth Policy should make specific provision in regard to youth and employment and in particular confront the situation of unemployment, the single most common problem faced by the Commonwealth countries today.

The scope of the National Youth Policy should make provision for :

- adequate and fulfilling employment to all sections of the youth populations;
- preventing exploitation of youth in the workforce;
- the immediate implementation of temporary and ongoing assistance to out of work youth; and
- re-training and on-the-job training to keep pace with technological change.

The overwhelming percentage of unemployed citizens of the Commonwealth are young people and this problem is shared by both industrialised and developing countries. In the OECD group young people under 25 now constitute 40% of those who are unemployed, and unemployment is growing. This growth factor is amply illustrated by the British situation, where unemployment rose in each of the five years from 1972 to 1977. Between those years youth unemployment rose three times as fast as total unemployment. In Australia young people under 21 form 12% of the labour force but 40% of those unemployed; in Canada young people 15-24 form 30% of the labour force but 50% of the unemployed; whilst in New Zealand young men 15-24 form 53% of all the male unemployed, and young women form 73% of all female unemployed.

The problem is significantly worse in developing countries. Thus in Sri Lanka young people 15-29 form 75% of the total unemployed, whilst in the Caribbean region average unemployment varies between 8% to 30% of the population of working age, but youth unemployment is as high as 55% of those between the ages of 15 and 23.

Of course one must draw a distinction between the problems of youth unemployment in these Commonwealth countries like Britain where over 90% of the employed population are in wage and salary employment, and the developing Commonwealth countries where the wage and salary sector embraces a third of the working population or less. Youth unemployment has become a problem in the advanced countries partly because of the general growth of unemployment, but more specifically because unemployment is much more concentrated among youth than it used to be due to the great growth in internal labour markets and in the institutionalised entrenchment of job security in employment organizations which has taken place over the last twenty years. In that sense the advanced countries have acquired patterns similar to the developing countries, though still in a form so much less acute as to make the problem of an entirely different order. This larger problem is such that the ILO estimated that the continent of Africa, for instance, will have to create 150 million new jobs by the year 2000 to reach anything near full economic capacity.*

In considering the magnitude of this problem, it is clear that long-term planning is needed to create more jobs. This planning must be integrated with short-term measures to alleviate the existing detrimental effects of unemployment. In firstly easing the unemployment situation it is suggested that the policy should include:

- regular unconditional assistance through either cash payments or alternative schemes to provide an adequate life while unemployed;
- medical and hospital coverage while unemployed;
- innovative programmes and alternatives to employment that counteract the social and psychological effects of unemployment, through education in living skills training that will equip the individual to cope better with being unemployed;

Source: A background paper prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat for the 24th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, January 1978, entitled "The Right to Work: Social Effects of Unemployment and Unrest Among Youth" and unpublished responses from various individuals and organizations to an internal Youth Division paper "Draft Interim Report on Youth Unemployment".

- vocational and business skills training which increases the employability and hence productivity of young people through initiatives in work co-operatives, community-based self-help schemes, self-employment and entrepreneurship schemes; and
- increasing rural employment opportunities and incentives in an attempt to avoid the worsening and more difficult urban unemployment problems.

In proposing the measures above, we recognize that some countries have already implemented special schemes to assist young unemployed. In New Zealand attempts have been made to forestall unemployment among young people and to enhance their social and job-seeking skills, through courses held in technical institutes and community colleges. These courses comprise:

pre-employment courses not exceeding six weeks in length aimed at improving social and job-seeking skills and intended for young people with lower educational attainment;

short-term skills training courses, of one to three weeks aimed at training for a particular occupation or skill required in the local area;

general skills training courses, not exceeding 20 weeks in length which include some social and job-finding skills, but are more directed to training in basic skills over a whole industry.

In the United Kingdom a number of special measures have been introduced. The most recent, and most ambitious programme yet in terms of proposed clientele and financial input from government is the Youth Opportunities Programme - the main elements of which are:

assessment of Employment Induction Course (lasting about two weeks) to improve young people's employability by helping them to assess the type of work they would like to do, and are best suited for, and to improve their social skills;

short industrial courses to introduce young people to, and develop the skills they need for employment at operator or semi-skilled level;

work experience on employed premises (normally lasting about six months) to provide first hand experience of different types of work on employer's premises whilst providing on-going opportunities for guidance and further training;

training workshops to provide training and work experience for a group of young people working together to produce goods or provide services under supervision; and

community service to provide a young person with an opportunity to try a number of different kinds of work, to exercise responsibility, and to acquire a range of basic skills - not least those to do with relating to people and communicating with them.

