# EDUCATION AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

## SOME PROPOSITIONS

Working Paper by

Dr Kenneth King



Dr Kenneth King was educated in Edinburgh and Cambridge and is currently the Executive Director of the Centre of African Studies, and Reader in Education at Edinburgh University. He has directed the International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) Education Research Programme in developing countries, and is currently co-ordinating a research programme on science, technology and education in Africa and Asia. His main publications are: Pan-Africanism and Education (1971), The African Artisan (1977), and Technological Capability in Developing Countries (1984).

# EDUCATION AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: SOME PROPOSITIONS

## Introduction

1. There is an extraordinarily rich diversity of experience in the Commonwealth in thinking about and in acting upon the relationship between education and youth employment. In this paper there will be little attempt to refer specifically to the experience and experimentation of individual member countries. That is largely available in the country papers. Instead, an attempt will be made to look across two main groups of Commonwealth country and to examine the extent to which member countries can generalise from these accumulated insights in the area of education and employment. This is a particularly timely point to review what can be learnt, since the unemployment of educated youth is frequently termed a common crisis, affecting every country within the Commonwealth.

2. The paper will follow the same five sections suggested for the country papers. It will employ the terms "industrialised Commonwealth country" (ICC) and "developing Commonwealth country" (DCC), while admitting that several countries are highly industrialised and technologically advanced but are still predominantly rural. Some others do not fit this categorisation at all, and the two most obvious, Singapore and Hong Kong, almost fall outside the scope of this paper, since they do not have a youth unemployment problem to speak of.

3. The propositions can be skimmed rapidly and used as a summary (see p. 28), or as signposts to the argument made at greater length in the intervening paragraphs.

## A. THE PROBLEM OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

*A1. There is no common youth unemployment crisis across the Commonwealth.*

*A2. The very language commonly used to describe the youth unemployment situation obscures fundamental distinctions between the industrialised and developing countries of the Commonwealth.*

4. The first set of propositions relates to this notion of a common youth unemployment problem, and they question the extent to which there really is a shared experience of the transition from school to work. The labour markets and education systems are sufficiently different in the industrialised and predominantly agricultural countries of the Commonwealth that even the basic concepts of 'transition', 'staying-on', 'education for self-employment', and 'part-time work' mean very different things in different country settings. The extent of primary and secondary school attendance and of wage and salary employment affects very directly the meaning of all such concepts.

*A3. Industrialised Commonwealth countries (ICCs) have a maximum of three great visible transitions out of the education system, whereas developing Commonwealth countries (DCCs) have frequent transitions from schooling all the way from Standard One to Form Six.*

5. Age-bound compulsory education systems (with compulsion, e.g. from age 5 to 16) provide only one or two major transition points: at the end of the compulsory cycle; at the end of the voluntary upper secondary level; and at the end of college, polytechnic or university. Those in transition are relatively visible, since they are part of a specific age group. Their numbers are rather precisely known whether they are staying on in education, or claiming unemployment benefit. The publication of monthly figures of those claiming benefit allows a close approximation to be made of the numbers of "unemployed" school-leavers. Not unnaturally, considerable political interest attaches to both youth and adult unemployment figures.

*A4. Non-compulsory systems have complex transitions from home to school, and very early "invisible" transitions from school back to home and to work.*

6. In non-compulsory systems, by contrast, the notion of transition has a very different meaning. For one thing, the transition to school itself is by no means compulsory everywhere in the Commonwealth. Even where campaigns for universal primary (and in some few cases secondary) attendance have been conducted, a portion of the appropriate age group remains out of school, enters school one or more years late, or attends irregularly because children are needed at home, farm or cottage industry. Despite the rapid spread of birth registration, the result is that the firmest figures are grade-specific, rather than age-specific. Ministries of Education know the size rather than the age of Standard One, Standard Seven, Form One or Form Four.

7. In non-compulsory systems many children not only fail to drop in: they also drop out for social, religious, economic and, to a limited extent, academic reasons. Even where universal access to primary schools is guaranteed, more than half may have left by grade four. Thus, by the time of the first important educational transition (from primary to secondary), several million children in the Commonwealth have made an earlier transition from school back to home, family shop, family farm or herding. Generally speaking, in discussions of education and youth employment this group is not discussed; their departure from school, though massive, is scattered through six years, and therefore relatively hard to quantify. Their work status is equally uncertain, but it is assumed, probably correctly, that the bulk who have left by the end of grade four will not long retain literacy skills. Little political interest currently attaches to this diverse group of non-completers.

*A5. "Staying-on" in education is not an option for youth in most DCCs. The majority face a compulsory transition out of school.*

*A6. No "dole" equals no politically visible unemployed.*

8. The closest parallel to the end of compulsory schooling in the industrialised Commonwealth countries is the end of the open access cycle, which comes variously at the end of the seventh or ninth year in many DCCs. After this point, further schooling is highly restricted, fee paying or both; consequently between 30 and 90 per cent of those in the last year of the basic cycle make a transition from school to work.

9. There is a further difference between these two large groups of school leavers terminating the first cycle of education. Those in ICCs have decided to leave institutions in which they would be entitled to stay on; whereas those in DCCs see themselves as being selected out (by fees, exams, and to some extent social pressure) from institutions in which generally they would be delighted to continue. 'Staying-on' is accordingly not an option that is open to the majority of children in the Commonwealth, although it is technically available and in the ICCs is currently providing an important policy choice for children (and politicians) faced with a deteriorating job market.

*A7. In ICCs, many well paid jobs have traditionally been available to youth with minimum schooling and no diplomas. Such jobs are now vanishing.*

10. This crucial distinction in attitude towards staying in formal schooling is explainable principally in terms of differing perceptions of the relations between schools and jobs. In ICCs a very large number of jobs have traditionally been available to young people with the minimum legal amount of schooling and without formal certification. Such unskilled, semi-skilled and even skilled jobs were increasingly well paid, and constituted a labour market that was almost independent of schooling, - beyond competence in the three Rs. In other words, a significant part of the labour market was not affected by the 'diploma disease' except in the minimum sense of the state raising the school leaving age from time to time. This situation allowed many young people to identify their schooling as almost standing in the way of their access to the labour market and to the adulthood of being a wage earner. Such students successfully combined a counter-school culture with a strong work ethic.

11. In the present crisis in the ICCs, it is precisely this part of the labour market (casual, unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled manual work) that has been most at risk; hence the historical transition from minimum schooling to satisfactory productive work has been severely threatened. It will be seen shortly that formal schools and training institutions are now being requested to assist with this crisis. It is too early to say if this will be successful, but in essence a whole section of young people may have to come to regard as valuable or even critical to their future the very institutions that have traditionally been regarded as irrelevant, if not obstacles, to jobs.

*A8. DCCs have very few paid jobs, but plenty of work. ICCs have still a majority of paid jobs, but now few other acceptable traditions of work.*

*A9. In DCCs the educated unemployed frequently work while looking for jobs.*

12. In many DCCs, the situation has been very different: schooling has been intimately associated with urban wage labour, more especially in the public, parastatal and multinational sectors than in the private industrial sector. Although the smaller private industries have continued to recruit without undue regard to level of schooling, the bulk of favoured employment has in many Commonwealth countries in Africa and the Caribbean lain in the public and multinational sectors, and these have strongly reinforced schooling through their recruitment and promotion policies. Where the ICCs have had a tradition of uncertified access to both skilled and unskilled work, the less industrial countries require, paradoxically, even higher school qualifications than the same jobs would require in Canada, Britain or Australia. The cause lies in the acute shortage of jobs offering regular pay and security as compared to various forms of subsistence, self-employment and casual work in the rural and urban areas.

13. The proportions between these two types of labour market (formal and informal, registered and unregistered) differ significantly in DCCs depending on the degree of industrialisation and urbanisation, but it is not uncommon for only 10 to 15 per cent to have secure wage and salary jobs or to be conducting commercial farming on their own account. The majority work on their own plots and petty enterprises, or work irregularly for low wages. In general the income differentials between urban jobs and work in the rest of the economy are very marked indeed, and are crucially different from the distinctions between unskilled manual work and middle level professional jobs in the ICCs. These vital differences in scale cannot be overemphasised if policies for youth unemployment are to be discussed.

