

Part 2

Case Studies

1. THE LESOTHO
PRIMARY TEACHERS' IN-SERVICE
PROGRAMME 1966-1974

Background

The Lesotho programme, whilst retaining the same overall purpose and organization since 1966, has varied its emphasis from time to time in the light of growing experience.

Three phases can be identified in which the main emphasis has, in turn, been on:

- (a) the up-grading to qualified status of a considerable number of unqualified primary teachers.
- (b) the further education and training of selected primary school headteachers.
- (c) the "up-grading" of the whole staffs of 12 selected primary schools.

Aims

There were two major aims:

- (a) to improve the competence of the body of primary school teachers, about one-third of whom were untrained, in such a way that they could play a constructive role in implementing a modernized primary school syllabus.
- (b) to develop the understanding, skills and teacher-training expertise of the field inspectorate staff.

Needs and
priorities

Educational resources at all levels are very inadequate to meet the country's needs. At primary level there is a high rate of wastage, due to poor physical conditions, lack of educa-

tional materials; children's malnourishment; parental poverty; large classes; and unqualified or under-qualified teaching staff.

The priority need was identified (1966) as up-grading the competence of primary teachers, at first by concentrating on unqualified staff. Later (1969 and 1971) there were shifts of priority, first to headteachers and then to whole school staffs.

The consequent in-service programme was planned to be carried out in the context of a revised and modernized primary school curriculum.

Resources

The resources on which the programme drew included:

(a) Agencies such as the Lesotho Ministry of Education; the University School of Education; The British Council; the British Ministry of Overseas Development sponsoring the team of British tutors; the Canadian Teachers' Federation (1969); UNICEF - financial assistance to local costs.

(b) Nine tutors recruited for the first and latter phases of the programme from Colleges in the Durham Institute of Education area. These worked with local counterparts - members of the Inspectorate. Staff preparation was helped by advance visits to Lesotho by the leader of the Durham team and by short attachments by Lesotho inspectors and teachers to St. Hilda's College of Education, Durham.

A group of five Canadian teachers helped to initiate the Headteachers' course in 1969.

(c) Financial assistance was supplied by the Lesotho Government in respect of local costs and by foreign agencies for the remainder.

Participants	A major problem was the selection of: (a) suitable unqualified teachers, with an adequate command of English. (b) the schools in the latter phase - "schools capable of acting as models for visiting teachers and as teachers' centres." The motivation of the teachers concerned was generally of a high level and there was no shortage of applicants.
Content of the course	The courses were concerned both to increase the teachers' knowledge of subject content, related to the school syllabus, and to improve their classroom practice by re-orientating their professional attitudes. In the case of the headteachers there was concern also to develop administrative skills.
Modes and methods of training	The residential courses were usually for two weeks with a further two weeks for planning and working with teachers in their schools. The unqualified teachers attended three such residential courses - one per year - and carried out a number of assignments in the form of practical activities in their schools. In the latter phase of the programme the selected school staffs attended for two consecutive years. The methods were very largely of a practical nature, involving the teachers (with groups of children when appropriate) in active practice of more modern approaches to the teaching of such subjects as mathematics, English, science and art. Personal experience through involvement was considered to be more beneficial than a lecture-dominated programme. The latter phase of the programme was "firmly based on the study of child development."

The following is a description of a typical day's programme, taken from the 1972 Report:

"Work began at 8.30 a.m. with 30 minutes of games. This "warming up session" was followed by practical teaching activities until noon but with a 30-minute break (10 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.). During this period, pairs of schools worked together spending two mornings with each pair of tutors in turn. In this way every school had an opportunity of working with each of the four pairs of tutors during the fortnight. An inspector linked with the school assisted by providing a degree of continuity in the work of its staff and by becoming familiar with the ideas and specialized knowledge of every tutor. The tutors, in these sessions, demonstrated a child-centred approach to various aspects of the primary school curriculum. (In some cases children from a local school were supplied for demonstration purposes). Lunch was from noon until 2.00 p.m., after which lectures were given by individual tutors. Two lectures were given daily; one to the four "first year" school staffs and one to the second years. In 1971 of course, only one lecture was given during this period since there were no second year students. The object of this part of the timetable was to enable each tutor to lecture on his or her special interest, not only to the students but also to inspectors and colleagues. Attendance at these lectures was so arranged that one tutor from each pair attended each lecture so as to be better prepared to answer students' queries during tutorial sessions. Tutorials followed the lecture period, here the students and their "own" tutors discussed the day's work and made plans for its application to their own school situation.

Finally there was a period of discussions between schools. Schools of the 1971 intake met schools of the 1972 intake (changing daily) and discussion was supervised by the local inspectors. Voluntary sessions were provided

in 1972 for those interested in games coaching and drama; on other evenings educational films were shown."

Follow-up and evaluation

This was the work of the members of the Inspectorate during their visits to schools. Because of their participation in the programme, the Inspectors were, from a professional point of view, in a good position to perform this function. However, in the case of the unqualified teachers, the numbers involved and the problems of travel made this very difficult to achieve. (The Lesotho Ministry of Education Report for 1968 states that only about one quarter of the primary schools were visited during that year.)

In the latter phase an Inspector was assigned to follow-up work in the 12 selected schools, in what came to be known as the "Experimental Primary Schools Project".

There was no formal kind of evaluation, but reports were made by Inspectors following their school visits. Such evaluation was seen as serving the purpose of improving the programme and, indeed, provided the information on which decisions were made to change the emphasis of the programme from one phase to another.

Special features

Of special note were:

- (a) The integration and co-ordination of resources: a poor country like Lesotho could only carry out an in-service programme of the kind and scale described by identifying and co-ordinating all possible resources, both local and external.
- (b) The continuity in staffing, achieved by the partnership between the Lesotho Inspectorate and the Durham team over a period of several years. thus building up an esprit de corps as well as accumulating experience and expertise:

the fullest involvement of the inspectors, both in the courses and in the follow-up process were an element essential to success.

(c) The changes of emphasis from one phase to another as a result of the field observations of the inspectorate: the headteachers were brought more fully into the programme when it became apparent that their understanding and support was essential to the success of the unqualified teachers involved in the project.

(d) The conviction that a more modern approach to the work of the primary school could not be fully achieved by the in-service training of only one or two members of its staff. Also, that a national in-service programme needed to develop a number of strategically located schools which could serve as local demonstration and resource centres. It was possible to maintain the essential continuity of staffing in the "experimental" schools for the duration of the project but these schools needed additional provision of the basic materials necessary for an active, child-centred approach to education.

(e) The considerable advantage of correlating in-service training of this kind with the production of curriculum materials for pupils and teachers, as has been done in the primary education improvement project in Northern Nigeria (Case Study 8): the cost per pupil was very modest, and within the limits of what could reasonably be expected to be afforded for the programme's next stage.

(f) The proposals made for the modernizing of the Primary Leaving Examinations for the 12 experimental schools: this would involve, in addition to two

objective attainment tests in English and mathematics, the assessment of pupils' individual project work and a process of continuous assessment based on the keeping of individual pupils' records.

References

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