In proposing any special measures it is acknowledged that finance may be seen as a major constraint by many countries. There are a wide variety of views as to the efficiency of such schemes which are often regarded as being particularly costly. Yet although the real opportunity costs of youth training and employment schemes are indeed rather high, their social benefits, mainly derived from the training provided, should not be underestimated. Thus the ILO have clearly stated that it would be a mistake to underestimate the strictly economic return, especially on the training side, since the length of the period over which the benefits are normally spread guarantees social profitability.

Furthermore, one must compare the cost of unemployment programmes with the costs of youth unemployment. In considering unemployment one must consider the implicit loss of potential GNP through the failure to utilise youth as a resource, and the disastrous long-term psychological and thereby economic and social effects of prolonged and intense youth unemployment which leads to the feeling that unemployment is an acceptable life style.

Therefore, while working towards the goal of adequate and fulfilling employment to all sections of the youth population there is a need to confront the reality that full employment will not be achieved overnight. Some action must be taken, and taken quickly, to ease the unemployment situation and the personal circumstances of the young unemployed.

EDUCATION

The ability of a society to provide more adequate and better education for its members can be regarded as one of the objectives of economic development. But as well as being an end of development, it should also be seen as a significant instrument in achieving it.

The view that any education must promote social justice and economic development is, of course, a naive one. Education can work as a further dis-equalising social factor and serve to weaken development impulses rather than strengthen them.

If education is to act as an instrument of development policy, and we maintain it definitely should, governments need to initiate new policies towards realigning the education system in this context as a stage and strategy of national development.

The scope of a National Youth Policy should include under Education, provision for:

- Free and meaningful education within easy access for all young people.
- The cost for all levels of education to be borne by the State not the individual or the family.
- Out-of-school non-formal education for young people who do not participate in the formal education system or whose learning requirements are not met by the formal education system.
- Special educational facilities for the physically handicapped, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed and hospitalised young people.
- Vocational guidance and job placement services linked to the educational system via Departments of Employment and Manpower Planning.
- For youth to contribute towards evaluations of the current education system so that their views may be taken into consideration in modifying educational policies by providing youth representation on school or academic boards; and
- Civic education as a means of broadening the range of learning to include the opportunity for young people to learn aspects of inter-personal cultural, social and national functioning.

The education system in developed countries almost universally prescribes fierce competition, scheduling, testing and grading. The current education system relies on uniformity and conformity which absolutely impedes individuality being allowed, let alone encouraged. There is little attention paid to individual pace or choice; to the discovery of identity or devotion to intellectual goals and a disregard of personal and social development. Students in effect learn how to "make it" in the system and as a result education becomes a means of social manipulation.

Over recent years people like Bruner, Illich, Reimer, Goodman and Friers have analysed the school system in an incisive, radical and cogent manner.

The basic factors brought out are that schools are too expensive to serve as a universal system of education; that schools perpetuate inequality through social role pre-selection; that schools inoculate against learning by forcing irrelevant curricula upon students; and that a schooled society is blind to its own errors.

As Everett Reimer points out in the book "School is Dead" to get these facts recognized is difficult since the people where the impact needs to be felt are those in power - the decision-makers - and they have a vested interest in the current schooling system; they are products of it, in fact the most schooled in society. In the early 1970's recognition may have been the goal, the first stage in any thrust at reforming the education system. Today, however, we would argue recognition to an extent has in fact occurred. The problem now is achieving these reforms.

In his book "The Relevance of Education" J.S. Bruner makes the point that there should be a much stronger emphasis on extending the solely academic base that schools currently provide to include education revolving around issues particularly concentrating on "subjects" or "disciplines" that have a plainly visible growing edge. We see no reason why the life sciences and the human sciences; human and behavioural biology; politics; economics; sociology and psychology should be the exclusive domain of tertiary institutions.