14. To heighten the contrast it may be useful to acknowledge that the proportion of regular urban jobs to work in the informal sector in developing countries (10 to 90) is almost the same as the proportion in the industrialised countries between unemployed and employed workers. The result is that unemployment in the industrialised countries, though unprecedented in the last decade, is felt as a minority condition, and as something that may be policy manipulable. In DCCs, the condition of not having a regular wage job is the norm. Consequently, there is little political capital to be made from regarding the 90 per cent as in some sense excluded from the formal market, or as 'unemployed'.

*A10. In ICCs politicians are concerned with the unemployed youth of low educational attainments. The opposite is true in DCCs.*

15. However, even more important than these basic proportions between different labour markets in different types of Commonwealth country is the close connection between the favoured urban wage and salary jobs and the school and college system. As schooling is identified as the mechanism for entering the preferred

employment sector, the 'educated unemployed' in this situation are seen as being the group which narrowly missed succeeding. For policy-makers concerned with youth unemployment, it is these 'narrow misses' with their relatively high educational qualifications that are most visible. This contrasts with the industrial countries where the focus of policy concern is primarily with those of comparatively low educational attainment.

*A11. Democratisation of education and educated unemployment go hand in hand in DCCs.*

16. Moreover, given the rapid expansion of primary and secondary education in the developing countries since Independence (itself a function partly of popular perceptions about the role of education in accessability to urban jobs), this policy concern with the educated unemployed is a shifting frontier. Thus, the inevitable democratisation of primary education after Independence devalued almost overnight the marketability of the primary school certificate; as a consequence there was a brief political concern about the educated unemployed primary school leaver. Within four years or so new generations of secondary school graduates had transferred this political concern to the secondary school unemployed leavers, and in turn to the higher secondary and college graduate. Within a little over a decade in the countries that had expanded schools fastest, the political concern with the 'educated unemployed' had run through several stages.

*A12. Few DCCs any longer regard primary school leavers as educated unemployed. They are invisible.*

17. By the mid 1980s in many DCCs primary school leavers could no longer be described as educated unemployed any more than the even earlier generations of primary school drop-outs could be termed unemployed. The 'ordinariness' of primary school leavers (unlike those quitting the basic cycle in the industrial countries) meant they were no longer seriously considered for modern sector jobs, nor seen as a category for political concern. Admittedly, the very suddenness of their disqualification in the early and middle 1960s* meant that there was a flurry of activity and schemes (village polytechnics, national service schemes, settlement schemes etc) directed at primary school leavers. But most of these never became large nationwide movements proportional to the primary leavers that a country might expect to have in the early 1970s. Such programmes often remained tiny, deriving their success from offering a few select primary leavers a second chance to enter the modern industrial sector.

*A13. The mass of reluctant school leavers in DCCs have nowhere coalesced as a political force despite widespread fears to the contrary.*

*A14. The benefits of good primary education both for school leavers and 'continuers' to secondary cannot be exaggerated, even if they cannot be proved.*

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* Many decades earlier in India.

18. The post-Independence political concern about 'mass unemployment of primary school leavers' moved onwards and upwards, in parallel with the "diploma disease". The widespread worries about the political threat of several million jobless school leavers were not confirmed; the expected demoralisation of youth did not materialise. Lacking any incentive even to register as unemployed, it became difficult to quantify these leavers from those still in the basic school cycle. They vanished back into the informal and unregistered occupations of their parents.

19. In passing one may note that it seems highly probable that the experience of seven years of primary education (under-resourced as that may often be) does have a positive influence on their 'invisible earnings', on their productivity, and on the wider learning interests of these millions of youth who work outside the protected environment of the modern sector. This cannot readily be proved any more than a classics degree can be proved useful in the eyes of the narrower manpower planner. But it is an assumption that most underlies any good primary school teaching. For the policy-maker concerned with the quality of working life in the informal sector, the good primary school is likely to be one of the few affordable and effective policy instruments available.

*A15. On unemployment there is little for ICCs to learn from the DCCs - except that countries can learn to tolerate very high levels of failure by young people to get the jobs they want. This may well happen in ICCs.*

20. This rapid sketch of differences in the scale and shifting nature of the youth unemployment problem in developing and industrial Commonwealth countries suggests that there must be caution in assuming that the ICCs can learn from the much longer experience of youth unemployment in the DCCs. Although it is frequently argued that youth unemployment is a common problem across all the OECD countries and across the developing countries, the exceedingly rich literature on the experience and experiments of the DCCs is likely to be regarded as of limited application elsewhere. In other words, the world employment crisis is in fact made up of several qualitatively different crises.

21. One thing, however, may be learnt from the two or three decades of experience in the developing countries which may shortly affect government policy on unemployment in the industrial countries. Once it becomes accepted that youth unemployment at current levels is not readily cured, and is not just the result of temporary economic recession, then it is possible that unemployment at the end of compulsory education will become politically invisible, especially if youth demoralisation and instability are not evident. Furthermore, political attention could then shift upwards (as in the developing countries) and concern itself with the 'educated unemployed' at the tertiary levels. Whether or not this happens, it is already clear that as a result of this first sudden political shock, a series of initiatives will be rapidly put into place that may continue to affect the education and training systems even after the crisis has passed or become politically unimportant.

## B. POLICY AND ORGANISATIONAL LINKS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

*B1. DCCs have "tackled" youth unemployment by educational expansion rather than training and job creation.*

22. The fundamentally different scale and character of youth unemployment in the industrial and developing countries of the Commonwealth affect directly the machinery for action and co-ordination to attack the problem. In the DCCs, the youth unemployment crisis has concentrated policy attention on the education system rather than on the employment system. This is partly because it became clear at a relatively early stage after Independence that there were many limitations to influencing directly the expansion of modern sector jobs, apart from those in the public sector. For one thing, many of the critical decisions about investment in new industries resided with foreign firms. Attracting foreign investment proved difficult, and even when successful brought very few jobs per unit of capital deployed.

23. By contrast, government intervention in the education sector was possible without external assistance in many cases. Moreover, expansion of those levels of education which controlled access to the best jobs was immensely popular with the electorate. Indeed, even without direct state assistance, communities in several countries were prepared to tax themselves to provide secondary or further education.

*B2. Youth unemployment in ICCs has dramatically increased state intervention in traditional training arrangements of employers.*

*B3. Unlike in DCCs, new powerful training agencies and departments concerned with youth affairs have teeth and budgets in the industrialised Commonwealth countries.*

*B4. In ICCs, early short-term reactions to youth unemployment change rapidly into long term institutionalised programmes.*

24. In the ICCs, the emergence of significant levels of youth unemployment at the lower levels of education and skill has thus far resulted in a whole battery of new initiatives to smooth the transition from school to work. The continuing political sensitivity attached to these unprecedented numbers of young unemployed school leavers has in most industralised Commonwealth countries mobilised the finance necessary to support really major interventions in the education and training systems as well as directly in the labour market itself. Youth unemployment has encouraged direct state intervention in many areas for the first time.

25. Thus, for example, where apprenticeship numbers were dropping dramatically, the state had directly subsidised apprentices, or given them full-time training (apart from their jobs) in the expectation that industry would hire them later. Whole new bodies and structures concerned with short-term training, work experience, job creation and transition were set up. The emergency conditions

gave them powers sometimes radically to alter traditional arrangements between the private sector, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Employment, or of Industry. In addition the numbers of young people out of work grew so alarmingly in the late 1970s that early temporary projects were constantly being collapsed into larger and more comprehensive programmes for covering all the different aspects of the problem. The result was that very rapidly short-term expedients became obsolescent and through the crisis new agencies evolved with a scope almost unanticipated in the early years.

*B5. Youth training and transition agencies become a third force between schools and employers in industralised countries.*

26. One outcome of this progressively deeper intervention by the state was that areas and institutions with which the government became involved initially as a subsidising or complementary agency soon became ones where the government could itself contemplate initiating radical structural change. This was the case with apprenticeship where, once governments had become indirectly responsible for several thousand places, it was natural to question what appreared like anomalies of age and sex in the admission to the traditional apprenticeship. Similarly, a series of unconnected training projects could evolve into a national youth training programme. Suddenly youth training agencies become a third force in the land, between the schools and the employers.

