

I N T R O D U C T I O N

One of the most serious problems affecting the development of technical education in the Commonwealth is the shortage of well qualified and experienced teachers. The Seventh Commonwealth Education Conference, held in Accra in 1977, recognised the urgency of this problem among others and recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat should hold regional workshops with a training component to identify needs and priorities in the training of technical teachers. The Conference also requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to organise a programme of regional workshops on in-service primary and secondary teacher education throughout the Commonwealth. Three such workshops were organised by this Division in the period 1977-80 : in Barbados (1977), Sri Lanka (1978) and Swaziland (1979). The design of the workshop held in Mombasa in 1980 on in-service staff development in polytechnics, which is the subject of the present report, draws on the experience and conclusions of all three previous workshops.

One important correlation between the primary/secondary teacher workshops and the workshop on technical teacher training is the concern to find ways and means of renewing the skills and knowledge of teachers in order to meet the constantly changing demands of their vocation. As the Eighth Commonwealth Education Conference recognised, in-service teacher training carried out on a planned and systematic basis offers a practical way to satisfy such a need.

The choice of the Africa Region to host this workshop was largely due to the existence of the newly formed Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA). This regional association, based in Nairobi, Kenya, was established in December 1978 following a recommendation of the Seventh Commonwealth Education Conference. Staff development in the member institutions of CAPA is a major element in the aims and objectives of the Association and its Executive Board welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with the Education Division in the planning and execution of the workshop.

Participants included principals and senior staff of polytechnics as well as Ministry of Education staff responsible for technical education. A total of 28 participants from twelve Commonwealth African countries attended the workshop, thus bringing together a very substantial body of experience on technical education, particularly on the African continent.

The workshop programme was designed to make maximum use of this experience by means of intensive work in study groups, followed by plenary sessions. The resulting recommendations, including the training analysis and model staff development schemes were thus produced by technical education administrators and by practitioners at the workbench. They are set out in the following pages in the hope that member states will find among them practical measures to assist in the design and implementation of schemes for polytechnics and technical college staff development.

The Eighth Commonwealth Education Conference which received a report on the Mombasa Workshop welcomed its contribution to Commonwealth co-operation in technical and vocational education and recommended similar workshops on technical teacher training in other regions of the Commonwealth with appropriate modifications to suit their needs. This report is now offered to the wider field of policy makers as well as practitioners in the context of our programme of dissemination of Commonwealth experience.

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