It must be realised that education affects all aspects of social functioning and is in turn affected by them. Governments need to look beyond education in order to reform it and they must look beyond unemployment to solve unemployment. To take employment for example, there is an inextricable link between the job market and the education system. A principal function of the education system is to prepare young people for employment. The problem of unemployment starts before young people leave school, it starts in school.

We are baffled that most governments, in their frequently unsuccessful efforts pitched at solving unemployment, do not change the education system and it remains untouched - an assembly line for unemployment. Those countries that adopt policies to combat unemployment through reforms in education should harness national economic policy and national social policy into a single effort. Initiatives taken in the social sector - in education or in community service - without linkage to national economic development do not really confront the problem in a comprehensive manner.

The First Five Year Plan (1973-78) in Bangladesh; Fiji's Seventh Development Plan (1976-78); the Five Year Plan for Economic and Social Development (1975-80) for Gambia and similarly Ghana; the Kenya Development Plan for Malta (1973-80) all emphasise that education must be linked into national development objectives. Common to all is the precept that education has to become relevant and related to employment and manpower requirements.

The result however have so far not been fully realised and the problem would seem to lie in the process of transition between the old school and the new school. With such significant social restructuring the task is not easy and although it is clearly stated in government policy this is a declaration of intent not a plan of action. A policy only goes part of the way, but its significance lies in the fact that governments are accountable to their policies which in turn serve as a measure of their performance.

The problems of education present a universality world wide . Both developing and developed countries are looking to new approaches in education for different reasons, the common factor being the current education system.

The position in developing countries takes on a completely new light. Since their independence, developing countries have surprisingly tended to reinforce the Western approach to education rather than react away from it. All too frequently the values which young people absorb at school lead them to regard work in the rural sector as a sign of failure. This is not at all surprising considering the socialising impact education has and the overwhelming urban ties present in imported Western systems.

Such attitudes are cultivated not only by the educational system but also by the general development strategy, which in turn is determined by products of that education. Development strategy too often has equated development with industrialisation, and over-stressed the urban sector at the expense of the rural areas in which the majority of the people happen to live. There is an urgent need in most developing countries to adopt an education system which is a useful introduction rather than a perpetual deterrent to rural life.

The argument put forward to make reforms within the current education system really imply an agreement that that type of system is sound. When we look at current education it is a singularly "formal" methodology. There is no desire on our part, nor is there the likelihood that formal education will be abandoned. But we see the urgent need for the establishment of a complementary system of education largely outside the role of formal education. Such a system needs to be a sharp break, from the traditional modes of teaching. Such a system is non-formal education which is emerging as a true alternative in education. It now needs to be fully utilized and supported in order to fill the large gap in existing education. The initiative of the Commonwealth Secretariat in holding an international Conference on Non-Formal Education in India in February 1979, and the hosting of that Conference by the Government of India, indicate that the Commonwealth is in the forefront of this endeavour.

It is evident that developing countries have appreciated the value and feasibility of non-formal education and have begun to act with much more urgency than developed countries in restructuring their education systems.

The task faced by any government in conscientiously tackling the massive shortcomings in education does not need to be emphasised. What we do want to stress is the importance education can play in the overall makeup of nation building and the damage it is doing by remaining unchanged.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Non-formal education is an organized and planned educational activity operating outside the structure and routine of the formal school-oriented system of education. It is a process of understanding the individual's own need, the environmental situation, the societal goals, and their mutual inter-relationships.

In the context of a National Youth Policy the fundamental aim is to help the young people to develop their learning needs, which are related to health, nutrition, family planning, functional literacy and numeracy, skills for improving family life such as building up good personal character traits and positive attitudes, increasing agricultural productivity, developing skills for gaining full or part-time employment to supplement the family income, co-operating with local government and voluntary organizations in development programmes and activities.

The clientele for non-formal education are illiterate youth, out-of-school youth, school drop-outs and young women.

The need for non-formal education for youths in Commonwealth countries has been realised after the non-productive consequences of the formal education system became apparent. We have chosen six countries to demonstrate the need for the inclusion of a non-formal education component in a National Youth Policy.*

- In Singapore nearly all children of school-going age are in primary schools. Every year about 60,000 primary six pupils sit for the primary school leaving examination and the failure rate is more than 30 percent. Of the 40,000 students who sit for the secondary level GCE 'O' level, 40 percent fail.
- Before the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Nigeria, 50 percent of primary school age children were in schools.

