

CHAPTER 6

A STRATEGY FOR THE LONG TERM

In this final chapter, horizons are extended beyond the provision of a single course.

Training Problems

It is widely agreed that the need for professional and management development for the educational leaders in schools, and in district and regional education offices in the developing countries of the Commonwealth is very great. The number of office-based administrators and supervisors of primary and secondary schools that need in-service training is formidable, though the former is more manageable than the latter. It has been shown that the planning and organising of relevant courses, working closely with Planning Committees largely drawn from the target groups, is a complex task requiring skill and patience. At present, the number of capable course organisers and the number of people qualified to teach on the courses is exceedingly small. A further constraint is the acute shortage of resource materials - simulation exercises, case studies, management games, films and tapes - appropriate to the needs and conditions of developing countries. Even when in-service courses are held, there is often a lack of follow-up support so that there will be a tendency in many cases to revert, after a time, to former, less enlightened, styles of administration and supervision.

Faced with these mammoth problems, the basic standpoint in relation to training needs of this Handbook, based on the previous trial Handbook and on the experience of several Commonwealth courses, seems essentially sound. It emphasises the clarification of objectives, the identification of issues related to the achievement of those objectives in a number of task areas, and an analysis with practical illustrations of the components of the control cycle which is integral to a management approach - planning, organising for implementation and exercising control. Whereas the training needs and problems which require attention will differ for the many countries of the Commonwealth, for the different positions of educational leadership involved, and for different stages in the development of an educational system, there appears to be some durability, as well as some necessary flexibility, in the approach adopted in Part 1 of

this handbook.

In the previous two chapters of Part 2, an indication has been given of the many factors and considerations involved in the planning and organisation of a single course, factors of which many course organisers have become aware by trial and error or 'being thrown in at the deep end.' It is hoped that some will find these chapters helpful in alerting them to problems with which they will have to deal in relation to similar one-off courses for which they are responsible.

In-Service Planning

And yet, something is still lacking if we are thinking only in terms of single courses unrelated to any other activity, however well planned and well organised those particular courses may be. What is really required, if a significant impact is to be made on the in-service training problems we have indicated, is a long term comprehensive and co-ordinated scheme of in-service planning which replaces the current haphazard and ad hoc types of training which usually involves no follow-up support.

Co-ordination

What seems to be required to achieve greater coherence in in-service planning is the setting up of a central agency which would have a facilitating function, providing support for local efforts, disseminating and encouraging the production of reports arising from courses, assisting in self-evaluation by course organisers, and providing such further co-ordination as appears to be desirable, having in mind the warning against over-coordination which we gave in Chapter 3. Such a facilitating responsibility might be given to an In-service Centre attached to a university, or might take the form of a Staff Training Institute, as in the case of Malaysia, which has established such an institute to provide in-service training for both school-based and office-based educational leaders. A unit or division might be set up in the Ministry or Department of Education, or the responsibility for taking a systematic view might be given to the Inspectorate of Schools. There are obviously other options. Each Commonwealth country moving in this direction would need to consider, in its own circumstances, how best to achieve the co-ordination that is desirable without stifling initiative and creativity.

Life-Long Training

Complementing the setting up of a central facilitating agency would be the establishment of a network of Resource and Training Centres to serve as infra-structure for life-long in-service training, which should be thought of as a continuing process of keeping abreast of changes and development. Such centres might be located in centrally situated schools, colleges of teacher education, and universities, to minimise operational costs, an arrangement which might also foster better understanding and closer co-operation among those in charge of the three types of institution. Colleges of teacher education and universities are particularly useful when in-service courses of a week or more duration require the provision of board

and lodging for the participants.

**A Network
of Centres**

The proposed network of Resource and Training Centres would serve as focal points for educational leaders in different settings, and from different levels, to meet fairly frequently, and would perhaps be linked to a national association of educational administrators, with opportunities to exchange views and experience in a non-formal and informal setting. Such exchanges constitute an important adjunct to the more formal approach to staff development represented by in-service courses.

**Resource
Material**

Funds should then be made available through the central agency for the setting up of libraries at the Resource and Training Centres, and positive encouragement should be given to the publication of books and journals related to the management and administration of education. Reports and papers presented at workshops, seminars and conferences in the different parts of the Commonwealth and other developing countries could also be collated and published in the form of Readings*.

These would serve as valuable resource materials at in-service courses.

**The Multiplier
Effect**

To contribute to overcoming the shortage of course tutors, the techniques and methods of tuition should be exemplified and given attention in every in-service course. This can usefully be linked with the involvement of participants with a potential for leadership in the planning and organising processes through the work of a Course Planning Committee as described in Chapter 4. At the end of an in-service course, it should be possible to identify a number of participants for further specialised training in order to act as course tutors and organisers, thus producing a multiplying effect.

**Mandatory and
Optional
Courses**

The primary aim of a comprehensive and co-ordinated system of in-service planning within a national framework would be to ensure that within a given period all the educational leaders in schools and in district and regional offices are inducted into the basic competencies of skills and knowledge of educational administration; and enabled to develop beyond those basic competencies according to their capabilities and interest. It may, therefore, be useful to think in terms of a first cycle of in-service courses which would be mandatory, while attendance at more advanced courses designed for enrichment, many of which would be role-specific, would be optional. It is envisaged in any case that the majority would be sufficiently motivated to keep abreast of new developments to some degree through making use of the facilities and resources of the Resource and Training Centres.

* A good beginning is provided by the two casebooks, related to school and university administration respectively, which are being produced for the Commonwealth Secretariat by the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration.

Self
Development

The long term aim would be that every educational leader should be able to continue his life-long education through attending further in-service courses as appropriate to serve his needs and by becoming an active member of his Resource and Training Centre and of an associated professional body. The ultimate test of a successful in-service training programme is that it should nurture the capability of self-development.

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 - No. 21 The Principal and Teacher Professional Development - Some Strategies, R. Brayne, 1980
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