*B6. In DCCs there are virtually no comprehensive youth training initiatives.*

*B7. "National" services are seldom national in DCCs, and frequently cover a very small group of the more educated.*

27. With one or two exceptions (e.g. limited work guarantee schemes) there are really no counterparts in the developing Commonwealth countries to the relatively large scale programmes evident in the ICCs. "National" (Youth) Services, for example, are typically tiny, and have increasingly covered a small group of the more educated rather than the school leavers most at risk.

28. Two factors deserve particular attention in explaining the response to school leaver unemployment in developing countries.

*B8. The discovery of the informal sector of the economy reduces the need to act on youth "unemployment" in DCCs.*

*B9. The rhetoric shifts from youth employment measures to aiding self-employment.*

*B10. Youth in DCCs are not idle but have acquired skill and work informally.*

29. First, almost immediately following the short lived primary school leaver crisis came the discovery of the informal sector, or in other words the realisation that primary school youth were

in some measure productively engaged in a whole range of informal activites in rural and urban areas, from petty trading, to cash cropping, to small scale production. So far from the alarmist image of the earlier years, it seemed that tens and hundreds of thousands of primary school leavers were acquiring skills, technologies and some limited income. More important, this process of absorption had happened without any government intervention, and without any source of employment support for young people outside the family and community.

30. There was naturally talk of government aiding this huge informal sector activity, making it more productive, or developing its technologies. But in many cases it was concluded that the virtue of the sector was its independence of government, and that it was difficult to construct an intervention programme that did not increase dependency on the state. In this sense, the original worry about the educated unemployed appeared to be solving itself by local mechanisms of self-employment. Even the informal training systems that operated in the informal sector seemed hard to improve upon, without encouraging the trainees to raise their sights again to certification needed for the modern sector jobs. So, unlike in the ICCs where youth unemployment gave an opportunity to the state to intervene directly in traditional patterns, indigenous training systems were largely left to their own devices.

*B11. Non-formal education points to existing youth training opportunities in many ministries and agencies other than Education.*

*B12. The informal sector and non-formal education relate directly to youth unemployment in DCCs, but appear to cost the state little or nothing.*

31. A second factor also had the effect of distinguishing the response to youth employment in the DCCs. As the emphasis began to shift from concerns with primary schools to secondary schools unemployment and beyond in the early 1970s, the notion of non-formal education became very widespread to refer to a whole range of opportunities for short-term, work-related courses that already existed in various ministries, enterprises and non-governmental organisations.

32. The interest however in non-formal education was less with setting up new courses and more with acknowledging that there was already a very considerable provision of relevant training available in the extension work of many ministries. The fascination with non-formal education was, thus, less involved with arguing for new initiatives than with discovering and classifying provision that hitherto perhaps had not been thought of as relevant to skill development of young adults.

33. In this way, in the developing Commonwealth countries two of the major policy thrusts of the early 1970s which were considered relevant to the employment and training problem both consisted of uncovering a phenomenon that was already in place. In combination they could be interpreted as suggesting that mechanisms are already in place that are taking care of youth training and unemployment. Unlike the variety of more and more comprehensive initiatives in Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand, neither the informal sector nor non-formal education held new budgetary or programme implications for the developing countries.

*B13. External aid agencies rather than national governments have prompted the importance of the informal sector and non-formal education in meeting the needs of youth.*

34. In this connection, it is interesting to note that both these concepts (the informal sector and non-formal education) trace their origins to the analysis of unemployment and training by external aid agencies, notably the ILO, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and USAID. Much of the basic conceptualisation was developed by analysts from the industrialised world, and this again may have made some difference to its being utilised in some of the developing countries of the Commonwealth.

35. Beyond this, however, undoubtedly lay the priority of expanding the higher levels of the formal education system which has already been mentioned. It seems reasonable to assume that this emphasis could only be strengthened by the evidence of so much existing activity and provision for the informal sector and for non-formal education. With the expansion of education the single most popular cause politically, few governments would seek to duplicate programmes of local skill development that seemed to be working quite satisfactorily.

36. This is not to say that there were no new initiatives at all dictated by educated unemployment. There certainly have been rural regeneration and self-employment programmes, and schemes involving ministries like Defence with no particular tradition of working with youth training in agriculture. But unlike the new agencies that have emerged with generous budgets in the OECD countries to deliver programmes of transition, youth training has all too often in the developing Commonwealth countries had the status of a poor relation to the mainstream ministries of Education, Agriculture, Industry, and Labour.

## C. PREPARATION IN SCHOOLS FOR EMPLOYMENT

*C1. Governments in ICCs and DCCs are trying to alter popular traditional attitudes towards schools and their relation to jobs.*

*C2. School systems can be easily made to adopt employment-oriented programmes. But it is extremely difficult to assess their effectivness.*

### 1. Introduction

37. There have been marked differences in the extent to which schools have responded to youth, or been used by policy-makers to prepare explicitly for the complexities of transition from school to work. In many of these employment-oriented initiatives in school, countries have in common some sort of contrast between traditional, popular attitudes towards schools and jobs, and the range of very recent short-term innovations that have been introduced into schools by governments to deal with the youth unemployment crisis. Countries also have in common a widespread conviction amongst policy-makers that schools can be manipulated rather directly to serve particular strategies of transition from school to work.

38. The relative ease with which schools can be made to adopt these instrumental approaches to work preparation contrasts rather sharply in many countries with popular parental traditions about what schools are for and how they can be used. To some extent therefore there is an area of conflict between these powerful popular traditions of using schools for certain ends and a whole range of more recent policies designed to make schools instruments for more specific work-related programmes. The result is that it is not difficult to point to programmes in schools that sound relevant to youth employment preparation; it is extremely difficult to judge how such innovations are actually affecting attitudes, values and employment outcomes.

## 2. In Developing Commonwealth Countries (DCCs)

*C3. In DCCs, schools are increasingly asked to point students two ways: towards paid jobs in the towns and towards ordinary rural life and work. This is a virtually impossible task.*

*C4. Because secondary schools in DCCs are still very selective and hence homogeneous, it is often counter-productive to introduce curriculum diversifications and orientation to rural employment.*

*C5. In many DCCs the popularity of the examination curriculum marginalises even the most serious and expensive curriculum attempts at rural relevance, self-employment etc.*

39. In many DCCs the problem about making the school more employment-oriented is that it already is highly associated with access to the small modern, predominantly urban, labour markets. Policy initiatives have sought widely to use the schools, in addition, to prepare students for the realities of life in the rural and informal urban labour markets. This objective has assumed that schools can offer two very different messages about employment at one and the same time. The new message that they are increasingly being asked to carry in many countries takes several different forms, but the commonest include the following: emphasis on positive attitudes to agriculture, applied skills for rural self-employment, exposure to productive labour, and diversification of the traditional academic curriculum.

40. However, one of the greatest obstacles to introducing aspects of these into the curriculum, is the strong popular conviction that there should only be a single curriculum at the secondary school level, - one that aims at the national examinations for higher secondary or for university. This determination to follow one curriculum has been made easier by the fact that secondary education is still in many countries highly selective, and in most non-compulsory; hence a much smaller proportion of the relevant age group is in secondary school than in primary. When only between 15 and 50 per cent of the age group are in secondary schools, it is relatively easy to argue against the need for different curricula to cover the entire ability range which would be present in secondary school in the industrialised countries. (Percentages are naturally much higher where the basic cycle includes lower secondary, and much lower in countries that have sought to restrain secondary expansion for financial, equity or employment reasons.)

*C6. Technical, vocational and agricultural schools in DCCs tend to become second choice, second class academic schools.*

41. The outcome of this strong wish for a single curriculum path at the secondary level is that new initiatives either begin to conform to the existing pattern or are effectively relegated to the margins of the curriculum as actually implemented in schools, even if the official curriculum statements award them priority. Thus, if there is an attempt to introduce new school types (vocational secondary, secondary modern etc) into already highly selective school systems, the new systems will increasingly converge on the established model, and will tend to become vocational in name, but in reality act as second class grammar or academic schools. Equally if the intention is to diversify the curriculum in the traditional schools with practical subjects, it can easily result in the academic "higher-fliers" being offered (at great cost to the country) practical options which they assume they will not use in later life.