* Source: The information contained in the following three paragraphs has been taken from country papers presented to the Commonwealth Conference on Non-Formal Education for Development, New Delhi, 1979.

With the advent of UPE the percentage rose to approximately 65 percent. At present, about 38 percent of children completing primary education go to secondary level. When the first intake of UPE children complete their primary schooling in 1982 it is expected that not more than 40 percent of the total of over 3 million school leavers will be able to go on to any other kind of formal education.

- In Papua New Guinea, the majority of the population does not have access to formal schooling. According to the 1976 estimates by the Manpower Planning Unit of the National Planning Office, 59 percent of the school age population are totally outside the formal system.
- In 1978 a policy document on education reform published by the Ministry of Education, Zambia, stated that the majority of the adult population of the country cannot read or write. Tens of thousands of young people will add to this number unless dramatic measures are taken, because they have not been able to get a school place or because they have left school too soon to retain their skills of literacy.*
- In Sri Lanka, 1,981,000 young people between the ages 5-19, and 1,175,500 in the age group 20-24 are outside the school system. Of these, only 364,300 are employed. The out-of-school youths are a heterogeneous group from the point of view of educational attainment; non-formal education programmes have to be tailored to cater to their different levels.
- Non-formal education holds great potential for youth in Bangladesh. In a recent study it has been found that about 42 percent of primary school age children do not attend school; about 83 percent of the secondary school age group are out of school; about 93.5 percent of the college age group do not attend college; about 97.1 percent are deprived of higher education; and of the adults 98.5 percent are left out of adult education programmes. The magnitude of the task of non-formal education may easily be compared from these figures. Since it will never be possible or desirable to get these

Source: "Policy Document on Educational Reform", Ministry of Education, Zambia 1978 and "Supplementary Paper to Committee on Non-Formal Education for Young Illiterate Adult"

deprived groups back into the fold of the formal education system, it is left to the non-formal education system to provide for them.*

The scope of the non-formal education component of a National Youth Policy should include :

Functional education and numeracy for the illiterate and semi-literate, which must be sufficient:

- for reading with comprehension a national newspaper or magazine, useful agricultural, health and/or other how-to-do it bulletins of instructional skills;
- for writing a legible letter to a government office requesting information;
- and
- for handling important common computations, such as measurement of land and house, calculation of agricultural inputs, costs and revenues, interest charges on credit, and rental rates on land.

A basic understanding of one's environment as those pertain to the ecology to raising crops and animals, to nutrition, to food storage and preparation.

Functional knowledge and skills for raising a family and operating a household including essential elements of protecting family health, and intelligent budgeting and marketing.

Functional knowledge and skills for civic participation, including some knowledge of national and local history and ideology, and understanding of one's society, awareness of government structures and functions, the principles, aims and functioning of co-operatives.

We commend two Indian projects which are taking up the challenge of non-formal education:

* Source: Daily Bangladesh Observer "Non-Formal Education in Bangladesh" March 1979

The National Adult Education Programme (NAEP): India launched this programme in October 1978, intended to cover about 100 million illiterate people (15-35 years old) in a period of approximately five years. In the NAPE, adult education has been looked upon as a method of human resource development including literacy, functional development and creation of awareness among the poor concerning their rights and responsibilities.

The Academy of Development Science (formerly the Graduate Volunteer Scheme): This programme encourages and promotes educated youth to play an active part in non-formal education by applying their knowledge and skills in rural areas, especially with non-student youth. These volunteers commit themselves to living and working in a rural area for a period of two years.

SOCIAL CHANGE

Youth are a major force for social change. Because youth constitute half the population, they have a definite and significant role to play in the process of social transformation. Youth are more open to change when confronted by outmoded traditions and institutions and are less susceptible to prejudices and vested interests. Youth are more open-minded and responsible to bold ideas and suggestions; they are more critical and forth-right in their approach.

Bringing about attitudinal changes and building up an awareness process should become important components of any youth work programmes. Youth work should prepare the youth to be instruments of change.

In many Commonwealth countries there is too great a gap between the objectives and policies as pursued by existing political, social and economic systems and those which youth can accept. It is not being advocated that the views of those systems there must be sufficient room for the free expression of opinion, activity and self-organization of young people. Otherwise it might lead to the existence of a static society in which youth was failing to play its vital dynamic role as a stimulator and agent of change.

