

Strategies for U P E and a consideration of alternatives

PLENARY SESSION

Mr R L Smith introduced the lead paper "Strategies for UPE and a Consideration of Alternatives" prepared by Mr Kisome, Director of Primary Education, Ministry of National Education, Tanzania who, because of illness was unable to be present.

The paper examined the revolutionary rather than evolutionary methods that have been used to introduce UPE based on the philosophy and practice of "Ujamaa". For example, a single integrated system was created to replace the previous racial one since Ujamaa stands for equality and respect for human dignity, the sharing of resources produced by co-operative efforts and work by everyone. The focus of Ujamaa is the development of man. To reduce a sense of dependence, Ujamaa holds that national development rests entirely upon Tanzanians themselves though there are a number of foreign agencies working in the country.

Originally, the population was scattered. The people were urged to live in organized villages. The emphasis was on "living together". This centralisation of the people also facilitated the provision of schools.

Tanzania assumes that adults hold the destiny of Africa in their hands, not just the young. Therefore, all efforts must be made to educate illiterate adults using all available methods, primarily the non-formal.

Adult illiterates make their impact now. The role of the children is in the future. To wait for development until all the population has passed through the schools would postpone the day too long. Therefore, a mode of education has to be devised which will take care of the productive population. Learning is viewed as intimately bound up with earning, both of which a person does all his life. Though there were over five million illiterates in 1971, six years later they have been reduced significantly.

In 1974, 80 per cent of the rural population lived in villages. The political party directed the Ministry of National Education to achieve UPE by 1977 rather than the original date set for twelve years later. Thus the Ministry perforce called upon the villagers to co-operate by constructing classrooms and teachers' quarters on a self-help basis. Shifts were instituted in classes I and II to meet the classroom shortage. Retired, but competent primary teachers, were employed on a temporary basis to meet the teacher shortage. Extension agents and para-medics taught subjects related to their professions. In 1965, 471,000 pupils were enrolled in the primary schools; in 1979 the number increased to 3,414,210, an achievement of 92.7 per cent. Provision was also made for handicapped children.

In teacher training it was found that different methods could be used with equally good results. "Distance Education" was employed in addition to conventional training techniques. The former consisted of correspondence education (in pedagogy, Kiswahili, and mathematics), tutorials, radio programmes and teaching practice. This method was but one-third as expensive as traditional teacher training in colleges. No difference in capability of

resultant teachers has been observed.

Curriculum revision has sought to make the curriculum relevant to the environment with which pupils are familiar and to incorporate practical skills, and values which are meaningful to them. Daily life features have been introduced to the curriculum freely so that education is linked to life. Thus the "town and gown-syndrome" has disappeared and the school and community has become integrated.

Mr Smith went on to say that the word "alternatives" as used in education means "to supplement, complement, or go alongside an existing programme". He then suggested some opposite concepts for consideration:

- School and non-school
- Evolution and revolution
- Centralised control and decentralised control
- Teaching and self-instruction
- Pilot innovations and mass scale campaigns of innovation.

The Tanzania Case Study illustrates the extent to which politics may influence the development of the educational system. President Nyerere has stated that educational objectives cannot be set until a people has decided what kind of society it wants. Tanzania has undertaken to create a society which is

- Self-reliant
- Socialised politically
- Controlled by a political structure that is decentralised
- Developing in a multi-faceted and well integrated manner
- Encouraging education for meeting present needs
- Developing formal and non-formal together
- Independent through self-help
- Learning and teaching all the time
- Community oriented
- Developing community schools as centres of production and appropriate alternatives to traditional primary schools.

The number of primary schools in Tanzania has increased greatly and much more rapidly than secondary education. A high level of political instruction is included in schooling. This results from the official view that at the first level, political education is desirable; at the secondary level it is defensible, but at the tertiary level it may be demeaning.