42. There is therefore a major policy dilemma inherent in trying to make school reflect the diversity of (low paid) work in the agricultural sector. If this is attempted in secondary school systems catering for a fraction of the cohort, there is little reason for the fortunate few children in school to be diverted from their traditional curriculum. Even where secondary school systems have 50 per cent or more in attendance, the opportunity to compete for college entrance in the national or state exams has made it politically unattractive to divert weaker students towards less ambitious examination tracks. Consequently, only a handful of countries attempt an early tracking of students away from the chance to compete in the national (or GCE) examinations.

*C7. The politicians' and planners' dilemma is acute in DCCs: parents and students want more "real" academic schools, but the lack of academic jobs suggests an alternative.*

43. Other factors also militate against programmes intended to prepare children for the rural sector, of which the most important is finance. It continues to be significantly more expensive to offer vocationalised higher secondary, prevocational primary, or diversified junior secondary curriculum than to provide the basic academic curriculum. In addition, where government policy has encouraged local communities to supplement government with self-help secondary schools, the lowest cost option is always a diluted version of the traditional academic school. In these and other situations, government policy is torn two ways in relating to strategies for school expansion and youth employment: broader philosophy expressed in reform documents and education commissions underlines frequently the need for diversified or terminal streams, and through external aid as well as central initiative some of this agenda is implemented. Local political and popular pressure, however, is constantly seeking to expand opportunities for access to the preferred jobs in the urban sector.

*C8. Vocationalisation of schooling is the number one favourite of governments facing educated unemployment.*

44. This tendency for one element in government policy to be advocating vocational emphasis in the face of formal sector unemployment, and for parents and students to resist it has become so commonplace that it may be tempting to conclude that diversification of the academic curriculum will never be satisfactory in such polarised labour markets. There are however a number of qualifications that must be made about attempts to improve youth employability by vocationalisation.

*C9. First problem: teaching rural skills in school - most rural children already know them in DCCs.*

45. First, if the vocational emphasis is designed to heighten interest and competency in productive work in the traditional rural sector, then the majority of non-urban school children have already during their schooling participated very closely in part-time agricultural activity with their families. In rural areas 'work experience' or 'alternance' is the norm before and after daily school and at the weekends. In urban areas where shift systems free up half of the school day participation in the family business or in part-time work is very common. In such informal work experience situations, the ordinary rural primary school (or junior secondary) will find it difficult to improve upon the basic knowledge of milking, herding, cash cropping, childcare, and petty trading that large numbers of children have acquired during their school years. This is not to doubt that primary schools can and do in several countries raise excellent cash crops and make significant contributions to school funds through coffee picking and other activities, but whether these activities introduce children to technologies any different from the home is another matter.

*C10. Second problem: the mass of early school leavers take up farm work or petty trade regardless of school vocationalisation.*

46. Second, it is unclear whether prevocational or 'exposure' programmes of this sort more positively affect children's attitude to working in agriculture after graduation. It may be noted that primary school leavers both in countries with and without these kinds of programmes get involved very rapidly in agriculture after being unable to proceed with school. The policy question then must be whether schooling with productive agricultural or other manual work makes any significant difference to the quality of post-primary agricultural productivity, attitudes to agriculture or cognitive content on agriculture.

*C11. Third problem: there is a Catch 22 about timing the prevocational curriculum.*

47. The third qualification relates to the timing of school initiatives in such vocationally relevant areas. If these programmes, aiming at the bulk of work outside the security of the modern sector, are offered before the crucial examination determining continuation to secondary and higher education, they will have little leverage on pupils' interests. If they are offered in secondary school after the critical selection, they are even less likely to coincide with pupil aspirations, since those who might now find the material useful are no longer in the schools, but are perforce practising these very arts in rural and urban areas.

*C12. Good science teaching in the ordinary primary and secondary schools can achieve many of the things politicians now attribute to practical, prevocational courses.*

*C13. The Commonwealth Secretariat initiative in promoting the interrelationship of science, mathematics, technical and vocational education deserves close attention.*

48. Two more positive options may be offered to planners in this apparent dilemma about prevocational skills. First, the cognitive base of improved agricultural, health and contraceptive technologies can be more successfully incorporated in the science sections of school curricula than in the prevocational courses. In other words, the scientific knowledge levels of primary (or secondary) school leavers can be raised independently of exposure to manual, agricultural labour. Arguably first rate primary school science curricula (now apparent in a number of DCCs) can do as much for rural relevance at less cost in the broad range of ordinary schools than can attempts at primary school production and prevocational exposure. This can happen because science as a subject is examinable and therefore very popular. Hence, making science more practical will be more successful than campaigns to introduce separate practical subjects. The new work by the Commonwealth Secretariat in promoting the interrelationship of vocational education is one example of this trend.

49. The second option is to locate programmes for employable skills in the non-formal education sector, in post-primary skill centres, polytechnics, vocational training centres. These will of course lack the numbers that make it so attractive to use the schools, but will have the advantage of offering skills to young people who have decided by now to acquire them.

*C14. Prevocational education can succeed by being linked to modern sector jobs in DCCs, but this success is expensive.*

50. The third assertion about technical and vocational education is that it can be made attractive to students and parents when it is clear that it is linked to technical positions in government ministries and large scale firms. Some countries have arranged a small number of technical schools that exercise a monopoly over apprenticeship and training positions in the mines or in industry. Not surprisingly, students compete to enter these positions since they offer protected access to the secure jobs of the modern

sector.

51. Although these training programmes are in this sense successful, it should be noted that for entry to ordinary skilled jobs, students are often doing a double apprenticeship: four years in a technical school followed by an apprenticeship. In industrialised Commonwealth countries, such a long prevocational preparation in school would not be required. This again underlines the tendency for DCCs to have higher certification levels than the ICCs for the same level of work.

*C15. "Investing in science and technology education" is becoming commonplace, but without infrastructural changes it cannot be a panacea for rural backwardness, youth unemployment etc.*

52. Planning for greater employability of school leavers through agricultural and vocational emphasis in schools has therefore some very basic preconditions for success. Consequently, it is worth noting that many countries are now emphasising investment in science and technology education as a mechanism for transforming agriculture and industry. While this has obvious advantages in terms of student motivation as compared with agricultural and vocational education, it is important not to exaggerate the consequences of emphasising science for developing the content of rural and urban jobs.

53. Perhaps the most compelling arguments for privileging science are currently drawn from countries in South East Asia, including Commonwealth countries. Here, it is argued, very deliberate policies of science investment (in schools as in industry) have led to the ability to attract new jobs, to indigenise originally foreign technology, and even to narrow the gap between industrial and industrialising countries. The consequences of pursuing science in very different economies have by no means been sorted out but it is already clear that a science policy like a vocational policy cannot be effective if it only relates to the schools, and is not part of a wider science and technology policy applying to industry and agriculture.

*C16. There is a hidden curriculum behind the options of investing in prevocational skills as opposed to science.*

54. Viewed as alternatives (which they need not be), prevocational policies emphasising rural skills and self-employment tend to underline the need for realism, and acknowledge that in many countries the majority of young adults will, for the foreseeable future, derive their livelihood from agriculture. An element of social control is sometimes also implicit in these policies, in their encouragement that youth remain in the rural sector and resist migration to the towns. By contrast, policies of compulsory science at all levels of education beckon to a vision of agriculture and industry transformed, and the closing of the gap between 'North' and 'South'. Accordingly, science is dramatically more popular in school than technology since it is compatible with the popular determination to maintain open access to high

status courses for as long as possible.

55. Although science and vocational orientation have been mentioned as almost two opposite ends of a curriculum spectrum thought relevant to youth employment, there are many other initiatives taken by DCCs which fall midway along this spectrum. These include the academic orientation to employment via science to the manual orientation to work through vocational studies. They would include education with production and the many schemes for secondary school diversification funded with external assistance, and more recently preoccupations with new information technology in education.