The National Youth Policy therefore should :

Create accessible structures for youth, through which youth can effectively mobilize public opinion to bring the developmental needs of their fellow citizens to the attention of the authorities. The structure should include new ways of utilizing modern media of communication - periodic Youth Forums on radio and television, youth columns in national dailies, and publication of youth magazines.

Encourage youth to educate the community through folk plays, work camps and public forums on issues of local and international concern.

Facilitate the greater interchange of young people from developed and developing areas of the world as a step in breaking down racial barriers and fostering greater understanding.

We endorse the declaration made by the first meeting of Young Commonwealth Leaders at Ocho Rios in 1977 which stated the social change role of youth in struggling against racism, class divisions, bigotry, urban deprivation and rural impoverishment.

We commend the Government of India for its policy of mandating Nehru Yuvak Kendras to struggle for the elimination of social evils such as illiteracy, caste, divisions, dowry, discrimination against women and extortion by money lenders.

It is not necessarily the case that the social change role of young people conflicts with Government Policy.

INFORMATION AND DATA BASE

In most of the Commonwealth countries, there is not sufficient knowledge on the current situation of youth. This results in authorities formulating policies on youth concentrating on superficial issues, thus directing attention from or obscuring the real aspirations and needs of youth. There is, therefore, the need for sufficient research study and scientific knowledge about youth values, attitudes, reactions, perspectives and judgements. Such studies have to be initiated to provide adequate insight into these aspects of youth, with a view to formulating appropriate programmes to meet the needs and aspirations of youth.

The scope of the National Youth Policy should make provision for the development of a comprehensive information and data base for the planning and evaluation of programmes relevant to young people and broad national objectives.

It is necessary to continuously assess and make known the vital contribution of youth to the economic, social, political and cultural development of the society. There is, therefore, a pressing need to establish a Youth Information and Research Unit within the national department having primary functional responsibility for youth to perform these tasks. Through the District and other sub-national offices of this department, it would be possible to inform the community at large of young people's contribution and also to inform youth of what opportunities the government is providing.

Just as the lack of sufficient knowledge on the situation of youth may lead governments to formulate policies on youth concentrating on superficial issues, so the lack of

proper programme evaluation and assessment perpetuates this same effect. There should be created opportunities for youth and government to evaluate and assess the programmes designed to develop and harness youth potential.

LEISURE, RECREATION AND SPORTS

Leisure is an element of life in most societies and young people should be enabled to make use of their leisure time in an enjoyable and satisfying way. Throughout the Commonwealth many programmes have been designed with a wholly recreational emphasis; such programmes can, of course, play an important part not only in providing for positive use of leisure time but also in fostering wider interests and influencing attitudes.

In rural areas programmes of this kind can be of special value, since one of the reasons why young people abandon country life for towns and cities is the lack of social amenities in the villages. Some provision can be made at low cost in the form of a meeting place and basic recreational and sporting facilities. In addition to its intrinsic value, this type of programme can help to make contact with the mass of the rural population who are often unaffected by development-oriented activities. It should be recognised that minor and purely social programmes can become growth points for subsequent activities with inbuilt elements of vocational training or cash-earning potential.

Recreational programmes serve a useful purpose, in the overall planning of youth programmes; the need therefore must be born in mind for a balance to be established between those of a purely recreational nature and those aimed, for example, at training the youth in various skills, with a view to either personal development or more appropriate employment.

Hence, the scope of the National Youth Policy should make provision for:

Educating the youth and their leaders of influence such as parents, teachers and employers, on the philosophy and fundamentals of recreation and sport. A correct concept and the desirable, supportive attitudes towards young people's leisure time activities should be developed.

Assessing youth's leisure needs and recreational interests at both national and community levels, and formulating comprehensive programmes and plans that make the best possible use of available physical, social, financial and human resources in meeting the existing and future needs of youth. Attention should be given to indigenous, low cost sports and folk arts.

Providing appropriate structures for promoting, planning, developing, implementing, co-ordinating

and advising on recreational and sport activities for youth organised by different agencies at all levels with special consideration to rural youth, working youth and the socially disadvantaged youth.

Training of professionals and leaders in the field of recreation and sport with good understanding of modern recreation philosophy and programme areas concerning youth.

