

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid expansion of education in many developing countries and the demands of new curricula and methods of teaching, the problem of providing a teaching profession suitable in quantity and quality for the task has become increasingly difficult by traditional patterns of teacher education. There is therefore an urgent need to consider ways and means of increasing the supply of teachers and renewing their training in such a way as to enable them to meet the challenge of changing needs.

In-service teacher training in various forms offers a potential solution. Many Commonwealth countries are still in the process of formulating their national educational policies, and as a result, teacher education, like other sectors of education, has yet to be effectively geared to the needs of the school. In addition, there is an urgent need to co-ordinate the various stages in teacher education - initial training, induction and in-service training. In-service training is frequently organized on an ad hoc basis or allowed to become the first victim of financial cuts in staff training programmes. The problem is not only very real, it requires deliberate policy decisions about educational objectives and ways in which these objectives can best be achieved. Co-ordination of all education and training resources is vital if the piecemeal approach to teacher education is to be overcome. It is important therefore, that initial training, induction and in-service training of teachers should be seen as different aspects of the single on-going process of teacher education, responsive to the process of curriculum change and development.

However, the high cost of conventional forms of teacher training and the inherent difficulty of increasing rapidly the number of teachers through in-service training place severe limitations on governments' ability to provide effective teacher education. It was for these reasons that this third and last in the present series of Commonwealth Regional Workshops on In-Service Teacher Education, funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation was designed to examine alternative approaches to teacher education and, in particular, the role of distance education in making in-service training available to more teachers. It was also agreed that some guidance should be given as to how programmes of in-service teacher education might be more effectively managed, and how teachers might be provided with better support and supervision in their work.

The earlier regional workshops held in Barbados and Sri Lanka had focused on the themes - "An overall strategy for teacher education" and "Educating teachers for changing roles". For this third workshop it was decided to examine the theme "Implementing programmes of in-service teacher education". The main objective was to help those involved in the provision of in-service training to consider alternative modes of training which would enable more teachers to be given in-service training at less cost than through conventional methods and to establish an effective infrastructure of support and supervision for this training.

The success of the workshop cannot be measured alone by the quality of the ideas presented through this report; but if in time countries that participated in the workshop, and others to whom this report is circulated, have managed to increase the numbers of teachers who are adequately prepared for their tasks, some credit may be claimed for the contribution of the workshop. This report is offered as a step towards that goal.

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