*C17. School and university expansion remains the most popular DCC strategy for dealing with youth unemployment.*

56. But taken as a whole these employment-oriented curricular initiatives pale into insignificance compared with the more general orientation of schools to modern sector jobs. The main national and local strategy for relating schools to employment is frequently school expansion rather than curriculum reform. Offering a chance to compete for the very scarce good jobs is a function of the state schools and also of the very large number of private and community schools that provide second chances to many thousands of children left unselected. While it is easy to be critical of the way in which the tiny modern sector tail affects so much of the education system, several points need to be made in favour of what often appears as needless over-expansion of secondary (and in turn higher) education.

*C18. Planners in DCCs cannot logically argue that under-investment in education is better than over-investment. But the former is certainly no solution to youth employment.*

57. First, countries that have sought to restrict the size of their secondary education to the amount of manpower allegedly required have not sufficiently acknowledged the growing conviction by parents and children that primary education is not enough to deal with the complexities of the late twentieth century "information society".

58. Second, the notion of manpower requirements particularly in small island states is frequently going to suggest that even a few is too many. The consequence of this may as rationally be educational expansion rather than restriction, as it has been in the science-based micro-states of South East Asia.

*C19 Why not a major Commonwealth project on the employment consequences of deliberate education "over-expansion"?*

59. Thirdly, it is still in most parts of the world too early to say what are the consequences of having a larger supply of educated

youngsters than might appear strictly necessary. If fears about the political impact of the educated unemployed are indeed misplaced, it could well be that the presence in villages of significant numbers of highly educated youngsters makes certain developments possible that were unthinkable otherwise. Since it is now the case that some DCCs, through twenty years of secondary school expansion, have perhaps ten times more secondary leavers than there are secure urban jobs, it would be instructive to examine the range of work with which they are engaged, as compared to countries where secondary leavers are still a relatively rare commodity.

### 3. In Industrialised Commonwealth Countries (ICCs)

60. In the ICCs preparation in schools for employment has recently been affected by unemployment: but the very different character and scope of secondary education, and its traditional relations with the labour market have produced rather different reactions than those just outlined. Amongst the more important of these has been a concern with youth attitudes to work and society, a greater urgency in introducing curriculum reforms for the middle and lower ability ranges, and a growing interest in rethinking relations between schools and further education and training.

*C20. The old family and community traditions of mining, shipbuilding, engineering or farming have been suddenly severed for tens of thousands of young people.*

61. The whole area of young people's attitudes to work has been very much in the forefront of the school side of this discussion, and in a sense this is the industrial world's counterpart to the rhetoric about school leavers in developing countries not wishing to dirty their hands, or work in the agricultural sector. But with this much difference. Until recently, school leavers with little if any formal certification could find a wider range of skilled and unskilled work, and were very ready to accept it.

62. In the present crisis and restructuring of industry, very large numbers of skilled jobs have gone completely or been deskilled: in other words the upper end of many traditionally respected working class occupations have been dramatically eroded in numbers and in skill. Traditions of following father or mother (almost regardless of schooling) into the mine, mill, factory or shipyard have in large areas almost been wiped out in a generation, and as a consequence that crucial social support and control in entering a secure occupation with strong family connections has gone. Labour processes have also changed rapidly and old categories of skill have been reconstituted through automation into requirements for generalised semi-skill and science-based technician skills. As a result the opportunity for young people to be taken on either unskilled or in apprenticeships and to work their way up into the hierarchy of craft has been severely reduced.

*C21. The schools are being asked to strengthen the work ethic which the collapse of work is expected to weaken. Courses on 'Education for an Industrial Society' are mounted as factories close all around.*

63. In these new and more complex transitions to work which is often deskilled and tedious, and which now lacks the social relations of the great regional industries of the industrial revolution, young people compete at a disadvantage with older workers. The schools in turn find themselves being asked more effectively to socialise youngsters to the discipline of this new work environment, as do the many new agencies and programmes of transition and training. In the absence of work, the work ethic must be maintained; in preparation for routinised work, social and vocational skills are offered, but in short modules now since much of the need for long term training has gone. The concern with youth morale is genuine as some categories of young people remain without work for periods of a year or more, but like the earlier worries about the educated unemployed in developing countries, there is little hard evidence of demoralisation, and despite unemployment benefit, little erosion of the will to work.

*C22. The continuing redundancy threat to skilled industralised labour is tightening the bond between higher school certification and a good secure job.*

64. The dilemma for schools in this situation is that it is precisely that group with which they have been least successful, and who quit school as soon as it was legal, who are now most visibly the victims of the crisis. The removal of many high status skilled jobs that were independent of school certification polarises the opportunity system much more into 'schooled' jobs and unskilled jobs, tightening the bond between education and work. With rapid moves in the industralised countries towards service and information sector jobs, the schools may play an increasingly important role, as in the developing countries, in distributing youngsters into more rewarding jobs. Part of the schools' difficulty, however, in this new work environment is with knowing whether the present job crisis for young people is a temporary phenomenon or something that will affect each generation of young people for the foreseeable future. In the latter case, it will be commoner for traditional non-participants in post-compulsory education to stay on, and new pressures will be placed on schools as a result.

*C23. One great benefit from the unemployment crisis has been the rapid development of school courses for children of average to low ability, too long neglected in the compulsory education system of ICCs.*

65. A second element deriving from the job crisis for youth is the urgency with which curriculum reform is being introduced across the ability range, but especially for the bulk of the less academic learners. Some of these initiatives were afoot before the onset of youth unemployment, but they have been given powerful political support in recent years. The extension of certificate

courses and assessment for almost the entire age group at the end of secondary is an example of this shift from schools' traditional preoccupation with the top 30 per cent of the ability range. With the benefit of hindsight it may later appear that the single greatest benefit of the unemployment crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s was the development of more meaningful general secondary education for all.

*C24. The youth unemployment crisis has challenged "educators" and "trainers" to rethink boundaries between education and training, and between academic, social and vocational skills.*

66. A third factor which has directly affected schools as a result of the employment crisis derives from a new policy interest in thinking out relationships between post-compulsory schooling and other forms of further education. Again, some of this new thinking might have come anyway, but the urgency of new government pressure and agencies operating with considerable autonomy in the space between formal schools and traditional further education has made educators think afresh. Doubtless part of this readiness to rethink structures and courses has come from a realisation that government demands for action might otherwise radically alter the existing boundaries between education and training.

67. If a significant group of young people most at risk from unemployment are to become the recipients of a range of courses promoted and paid for by governments, the location and content of those courses will have major implications for the post-compulsory section of secondary schools and for technical and further education colleges. The attractions of large numbers of sponsored students, or students staying on at school at a time of government cuts and falling rolls has produced a readiness both in school and further education to think seriously ahout curricular changes necessary for these non-traditional students. In particular it has produced in some quarters very short-term modular units transferable from school to college to other training schemes, which may allow the 'unemployment' courses to become part of transferable systems of credit. In this fashion, the onset of youth unemployment, however temporary or long-term it may prove to be, will have had the effect of dramatically increasing education and training provision for the less academic.

*C25. This educational restructuring must not be too narrowly tied to industrial restructuring; otherwise the only growth areas in education will be new information technology courses and work preparation courses for an insecure work environment.*

68. One danger in the rapidity of unemployment course provision will be that course content will seek at all costs to be relevant, applied, and vocational, on the assumption that such students have voted against education, and must be offered exposure, if not to work itself, then at least to the skills both social and vocational that employers look for in their workforce. This however is where state intervention will need to be at its most sensitive,

if there is to be any chance that a coherent approach to education and training can emerge from the range of expendients and crash programmes that the youth crisis has spawned.

69. It is going to be particularly difficult for countries to look beyond the immediacy of the unemployment statistics and devise programmes that make sense to youngsters in a climate of continued industrial restructuring. One possibility could be the emergence of an extension of compulsory education in the form of various co-ordinated training courses. On the other hand, if the training initiatives do not satisfactorily "work" either in connecting trainees to jobs, or in legitimating the competition for the inadequate number of jobs available, then government priority may retreat from this sector as fast as it appeared. Particularly if there is no evidence of unemployed school leaver politicisation or demoralisation, it is entirely possible that this group of ten or fifteen per cent of young people will become as invisible as some of their counterparts in the DCCs. But there is certainly an opportunity available at the moment in the emergency of the job crisis to build some new structures of education and training that may prepare youngsters for work and leisure in the later 1980s and 1990s.