Enabling the youth to contribute their ideas, suggestions and potentialities in planning, leading, participating and evaluating their recreational and sport activities.

RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

The enormous exodus of rural youth to urban areas has been recognised as one of the chief reasons for heavy urban unemployment. In Asian cities the rate of urbanisation (urban population growth) has been on average two to three times that of the average population growth.

Among the causes for rural-urban migration are:

- the search for and expectations of better employment opportunities;
- high pay differentials between the rural and urban sectors;
- the search for better education;
- and
- the attractions of urban amenities for entertainment and recreation.

"A survey on migratory movements of youth in the ECAFE Region revealed that migration occurred most frequently among youth adults, predominantly among unmarried males. Mobility seemed to be particularly high within the youth age groups. Those who moved to the cities were mostly unskilled youth".*

* Source: A. Callaway and K. Bettenhausen, "Approaches to Employment Problems in Africa and Asia".

Another trend has become clear - once youth have left the countryside for higher education in towns they rarely return there, but look for work in the towns after completion of their studies. This trend is likely to increase the imbalances in the urban-rural labour market.

We see this tendency as highly undesirable. A better balanced growth between urban and rural areas is long overdue. Rural development is a priority area for national development. We believe a committed programme by governments in rural regeneration would play a major role in halting the rural-urban drift in many of our countries.

The scope of the National Youth Policy should focus on:

- providing more productive employment opportunities and incentives in rural areas;
 - enhancing the quality of rural life to reverse the present migration to towns;
 - reducing the traditional dependence of rural areas on a few primary products;
- and
- increasing agricultural efficiency for all farmers. Development must not result in prosperous farmers growing richer while peasants grow poorer.

Rural development programmes should consider these approaches:

- the creation of small-scale industry in rural areas, particularly based on local skills and resources;
- the development of a host of labour-based non-agricultural activities;
- the development of new growth centres outside capital cities. These could be encouraged by tax incentives, tax relief and other financial encouragements given to industries to move out of congested areas;
- the creation of public works programmes, e.g. the construction of roads;
- the up-grading of agricultural techniques through advisory services which permeate throughout the country, particularly active at the village level;
- the general up-grading of living conditions, including electrification, water supply, health, housing, schools;

- the provision of more entertainment and recreational facilities;
- decentralization of commerce and industry and importantly also decentralization of government departments;
- and
- a greater emphasis on the development of non-formal education in rural areas in an attempt to reverse the urban bias in formal education systems.

POLICY AND PROGRAMME INTEGRATION

The scope of a National Youth Policy should ensure that there are adequate administrative arrangements to integrate the youth policy with other national policies; and to integrate the delivery of youth services across the separate government departments and the non-government organizations implementing programmes affecting youth.

These arrangements should apply at the Ministerial and bureaucratic levels. Arrangements should also be made at the scale at which programmes are implemented - local and district-regional.

In any democratic society, there should be a proper working relationship between voluntary organizations and government agencies based on mutual respect and understanding. A National Youth Policy can be effectively formulated and translated into action only if all the voluntary organizations realize the importance of co-operation and co-ordination.

Administrative structures reflect the constitutional and political realities of each country. Consequently, the tiers in the administrative hierarchy, and the precise nature of the relationship between government and voluntary agencies, will vary between member countries of the Commonwealth. Our comments are made from the perspective we hold as youth workers, most of whom operate at sub-national level, often at the district-regional level. Our concern is to ensure that national policy intentions actually get carried out on the ground. Youth involvement in national development has to be on a mass scale. The youth contribution will be weakened if the programme implementation results in only a selective outreach to young people.

In the Asia-Pacific region it is unusual to find a Ministry solely for Youth Affairs. This means that "youth" are attached to traditional Welfare or Education Ministries; or are associated with sports, recreational and cultural functions; or employment, as in the case of Australia, or Home Affairs as in Papua New Guinea. The danger is that expenditure on youth is seen as residual, something to be attended to once matters of prime importance have been dealt with.

We would prefer to see a budget-framing arrangement which allocated money between the various sectors of departments responsible for youth affairs on the basis of "budget bids" from the grass roots, expressed through district-regional level forward programmes submitted by youth officers at that level. These annual forward programmes would be prepared in consultation with youth groups functioning in the districts-regions, and to that extent, and because of the level at which they are compiled, they stand a greater chance of being based on the needs and aspirations of young people. Clearly, these forward programmes would have to be framed in the context of the National Youth Policy.

