

**Work Experience Programmes  
in  
Commonwealth Secondary Schools**



Commonwealth Secretariat

**WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES  
IN COMMONWEALTH SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

by

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CHAPTER 1: THE THRUST TOWARDS LINKING  
EDUCATION IN COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES

When speaking of unemployment I mean the non-utilisation or gross under-utilisation of available labour...When considering productivity in any society it is not sufficient to take account only of those who are employed or self-employed and to leave out of the reckoning all those who are unemployed and whose productivity therefore is zero. E.F. Schumacher (1)

Work experience programmes are an outgrowth both of a thrust towards making schools' curricula more relevant to the needs, interests and aspirations of young people and of attempts to make schools' curricula respond more directly to the needs of national economies by giving young people skills which are readily usable in the labour market. It is not surprising that the era in which these programmes have blossomed, particularly in developing countries, is one in which these countries' economies have been on the decline. Ian Jamieson puts it in a nutshell when he states:

When the economy is in boom there is a tendency to allow education to fulfil the needs of individuals rather than the needs of the economy. In time of economic depression, there are pressures to force all parts of the social structure to conform to the needs of the economy. Education finds itself particularly vulnerable because it is a direct producer of a major and expensive commodity for industry-labour.(2)

Julius Nyerere is perhaps the foremost exponent of the need for education systems in developing countries which are modelled on the British system to reject subservient attitudes and aspirations for 'white collar' skills emphasised by the colonialists, since this thrust in education, he says, is 'not sufficiently related to the tasks which have to be done in our society.'(3) Nyerere, in making education more relevant, instituted reforms in the educational system which, in his words, were designed with a recognition that 'we in Tanzania have to work our way out of poverty.' All schools, but particularly those at the secondary level and other forms of higher education, were required to contribute to their own upkeep by having a farm or workshop which provided food for the school and the community and at the same time contributed to the national income. Thus, these institutions, said Nyerere, became 'economic communities as well as social and educational communities.'(4)

In Zimbabwe there is an emphasis on educating young people to enter agriculture. At the same time there is a recognition of the need to produce large numbers of people with industrial skills suited for various levels of the economy. 'It is therefore a matter of life and death,' said the Minister of Education, 'that our education system produces school leavers who have received the type of education that will enable them to initiate and participate in productive activities.' The integration of practical and theoretical work that this type of education demands, 'can be achieved either by giving students in-service exposure in an actual factory, by excursion to various factories, by setting up production workshops at the schools, or by a combination of all these methods.'(5) In Zambia where it is vital for the people to be self-reliant in terms of food production, and where few people benefit from vocational education, the case has been made for the inclusion of production in schools' curricula. Thus, 'pupils will be engaged in actually making useful products rather than token items in their productive activities, such as agriculture, carpentry, metalwork and supplying services... the curriculum of the new grades 8 and 9 should therefore cater for those who will enter the world of work...'(6)

Nyerere's call for an education system that fostered 'work by everyone and exploitation by none' was taken up in other parts of the developing world. In the Commonwealth Caribbean, for example, Michael Manley criticised the Jamaican education system for not reflecting 'a realistic balance between the needs of economic development and the actual training that is provided.'(7) He called for a radical restructuring of the training content of the system designed to provide young people with a wider range of subject options so that they could enter new careers in the skill areas indispensable to a modern economy. His government emphasised the development of a spirit of self-confidence individually and collectively, the training of young people to accept a spirit of social co-operation as the foundation of national success, and the acceptance of the work ethic. The work experience programme (8) implemented in 1975 in Jamaica's New Secondary schools was an outgrowth of this philosophy. It was in fact part of a general strategy to tackle the high rate of unemployment amongst the 14-18 age group which had reached a crisis proportion of a little over 40% in 1973.

### The Problem of Youth Employment

Widely expounded has been the theory that if academic curricula could be balanced by a practical component to give young people skills more directly related to the immediate skills needs of the economy, this would make the young more readily employable on leaving school. Asian countries, for example, have put in place measures to give 'a more practical orientation to their systems of education with emphasis on the development of productive skills relevant to economic development by relating learning with work.'(9) The 1969-70 statistics in Sri Lanka showed that some 82.6% of young people between the ages of 15-24 were unemployed - a problem attributed largely to the irrelevance of the education system. In fact, it has been said that the insurgency in 1977 in Sri Lanka was in large measure a manifestation of the discontent of unemployed youths who were ill-equipped for the demands of the working world. After the insurgency the government instituted measures to prepare early school leavers to engage in what Wijemanna has described as 'the productive occupations that the economy is capable of providing.'(10)

With the exception of such countries as Brunei, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, most Commonwealth countries have identified unemployment among young people as a major social problem. India, for example, foresaw a shortfall of over four million jobs by 1985. Malawi anticipates unemployment at 11.9% by 1994, while Zambia expects a shortfall of jobs for 100,000 young people each year.'(11)

But, as Table 1 shows, youth unemployment is not confined to the developing countries of the Commonwealth.