*C26. The job crisis has also unleashed new energy amongst a myriad of non-government organisations, initiating transition programmes for young people at the local level. These experiments are worthy of long-term government support.*

70. It will be a pity in the preoccupation with training for jobs, work experience, and narrow "relevance", if some attention is not given to exposing young people to alternative patterns of employment, including work-sharing, co-operative work organisations and the like. There is some evidence that the youth crisis has also thrown up, particularly in the non-government organisations, some very innovative re-thinking of new work arrangements and work environments. So far, little of this thinking has entered into the approach of the new agencies that have intervened in training, but it is quite possible in any continuation of structural unemployment that in the 'North' as in the 'South' today, government will turn increasingly to non-government agencies to deliver skills relevant not so much to individually-held jobs but to community enterprise, community work, and even to new forms of community-employment and self-employment.

## D. PREPARATION IN UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT*

*D1. There is no common reaction to the risk of tertiary level unemployment across the Commonwealth, nor is there a common pattern amongst the ICCs.*

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* This section is shorter as higher education and student mobility is also the subject of this Conference. In addition graduate unemployment affects a very much smaller number of young people than other levels of education.

*D2. In the face of much worse economic crises than in industrial countries, many DCCs are dramatically expanding tertiary education.*

71. Generalisation about trends across the Commonwealth becomes even more perilous at the tertiary level. Compared with the numbers of primary and secondary schools, a large group of countries have perhaps only a single tertiary institution if that, while others have complex systems of university and polytechnic education. Yet for reasons mentioned earlier, it is at the graduate level alone in many developing countries of the Commonwealth that there is some degree of political visibility for unemployed students, whereas currently in many of the OECD countries the acutest concern is with the least educated. This graduate visibility in DCCs has seldom however translated itself into programmes to reduce university numbers as it has in some situations in the ICCs. In fact all the evidence from the developing countries points in the other direction - to the overpowering political and parental pressure to expand the highest tiers of education.

*D3. Rationales for open access to higher education can only get stronger in ICCs and in DCCs. New clienteles will need access as universal secondary schooling expands. Shorter working lives will soon create pressures for tertiary studies for new generations of 50 year old students.*

72. At this stage there is little guidance on the ideal enrolment size of post-secondary education. At primary and secondary school the goal of universalising access to primary and lower secondary has had a widespread and continuing appeal, but there are few guidelines from the ICCs about the proportion of the tertiary age group that might require or want access to full or part-time education. Undoubtedly the collapse of a large sector of skilled high status jobs in the industrialised countries is producing new pressures on traditional leavers to continue through school and acquire some post-school training. Equally, there will be real difficulty in resisting pressure for entry to university from the very large number of students whose parents were often the first generation in their families to be undergraduates in the great expansion of the 1960s. Now, twenty years later these parents confidently expect some form of tertiary education for their children, and the evidence of widespread secondary school leaver unemployment will only confirm this conviction. There is therefore every reason to expect that a combination of social, employment, and even retirement pressures will encourage a further necessary expansion of further and higher education.

*D4. New rounds of investment in high technology universities are imminent. They bring new fears of a vast new science and technology gap between 'North' and 'South'.*

73. In fact pressure will also be applied from a new quarter - from the sense that nations are entering the new technology revolution at great speeds, and that the universities and polytechnics can play a major role in ensuring national participation in the developments that are changing the shape of traditional disciplines, communication and even learning itself. Some of the rhetoric about the potential of the new information technology in education is certainly exaggerated, but it is difficult for poorer university systems not to fear a newer and even larger technology gap in the information revolution when they see American universities being wired up into massive data resources, and some colleges even requiring that students have their own microcomputer.

74. The disturbing speed of change in the frontier disciplines affected by information technology is such that the political climate is certainly favourable for a new round of investment in human capital, but this time the emphasis will be much more strongly towards science and technology than it was in the years when many of the newer universities were built both in the DCCs and in the more industrialised countries. Since, however, these new calls for investment in scientific research and development are coming at a time of general financial stringency, there is a real danger that the privileging of new science and technology potential will be at the expense of arts, social sciences and other disciplines essential to the analysis of society. As many of the new disciplines (biotechnology, genetic engineering) are very capital intensive, they raise major dilemmas for countries that wish to expose their students to some of the work being done in Japan, Europe or North America, and yet feel that there is an earlier obligation to spread more widely a basic scientific temper across the nation.

D5. *The attractions of new informaiton technology over new sociology or new classical studies will be apparent to politicians, and will be argued on spurious employment and manpower grounds to the long-term disadvantage of the non-scientific culture of the nation.*

75. In these situations governments in both 'North' and 'South' will have to seek for a balance between further democratising access to higher education in arts and social science disciplines where an investment approach will continue to be inappropriate, and newer high technology disciplines where failure to invest now may mean the loss of whole fresh areas of research, production and employment. What this implies for planners of tertiary education is the development of new and more sensitive approaches to the analysis of manpower needs than were in vogue in the 1960s. In particular in the developing countries of the Commonwealth, the university's main task of the post-Independence decades - the localisation of expatriate manpower - has been substantially completed, and new rationales for a university have developed naturally as government has grown in complexity.

76. But in all these developments, the explicit concern of universities with unemployment has been minimal, in terms of special programmes or emergency measures. Rather the pressures have come from the student body who have perceived certain courses

as more vocational than others, and particularly in DCCs the competition to enter engineering, medicine, veterinary, law, and to some extent commerce has been exceptionally strong. Although intense selection programmes exist for such disciplines as compared with the arts and sciences, it must be remembered that despite these strong disciplinary differences, there is a basic similarity still inasmuch as the large majority of graduates can expect to get urban modern sector jobs.

*D6. Only at the tertiary level are graduates in ICCs and DCCs entering the same kind of urban labour market. It is little wonder that pressure to expand DCC universities and colleges is virtually unstoppable.*

77. It is only therefore at the tertiary level that it is possible to think of graduates from all countries of the Commonwealth entering the same kind of labour market. Unlike primary and secondary schools where the majority of leavers in the developing countries are heading for a different kind of employment altogether, graduates have been progressively selected away from the need to think of informal sector employment. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the competition is restricted to different kinds of jobs within the preferred urban labour market, and that there are not a range of schemes preparing for educated unemployment.

*D7. It is worth noting that there is at least one connection between this theme of education and youth unemployment and the parallel theme of student mobility in this Conference. Certain forms of student mobility are being actively encouraged to many ICC universities and colleges whose governments are imposing financial cuts. In the threat of unemployment (of university and college teachers) and of departmental closure in the rich industrial world, student mobility from the developing countries has become one of the top university priorities.*

*D8. North-South academic collaboration, inside and outside the Commonwealth, must be based on a wider set of shared intellectual concerns, and not on short-term pursuit of the revenue brought by foreign students to prevent university unemployment in the North.*

## E. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

*E1. There is little similarity between government responses in non-formal education for youth in ICCs and DCCs.*

*E2. ICC programmes are currently massively funded, comprehensive and national. DCC programmes are poorly funded and seldom national except in name.*

78. This final section re-emphasises the differences between provision in the industrialised and developing countries of the Commonwealth which have been noted throughout. The ICCs have in the recent youth unemployment crisis produced very large amounts of money for crash training programmes with expenditures of

several million dollars or pounds a day being commonplace. Such programmes are typically national, guaranteeing some post-school training to every ex-student without work. They cater for very large numbers of young people, and they are non-formal in the sense that the training is offered by a Ministry or agency other than Education.