In a number of Commonwealth countries considerable attention has been given to expanding local level youth groups. And in Ghana, for example, the sort of annual forward programme we have described is submitted to the regional level for onward transmission to the national level. This process allows the central department to form a clear view of the extent and direction of demand from youth.

Once the overall allocation to "youth affairs" has been decided centrally, in our view it should be allocated to regions on a "block" basis. That is, each region or district would receive so much money to spend, but not earmarked as to how much should be spent on particular programme components of the National Youth Policy. The practice of giving "tied" budgetary grants is not favoured.

Instead, we propose a decentralization of decision-making on programme expenditure within national guidelines. In our view, policy creation is a national level function; programme development may be shared between the national and regional levels; but programme implementation can conveniently be left to the regional-district level. Accordingly, the central department for youth affairs may issue guidelines on the proper expenditure of funds allocated to regions-districts, and those guidelines should be consistent with the National Youth Policy. But the subdivision of the block of funds to programmes and specific projects should be left to the regional-district office to decide.

Guidelines are necessary for two reasons:

- to prevent a concentration of expenditure on one or a restricted number of aspects of policy, to the detriment of other aspects
- and
- to prevent misuse of public funds

Within the context of those guidelines, flexibility to respond to regional variations, and the capacity to respond to the people would be greatly enhanced.

If regional forward programming is to form the basis of budgetary planning in the context of a National Youth Policy, an adequate information and data base at regional and national levels is essential. National level data systems need to be structured in such a way that they can be accessed from the regional offices of the department responsible for youth affairs.

But in addition, whatever information and data is held in the youth field should be integrated into the nation's overall planning information system, against national and regional levels. We note that in India, for example, there is a District Statistical Officer whose function is to collect and collate monthly returns on programme expenditure from all State level agencies in the district. His information file is accessible to the district youth officer. Potentially, this arrangement should facilitate the forward programming work of the district youth officer, allowing him to integrate his proposals for national development within the broader effort taking place in the district.

In the State of Victoria, in Australia, a computerised data file on human services provided in the State has been compiled. Among other things, it can provide a print-out of the programmes of government and non-government organizations involved in youth work by objective, by category of programme, by type of client, and by scale of service delivery - State, region, locality. This data base has been compiled as a joint effort between the national government departments operating in the State; State Government agencies; local government; and the non-government sector. While the Victorian Services' Identification System may be the ideal resource for a regional-district level planner, it nevertheless represents the sort of information tool which we have in mind in a regional information system.

If this paper stresses the role of the region-district in policy and programme integration, this reflects the growing awareness by governments of the importance and value of this level in translating national development objectives into reality. Malaysia's arrangements seem to us to be especially commendable in this regard.

In each district there is an Operations Room which contains details of programme expenditure by government agencies, as well as details of plans and progress in implementation. This data is kept up-to-date by the District Officer's Department. The District Youth Officer has access to the information stored in the Operations Room to help him with his work.

But in addition to this the Malaysian Government has set about establishing structures to promote the integration of development efforts by government agencies. To co-ordinate the government sector itself, it has established District Development Co-ordinating Committee (DDCC) comprising heads of departments at district level. Then it has established a District Action Committee (DAC) to review the performance

of development programmes. The DAC includes in its membership the DDCC; State Member of Parliament and the national level Member of Parliament from the district; and, as observers, representatives from lower levels of administration, "PENGHULU MUKIM".

The DAC meets monthly and attendance by officials is compulsory. Minutes are taken. The Chairman of all DAC within a State meet on a State basis, and the Chairman of these State-wide forums meet in a national level forum.

The District Action Committee model provides for information-sharing, problem-solving, participation by lower levels, and programme monitoring. It links the administrative and political elements together at the regional-district level. A District Youth Officer, in his capacity as a proxy representative of youth, can raise in the DAC problems and views of youth in his district; depending on the merits of the issue and his personal efficacy, matters may be satisfactorily resolved. We commend this model to the attention of the pan-Commonwealth Conference, and to it we would add our earlier comments relating to practical measures for participation by youth.