Returning to the paired concepts suggested as alternative strategies, the following comments were offered:

- (a) Schooling may be seen as expensive, and creating dependency, yet it is still popular and often quite successful.
- (b) Non-formal education may be more functional, produce quicker results and may be cheaper.
- (c) Evolution is slow and expensive but encourages good planning.
- (d) Revolution is dynamic but may be inefficient and wasteful.
- (e) Centralisation control is easier to manage, but tends to break down, and create delays. However, it prevents duplication of efforts.
- (f) Decentralisation control may suffer from lack of expertise at the local level and there is a danger of duplication. Strong community support is essential.
- (g) Teaching is easier to control. It also presents a pattern that is familiar and provides employment. However, success in teaching seems to be more dependent on personality characteristics rather than learned skills.
- (h) Self-instruction may be more creative but it is severely limiting if it trivialises knowledge. For success, it requires high levels of organisation.

Whichever strategy is chosen, a price has to be paid. Tanzania has chosen to develop the base of the educational pyramid at the cost of opportunities for secondary schooling, though there has been a recent move to add two years of vocationally based courses to the first level to cater for those unable to enter secondary schools. Additional prices that Tanzania is paying include problems of achieving quality in education and in obtaining the full support of parents.

Strategies always imply choices. Tanzania is offered as a case study so that seminar delegates may discuss strategies relevant to the achievement of UPE in their own countries.

GROUP SESSIONS

The following themes and questions were suggested for discussions:

Politics

In what ways can politics be used to develop pressure for UPE? (e.g. political socialisation of communities)

Alternatives

What aspects could be adopted in other countries of the Meher Union UPE? IMPACT or Tanzanian approach?

Aims

List appropriate, specific aims for UPE (e.g. how might national unity be achieved through UPE)?

Research

What research (other than statistical data gathering) do we need to strengthen our drive towards UPE? (e.g. Have we checked the level of difficulty of school text-books?) (three years ahead in Pakistan)

Language Policy

What implications for language policy does UPE carry in member countries?

Curriculum

Who controls and who contributes to curriculum making in member countries?

What specific strategies are being used or could be used?

Formal and Non-Formal

List specific ways in which the gap between formal and non-formal education can be bridged. Teachers facilities, media, certification etc. should be included in your discussion.

REPORT OF SMALL COUNTRIES GROUP (Chaired by Mr P Misiga)

The group discussed briefly the topics prepared by Mr Smith and made the following comments:

POLITICAL ASPECTS OF UPE:

Effective programmes of UPE require full government support; partial support leads only to partial success. Community support is also necessary but can be effected by political means.

MODELS OF ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

All aspects of a country's innovations may not be replicable elsewhere. The level of development and culture of a country must be considered when alternative approaches are to be copied.

The specific alternative of modularised instruction might be useful in supplementing "normal" teaching but in some countries a transfer to teaching by modules might prove expensive.

The use of retired, educated personnel as primary school teachers was recommended as a stop-gap measure by which colleges could produce appropriate numbers of new teachers.

AIMS OF UPE

UPE can be used to socialise the population and, as such, it can contribute to the achievement of national unity by providing a focus for teaching and other activities which reflect the cultural and national identity. The national flag flying above the school may be the most concrete focus for rural communities of a sense of national unity.

The achievement of functional literacy is another major aim of UPE programmes as also should be the instruction and training of children in the moral and religious values of the community.

RESEARCH

A constant check on textbooks is necessary, particularly to evaluate levels of difficulty and relevance to the environment. Books must be designed for the pupil, not the teacher, and need to be constantly updated.

Research should be carried out in each country aimed at discovering which teaching methods are most successful in improving the quality of classroom learning, for what is effective in one context and culture may not be effective in another.

There is need also for research to be conducted into the design and use of teaching aids and the development of instructional materials.

The extent and causes of truancy should be studied in each country so that appropriate action can be taken to overcome it.

LANGUAGE POLICY

Where universalization will draw in a number of dialects not well known, teachers who have these dialects as their mother tongue may have to be recruited.

Although it is wholly appropriate that a national language should be the eventual medium of instruction in schools, it should be the right of every child to begin learning in his mother tongue.

CURRICULUM

A well designed structure of subject panels and curriculum committees should be established on a permanent basis to develop and monitor curricula which are relevant to the children and enjoyable too. Educators of all levels, from the primary teacher to the academic specialist should be represented on these panels.

Although most parents are very conservative in what they want of the curriculum, there is a place for setting up a national forum at which parents, teachers, employers and all people with an interest in education can contribute discussion.

FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL

Non-formal education is probably best administered by a different body from the formal system.

Where accommodation and other resources are shared between formal school classes and non-formal groups, close supervision is necessary.

Certificates for non-formal students should be awards for specific courses and themes, not for general education.

EVALUATION

Levels of success in achieving the stated aims of UPE should be evaluated. So also should pupil achievement since these must be maintained or improved if UPE is to be successful.

Parents should be provided with appropriate information about their children's progress at school. This will go some way to helping them to evaluate UPE.

REPORT OF LARGE COUNTRIES GROUP (Chaired by Dr V McNamara)

The group re-ordered the discussion heads to link related topics, then drew up the following recommendations:

POLITICS

A firm political will is essential for successful implementation of UPE. To be firm it must be:

- Defined as clear aims
- Expressed as policy
- Conveyed vigorously and persuasively to all strata of the people in order to mobilise popular enthusiasm and gear all agencies into appropriate action.
- Backed by adequate, realistic and continuing budgetary support.

SPECIFIC AIMS

- These need to be expressed in as concrete terms as possible. e.g. to enable all children to read, write communicate etc.
- To help the child to acquire manipulative (psycho-motor) skills necessary for undertaking socially useful and productive work.
- To inculcate attitudes and values necessary to become a good citizen (e.g. create a sense of national loyalty essential to national integration. Note that this is political socialisation in terms of what, in the consensus of national leaders, are seen as desirable national values.
- In general, to provide a sound basis for unified national development.

LANGUAGE POLICY

Education is most meaningful where it commences in the mother tongue, However, where this is not possible, UPE should be given through a commonly used language.

CURRICULUM

The answer to the question "Who controls and who contributes to the curriculum?" varies from country to country, depending on factors that are sometimes intrinsic to the nation (e.g. diversity of language and cultures), sometimes built into the power structure (e.g. constitutional provision for curriculum to be controlled at Federal or State level.)

The following examples illustrate the state of curriculum development in member countries.

(a) Bangladesh

This is a single national state with a common culture and language. The Government sets the curriculum centrally through a Curriculum Committee of specialists. A Textbook Board writes, prints, publishes and distributes appropriate textbooks to support the curriculum. Teachers, headmasters, inspectors and teachers' college lecturers are not sufficiently involved in the determination of curriculum. This results in a lack of awareness of the intention of the textbooks and consequent failure to use them effectively.

(b) India

School curriculum for a ten year programme was developed by professional experts organized for the purpose by NCERT. Successive drafts were circulated widely throughout all states and to all interested bodies. The responses led to a progressive refinement of the curriculum to a point where it was presented to and adopted by a conference of State Ministers of Education. This "curriculum by consensus" has become the pattern for the development of state curricula.

(c) Papua New Guinea

The National Curriculum Unit comprises full-time professional curriculum experts in all subjects in all subject areas, supported by associated research, measurement, materials and audio-visual staff. These subject experts chair subject committees comprising teachers, inspectors, lecturers and others known for their leadership in the subject. General direction is given by the National Executive Council and the Minister through the Permanent Secretary. Periodically, committees of laymen, including provincial representatives meet for several weeks to advise on curriculum objectives and orientation.

Draft curricula and materials to meet these national directives are tested and submitted to the Secretary for approval, promulgation and implementation.

There is still considerable local and provincial dissatisfaction with curricula. Although curriculum is a concurrent function on which the National Government has the final say, the Minister for Education has introduced legislative amendments to place control of non-core subject areas (i.e. subjects other than English, Maths, Science and the national and international components of Social Studies) in the hands of the Provinces.

It is not certain that this will be sufficient to suit the extreme cultural heterogeneity of Papua New Guinea. One cannot rule out the possibility of further decentralisation e.g. of the core subjects, length of the curriculum, the school year, the school day, inspections, examinations, etc.

(d) Malaysia

Curriculum is a Federal responsibility. Materials are developed by the National Curriculum Development Centre under the direction of a high powered Curriculum Committee chaired by the Director General of Education and comprising directors of professional divisions of the Ministry Curriculum Committees formulating syllabuses comprise curriculum developers, inspectors, headteachers and teachers. State Curriculum Committees review curricula and propose modification to the Federal Committee.