79. Yet, there is a sense that these programmes in ICCs are almost becoming like an extension of formal compulsory schooling. Increasingly, the money for these non-formal courses, whether run by government agencies or by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), is coming from government. Thus, the non-formal youth training schemes and programmes are massive, inclusive of all who apply, and are rapidly being formalised as governments recognise that the crisis is not temporary. Finally, they are on offer to the least educated young people who have left the compulsory school with few if any qualifications. And they operate on the assumption that non-formal training will improve the employability and maintain the work ethic and interest of the young until openings in the paid labour force emerge. In other words, the philosophy is still very much 'training for jobs' as opposed to training for self-employment or work on one's own account.

*E3. ICC government programmes are based on the rhetoric of "training for jobs". DCC programmea sre based on the rhetoric of "training for self-employment".*

80. In DCCs by contrast, non-formal education (NFE) programmes for young people are founded on a wide range of often conflicting assumptions. Some aim at giving young people a second, third or fourth chance to enter the coveted secure jobs in the formal sector of the economy. The great majority of programmes, however, now assume that their function is to prepare young people for more effective, more productive self-employment. This means that in ICCs and DCCs, non-formal education and training are founded on quite different assumptions about the kind of work young people will do. In DCCs there is no expectation by the course organisers that the trainees will mostly enter paid jobs. Rather, the aim is to improve the quality of working life in family firms, small farms, or petty production, even if no regular paid job is available.

*E4. "Successful" DCC programmes frequently prepare very small numbers of youth for modern sector jobs, not self-employment. Hence, successful DCC programmes suffer from the same diploma disease as schools.*

81. A second difference with NFE in developing countries is in scale. The number of youngsters outside the paid wage sector is so large at every level, from post primary to post junior secondary to post senior secondary that few governments and NGOs have the resources to offer training for all. The result is that even NFE programmes have to be somewhat selective, and choose a few hundred participants out of many hundreds of thousands young people. These relatively small numbers of participants often

change the direction of the programmes back to a concern with preparation for urban or rural wage jobs as opposed to self-employment. Once this happens, and a non-formal programme begins to be identified with transferring youth into urban wage jobs, there is a tendency for it to be affected by the same 'diploma disease' as is evident in the schools themselves; thus, the programme begins to recruit 'O' level students rather than primary school leavers, and soon 'A' level rather than 'O'. This is the situation with many of the national youth services as mentioned earlier in this paper. They are not national in coverage, and often offer government trade tests and certificates to a small number of participants who expect then to enter the uniformed services, such as police, army, etc.

*E5. Evaluating "successful" NFE programmes in DCCs is difficult since their official aims differ so greatly from their use by trainees.*

82. This phenomenon - of NFE programmes resulting in paid jobs - makes them very difficult to evaluate. The rhetoric of the programmes is frequently 'training for self-employment in the rural or urban informal sector'. The reality is that a combination of student pressure and formal certification changes the focus entirely. The definition of a programme's "success" is thus highly controversial, since the trainees' definition is often very different from what the programme promises.

83. Given the scarcity or even absence of evaluations of such programmes, it becomes virtually impossible in a Conference of this sort to be clear in what sense the many innovations mentioned in the country papers are successful. Are they successful only in transferring their select clientele to urban skilled jobs? Do they succeed in giving youth skills which allow them to work contentedly on their own in rural areas? Can programmes succeed in training simultaneously for employment and self-employment?

*E6. The most popular NFE courses offer the same testable skills as are used in the urban wage sector.*

84. Any careful examination of these many small programmes would probably reveal that their success and popularity were closely linked to their course content. The most popular programmes would be those offering training in skills that were also available in formal vocational training schools and for which there are specific careers in the modern sector, e.g. mechanic, carpenter, welder, metal worker, etc. Such courses tend to be of one or two years duration and to be little different from formal vocational training programmes.

*E7. Other NFE training in DCCs assume youth are already working in the informal sector, and need up-grading.*

85. A very different type of NFE course is that which assumes that the participants are already working at home or on the family farm, and offers very specific information and help on, say, high

yielding seeds, on nutrition and child care, on how to get a small loan, etc. Such courses are of very short-duration, and cannot be certificated or easily used to acquire an urban job. They are properly speaking concerned with working youth who have perhaps stopped aspiring to urban jobs, and who wish to improve their income and the quality of their homes.

86. A third group of non-formal programmes is a variation of the last, but with one critical difference. It assumes that large numbers of young people working in the informal sector of the economy have acquired their training and skills on the job through informal apprenticeships. Several non-formal training programmes hope to build onto this indigenous system, making the training more scientific, increasing the number of learners, improving the skills of the master. Such schemes do have the intention of increasing the number of young people getting access to training, but they expect to do this through a local training system which is often imperfectly understood.

*E8 There has been little serious examination of the assumptions in expanding the training capacity of the informal sector. But the common metaphors of "sponge", "reservoir" and "mopping-up" suggest the informal sector is seen as a low-cost solution to youth unemployment.*

87. In the ICCs it has been difficult enough to be sure how the apprentice subsidies to firms were really working; it will be even more difficult to monitor schemes for attaching apprentices to small entrepreneurs in the informal sector. But the deeper problem in many of the intervention schemes (e.g. ILO's) which plan to build more training places for young people onto the informal sector is their assumption that the informal sector has the potential to act as a great reservoir or sponge absorbing young people and giving them a training that will convert them into rugged entrepreneurs. Although these and similar schemes are attractive because they are low-cost, and not based on institutions, there will be a need to watch carefully the outcome of all such experiments and pilot programmes. One result could be to make the masters less self-reliant as they begin to depend on government. Another danger is that there are strict limits to the formalisation of training in small roadside workshops.

88. There is thus a dilemma at the heart of non-formal youth training. Given the lack of resources to make a national provision, a small number of youth can be trained in skills, but they will be oriented towards the formal sector, or a much larger number can be given very specific information in very short courses to assist the quality of their working life. For most parents and many politicians, however, such programmes have a very low priority compared to the expansion of secondary and higher education. Hence in many DCCs the whole non-formal training sector operates under-resourced by governments, with the result that the truly massive investments in formal school education often fail to have any follow-up courses for the millions who compete and do not succeed.

*E9. The most promising innovations with youth employment have been small scale activities associated with NGOs and action groups. Though myriad and scattered, they constitute as a whole a set of alternatives for rural and urban youth.*

89. Into this enormous gap between formal school provision and various forms of paid and unpaid work, the non-governmental organisations continue to be the most active and innovative, developing local community-based programmes for rural and urban youth. Although small and scattered in myriad forms, in many DCCs these can be seen to operate successfully where the official arm of government agency and political party has failed to reach and activate the rural poor. Their agenda is large and includes science popularisation, appropriate technologies to lighten the burdens on young women, popular education, and political education. Such programmes are not as visible as the government's official programme for rural development, but considered as a whole these NGO activities can be seen as a movement asserting the need for a more even redistribution of power and resources to the young people in rural areas. Such groups acting on behalf of the excluded young in the DCCs have much in common with the action groups and NGOs coping with the consequences of unemployment in the ICCs.

*E10. A fruitful dialogue could be established between NGOs active in youth employment in DCCs and in ICCs.*

90. There would in planning activities across the Commonwealth for International Youth Year in 1985 be some merit in establishing a dialogue amongst those NGOs and action groups exploring alternative responses to youth unemployment and the lack of productive meaningful work.

## LIST OF PROPOSITIONS

### A. THE PROBLEM OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

A1. There is no common youth unemployment crisis across the Commonwealth.

A2. The very language commonly used to describe the youth unemployment situation obscures fundamental distinctions between the industrialised and developing countries of the Commonwealth.

A3. Industrialised Commonwealth countries (ICCs) have a maximum of three great visible transitions out of the education system, whereas developing Commonwealth countries (DCCs) have frequent transitions from schooling all the way from Standard One to Form Six.

A4. Non-compulsory systems have complex transitions from home to school, and very early "invisible" transitions from school back to home and to work.

A5. "Staying-on" in education is not an option for youth in most DCCs. The majority face a compulsory transition out of school.

A6. No "dole" equals no politically visible unemployed.

A7. In ICCs, many well paid jobs have traditionally been available to youth with minimum schooling and no diplomas. Such jobs are now vanishing.

A8. DCCs have very few paid jobs, but plenty of work. ICCs still have a majority of paid jobs, but now few other acceptable traditions of work.