A separate Curriculum Implementation Committee directs implementation through teacher trainers, inspectors, teachers and textbook publication. Implementation at the local level provides scope for presentation of the common curriculum content in ways that are relevant to the local environment of all pupils.

An interesting current development, not confined to Malaysia alone, is the study of how best to provide a moral education curriculum.

(e) Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has a single national curriculum, initiated by a Curriculum Development Centre which works in close consultation with practising teachers. Attempts have been made to involve parents and laymen but it seems they prefer to leave the task to the professionals.

SUMMARY

Although national conditions impose a diversity of patterns of curriculum control, all countries seem to share certain basic trends:

- A central initiative, taken by professionals, but with appropriate political backing.
- A careful process of progressive refinement, requiring committees, series of drafts, trials and pilot projects, close consultation with practitioners and with those in

typical local situations.

- Provision of appropriate materials and training once the new curriculum has been adopted.
- Permanent machinery providing for a continual process of review, development and realisation through appropriate support materials.
- Some provision for local decision-making, at least at the level of adaptation and presentation.

BRIDGING THE FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL GAP

Whether there is a gap is a matter of definition. There is a gap if one accepts that non-formal education is decentralised to the level of the learner's interests, problems and concerns, and therefore is not a common curriculum leading to the award of a common certificate.

However, we are considering non-formal education in a very special context - as a supplement to formal education in achieving the common curricular goals of UPE.

To that extent, then, we are considering non-formal methods of achieving common primary curricular goals and, if desired, certification. An example is the Thai Programme for teaching basic skills to those out of school through regular radio lessons supplemented by special printed materials. While the goal (literacy) is that of the formal education system, the method is not.

Further, we can adopt the approach of non-formal educators in basing the initial learning goal on the everyday problems of the learner. For example, India's CAPE programme might start by helping a particular learner such as a restaurant handyman to solve the problems of his daily occupation though this may lead, if the student is interested, to a module on the basic mathematics of budgeting for meals.

In some countries there is clearly scope for a non-formal approach to supplement formal education in ensuring UPE by providing a basic education to those children and adults who cannot get to school or who have dropped out of the formal system.

One example of a "bridge" is the provision in CAPE for assessment of attainment of formal curriculum goals by those non-formal students who request it, so making possible movement from one form of education to the other.

ALTERNATIVES

The group felt that the alternatives examined had much to offer for expediting the achievement of UPE, particularly if on "all-or-nothing" approach was to be avoided.

For example, one country might not wish to emulate the untrained teacher element of the Meher-Project, yet see considerable value in supplying its concept of embodying the UPE drive, in at least some regions, in integrated development programmes where the main decisions are made by the people directly affected.

Elements of project IMPACT which might be suited to particular situations include:

- Individualised programmes, with their dependence on sophisticated centralised preparation and highly trained users.
- Extending the reach of trained teachers by the use of teacher aides, and senior pupils as monitors.

Further, the achievement of UPE may well be speeded up by the encouragement of a diverse range of programmes in different parts of the nation, as demanded by local circumstances, or made possible by local leadership. Some of the more successful projects could then be used as models for replication in other parts of the country.

From this point of view, insistence on uniformity might be a hindrance to UPE rather than a help. On the other hand, care must be taken to ensure that local efforts are properly planned, supported with resources, and managed. The aim is a wider spread of effective learning not confusion or chaos.

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Both depend on the clear definition of objectives in precise, detailed measurable terms. Evaluation of the various aspects of a UPE programme is essential. These should include the evaluation of overall progress, progress in particular projects, and the attainment of particular pupil learning goals (in this case quite independently of pupil-grading and selection decisions and, hopefully, with considerably more validity and reliability than the average school exam.)

The most useful form of evaluation is continuous (rather than summative) commencing at the stage of project design and feeding back assessments of problems and progress throughout the life of the project—concluding, of course, with a better informed summative evaluation. Such a continuing evaluation sets emerging research tasks and provides guidelines for their implementation.

Such essential evaluation is best provided for by budgeting for the provision of suitable trained staff (including some for external evaluation, independent of those managing the project) at the stage of project design and in the presentation of financial estimates.