A9. In DCCs the educated unemployed frequently work while looking for jobs.

A10. In ICCs politicians are concerned with the unemployed youth of low educational attainments. The opposite is true in DCCs.

A11. Democratisation of education and educated unemployment go hand in hand in DCCs.

A12. Few DCCs any longer regard primary school leavers as educated unemployed. They are invisible.

A13. The mass of reluctant school leavers in DCCs have nowhere coalesced as a political force despite widespread fears to the contrary.

A14. The benefits of good primary education both for school leavers and 'continuers' to secondary cannot be exaggerated, even if they cannot be proved.

A15. On unemployment there is little for ICCs to learn from the DCCs - except that countries can learn to tolerate very high levels of failure by young people to get the jobs they want. This may well happen in ICCs.

## B. POLICY AND ORGANISATIONAL LINKS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

B1. DCCs have "tackled" youth unemployment by educational expansion rather than training and job creation.

B2. Youth unemployment in ICCs has dramatically increased state intervention in traditional training arrangements of employers.

B3. Unlike in DCCs, new powerful training agencies and departments concerned with youth affairs have teeth and budgets in the industrialised Commonwealth countries.

B4. In ICCs, early short term reactions to youth unemployment change rapidly into long term institutionalised programmes.

B5. Youth training and transition agencies become a third force between schools and employers in industrialised countries.

B6. In DCCs there are virtually no comprehensive youth training initiatives.

B7. "National" services are seldom national in DCCs, and frequently cover a very small group of the more educated.

B8. The discovery of the informal sector of the economy reduces the need to act on youth "unemployment" in DCCs.

B9. The rhetoric shifts from youth employment measures to aiding self-employment.

B10. Youth in DCCs are not idle but have acquired skill and work informally.

B11. Non-formal education points to existing youth training opportunities in many ministries and agencies other than Education.

B12. The informal sector and non-formal education relate directly to youth unemployment in DCCs, but appear to cost the state little or nothing.

B13. External aid agencies rather than national governments have promoted the importance of the informal sector and non-formal education in meeting the needs of youth.

## C. PREPARATION IN SCHOOLS FOR EMPLOYMENT

### General

C1. Governments in ICCs and DCCs are trying to alter popular traditional attitudes towards schools and their relation to jobs.

C2. School systems can be easily made to adopt employment-oriented programmes. But it is extremely difficult to assess their effectiveness.

### Developing Commonwealth Countries (DCCs)

C3. In DCCs, schools are increasingly asked to point students two ways: towards paid jobs in the towns and towards ordinary rural life and work. This is a virtually impossible task.

C4. Because secondary schools in DCCs are still very selective and hence homogeneous, it is often counter-productive to introduce curriculum diversifications and orientation to rural employment.

C5. In many DCCs the popularity of the examination curriculum marginalises even the most serious and expensive curriculum attempts at rural relevance, self-employment etc.

C6. Technical, vocational and agricultural schools in DCCs tend to become second choice, second class academic schools.

C7. The politicians' and planners' dilemma is acute in DCCs: parents and students want more "real" academic schools, but the lack of academic jobs suggests an alternative.

C8. Vocationalisation of schooling is the number one favourite of governments facing educated unemployment.

C9. First problem: teaching rural skills in school - most rural children already know them in DCCs.

C10. Second problem: the mass of early school leavers take up farm work or petty trade regardless of school vocationalisation.

C11. Third problem: thre is a Catch 22 about timing the prevocational curriculum.

C12. Good science teaching in the ordinary primary and secondary schools can achieve many of the things politicians now attribute to practical, prevocational courses.

C13. The Commonwealth Secretariat initiative in promoting the inter-relationship of science, mathematics, technical and vocational education deserves close attention.

C14. Pre-vocational education can succeed by being linked to modern sector jobs in DCCs, but this success is expensive.

C15. "Investing in science and technology education" is becoming commonplace, but without infrastructural changes it cannot be a panacea for rural backwardness, youth unemployment etc.

C16. There is a hidden curriculum behind the options of investing in prevocational skills as opposed to science.

C17. School and university expansion remains the most popular DCC strategy for dealing with youth unemployment.

C18. Planners in DCCs cannot logically argue that under-investment in education is better than over-investment. But the former is certainly no solution to youth employment.

C19. Why not a major Commonwealth project on the employment consequences of deliberate education "over-expansion"?

Industrialised Commonwealth Countries (ICCs)

C20. The old family and community traditions of mining, shipbuilding, engineering or farming have been suddenly severed for tens of thousands of young people.

C21. The schools are being asked to strengthen the work ethic which the collapse of work is expected to weaken. Courses on 'Education for an Industrial Society' are mounted as factories close all around.

C22. The continuing redundancy threat to skilled industrial labour is tightening the bond between higher school certification and a good secure job.

C23. One great benefit from the unemployment crisis has been the rapid development of school courses for children of average to low ability, too long neglected in the compulsory education systems of ICCs.

C24. The youth unemployment crisis has challenged "educators" and "trainers to rethink boundaries between education and training, and between academic, social and vocational skills.

C25. This educational restructuring must not be too narrowly tied to industrial restructuring; otherwise the only growth areas in education will be new information technology courses and work preparation courses for an insecure work environment.

C26. The job crisis has also unleashed new energy amongst a myriad of non-government organisations, initiating transition programmes for young people at the local community level. These experiments are worthy of long-term government support.

## D. PREPARATION IN UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT

D1. There is no common reaction to the risk of tertiary level unemployment across the Commonwealth, nor is there a common pattern amongst the ICCs.

D2. In the face of much worse economic crises than in industrial countries, many DCCs are dramatically expanding tertiary education.

D3. Rationales for open access to higher education can only get stronger in ICCs and in DCCs. New clienteles will need access as universal secondary schooling expands. Shorter working lives will soon create pressures for tertiary studies for new generations of 50 year old students.

D4. New rounds of investment in high technology universities are imminent. They bring new fears of a vast new science and technology gap between 'North' and 'South'.

D5. The attractions of new information technology over new sociology or new classical studies will be apparent to politicians, and will be argued on spurious employment and manpower grounds to the long-term disadvantage of the non-scientific culture of the nation.

D6. Only at the tertiary level are graduates in ICCs and DCCs entering the same kind of urban labour market. It is little wonder that pressure to expand DCC universities and colleges is virtually unstoppable.

D7. It is worth noting that there is at least one connection between this theme of youth unemployment and the parallel theme of student mobility in this Conference. Certain forms of student mobility are being actively encouraged to many ICC universities and colleges whose governments are imposing financial cuts. In the threat of unemployment (of university and college teachers) and of departmental closure in the rich industrial world, student mobility from the developing countries has become one of the top university priorities.

D8. North-South academic collaboration, inside and outside the Commonwealth, must be based on a wider set of shared intellectual concerns, and not on the short-term pursuit of the revenue brought by foreign students to prevent university unemployment in the North.

## E. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

E1. There is little similarity between government responses in non-formal education for youth in ICCs and DCCs.

E2. ICC programmes are currently massively funded, comprehensive and national. DCC programmes are poorly funded and seldom national except in name.

E3. ICC government programmes are based on the rhetoric of "training for jobs". DCC programmes are based on the rhetoric of "training for self-employment".

E4. "Successful" DCC programmes frequently prepare very small numbers of youth for modern sector jobs, not self-employment. Hence, successful DCC programmes suffer from the same diploma disease as schools.

E5. Evaluating "successful" NFE Programmes in DCCs is difficult since their official aims differ so greatly from their use by trainees.

E6. The most popular NFE courses offer the same testable skills as are used in the urban wage sector.

E7. Other NFE training in DCCs assume youth are already working in the informal sector, and need upgrading.

E8. There has been little serious examination of the assumptions in expanding the training capacity of the informal sector. But the common metaphors of "sponge", "reservoir" and "mopping-up" suggest the informal sector is seen as a low cost solution to youth unemployment.

E9. The most promising innovations with youth employment have been small scale activities associated with NGOs and action groups. Though myriad and scattered, they constitute as a whole a set of alternatives for rural and urban youth.

E10. A fruitful dialogue could be established between NGOs active in youth employment in DCCs and in ICCs.