TABLE 1: Youth Unemployment 1980 (as a percentage of total unemployed) in selected countries in the Commonwealth

COUNTRY	% TOTAL UNEMPLOYED
Australia	55.9
Barbados	66.2
Canada	47.1
Ghana	60.4
India	67.2
Singapore	58.0
United Kingdom	42.2

Source: ILO: Bureau of Statistics (12)

In the wake of rapid technological advances, Schumacher's thesis becomes more and more real: 'The type of work which modern technology is most successful in reducing or even eliminating is skilful, productive work of human hands, in touch with real materials of one kind or another. In an advanced industrial society, such work has become exceedingly rare.'(13) There are some people who believe that youth unemployment may be a permanent feature of advanced industrial societies. Others blame the phenomenon on social welfare programmes which make the 'dole' a disincentive for young people to seek work.

The ILO has projected that the young (15-20) economically active population in more developed regions of the world will decrease from some 111 million in 1985 to 104 million by 2025, while in the less developed countries it will increase from some 469 million in 1968 to 608 million by 2025. Thus, whereas in developed countries there will be less pressure on the labour market to absorb new entrants, in developing countries, 'the already over-burdened capacity of the labour market to provide productive employment for youth will come under great stress.'(14) While acknowledging that youth employment in developing countries is part and parcel of the overall national problem of poverty, unemployment and under-employment, the ILO report attributes part of the problem to the mismatch that frequently exists between the skills taught in school systems and those actually needed for the world of work. 'Training systems,' it says, 'have not succeeded in adapting their teaching methodology or curricula to the requirements of the labour market.'(15)

## Tackling Youth Employment: Strategies Adopted

### Developing Countries

Many developing countries have tried to adapt their curricula to the requirements of the working world, largely through the introduction of work experience programmes. For example, Jamaica's Five Year Education Plan (1978-83) emphasised that each secondary school student was 'to pursue studies and work experience in at least one technical/vocational area,' so that by the time the student graduated, 'he should have acquired both skills and habits which will enable him to move smoothly into the world of work.'<sup>(16)</sup> Jamaica's experience is not untypical of many parts of the English-speaking Caribbean. Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and smaller territories such as St. Kitts and St. Lucia have made use of work experience programmes. Similar moves are evident in various parts of Africa. The main objective of the Contribution Programme in the fourth year of the upper segment of Basic Education in Ghana, for example, is 'to predispose the learners to different types of vocations.'<sup>(17)</sup> In its 1977 educational reforms, Zambia introduced production units in a number of schools to provide opportunities for integrating theory and practice and to provide training skills appropriate for young people who did not wish to proceed to further education. Tai Solarin's 'Mayflower School' has done much to disseminate in Nigeria and other parts of Africa the value of hard work and discipline as well as the necessity of giving young people skills to enable them to leave school and take up occupations as 'bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, farmers, clerks, horticulturists, livestock farmers, motor mechanics, home decorators, caterers...mathematicians, doctors and engineers...'<sup>(18)</sup> The Swaneng Hill Secondary School, when it was first started in 1963 by Patrick Van Rensburg, embodied a thrust towards in-school work experience. Much of the school itself was built by the students. Van Rensburg is perhaps best known for his work in establishing the Builders Brigade in Serowe, Botswana, described as 'a unique attempt to link education and training with the needs of society.'<sup>(19)</sup> In the early days he attempted to implement a model of secondary education which combined the Swaneng Hill Secondary School and Brigade Movement whereby, in return for their labour, the Brigades received food, technical instruction and two hours teaching per day in general subjects done by the students themselves. The experiment was short-lived.

### Developed Countries

What, then, of work experience in the developed countries? In Britain, Bloomer traces the origins of present-day concern to 1963 when the Newsom Report Half Our Future recommended that the final year of the school programme should seek to initiate the young into the adult world of work and leisure. The DES Green Paper on Education in Schools (1977) advocated among the aims of education 'to help children appreciate how the nation earns and maintains its standard of living and properly to esteem the essential role of industry and commerce in this process.'<sup>(20)</sup> In Europe generally, initiatives have been taken to make the world of work more open and accessible to young people. The Second Transition Programme is an example of this European commitment. It is based on a resolution adopted in July 1982 'concerning measures to be taken to improve the preparation of young people for work, and to facilitate their transition from

education to working life.' One of the initiatives is the development of co-operation between schools and employers 'in order to provide direct work experience, simulated work experience, and work experience in the local community.'(21) Two main reasons have been put forward to explain the trend towards strengthening links between education and work. In their 1985 New Year speeches, nearly all European Prime Ministers emphasised both the necessity for the development of new attitudes and the need for Europe to play a more important role in the economically competitive world situation. This new enterprising spirit demands initiative and flexibility in the young and it is seen as the task of the school system to develop these traits. Meijer sums up the reasons for the trend towards education and work linkages thus:

...due to the rapid and radical changes in the European economies, the labour market has become inaccessible, invisible and incomprehensible to young people. To be able to make an informed decision about their own future, they need to have a good understanding of the world 'outside the school'...(and)...specific skills like self-confidence, initiative and flexibility to cope with the problems they will meet in the future...Simulated and real productive work could play a role in developing those personal and social life skills.(22)

#### Work Experience and Social Transformation

Whereas in many developed countries, work experience programmes are seen mainly as fostering the development of personal and social skills, in developing countries of the Commonwealth, work experience programmes are largely geared to achieving wider objectives. These include providing balance to a theoretical curriculum, developing positive attitudes towards manual work, lowering the unit costs of schooling through the sale of pupils' products or services, and equalising educational opportunities. Indeed in countries which subscribe to a democratic socialist ideology, work experience programmes are part of a general philosophy of linking education with production so as to transform not only education but ultimately society itself. Some analysis of school-to-work transition have pointed out the seeds of conflict and contradiction inherent in school systems in democratic societies which have the dual task of preparing the young as workers and as citizens. Martin Carnoy for example, argues: 'The preparation required for citizenship in a democratic society based on equal opportunity and human rights is often incompatible with the preparation needed for job performance in a corporate system of work. On the one hand, schools must train citizens to know their rights under the law as well as their obligations to exercise these rights through political participation. On the other, schools must train workers with the skills and personality characteristics that enable them to function in an authoritarian work regime. This requires a negation of the very political rights that make for good citizens.'(23)

Particularly in schools where 'work' is experienced in production units on the school premises, there is serious danger that production for economic ends can undermine educational goals.

## Aims of the Study

A study undertaken ten years ago by Margaret Sinclair on work experience programmes in Third World countries concluded that programme objectives were far too ambitious, often leading to their collapse on account of serious problems including lack of teacher skills and motivation, lack of material resources, and negative responses from students and their parents. 'For most Third World countries,' she wrote, 'the best policy would seemingly be to leave work experience programmes severely alone!' Sinclair nevertheless admitted that many schools had managed to introduce 'respectable work experience programmes no better or worse in quality than the rest of the school's offerings.'(24)

To what extent has the situation changed since Sinclair conducted her study? This forms part of the concern of the present study which, however, is limited to the secondary school system in Commonwealth countries.

More specifically, the aims of this study are:

1. To identify the aims and objectives of work experience programmes in secondary schools in the Commonwealth.
2. To determine who chooses involvement by whom in work experience programmes and with what ends in view.
3. To present case studies of work experience programmes conducted in school and out-of-school premises in the various regions of the Commonwealth.
4. To point out contrasts in approaches between the more developed countries with well developed modern sectors and less developed countries where such opportunities are few. Where possible, comparisons will also be drawn between urban and rural schools.
5. To discuss how work and the curriculum are linked with special reference to: (a) the subjects in the curriculum which lend themselves best to work experience; (b) the effect of the examination system on work experience programmes; and (c) advantages and disadvantages of different phasings of work experience.
6. To throw light on the cost-benefits of work experience with a view to identifying those who benefit most from work experience programmes.
7. To discuss the problems most commonly experienced in work experience programmes.

It is hoped that what emerges from this study will be of value not only to teachers and students involved in work experience programmes, but also to educators generally, to researchers and to those involved in planning these programmes in Ministries of Education, Youth and Community Development and elsewhere.

## Methodology

The data on which this study is based were derived from the following:

### Published Studies, Reports, etc.

Most of these were consulted at the Institute of Education Library in London University and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in July 1986. Unpublished studies, reports and other information were obtained directly from Ministries of Education, other government agencies, and researchers from universities in various parts of the Commonwealth with an interest in the area - all of whom responded to the writer's request for information.

### Unpublished Studies

These were done by the writer:

(a) Education and Productive Work in Jamaica: Report to Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development (CARNEID/UNESCO, 1983) 231p.

(b) Education and Productive Work Lingages in the Commonwealth Caribbean (Report to the Commonwealth Secretariat, London, October 1985, revised February 1986). 167p.

Other unpublished studies on work experience programmes done at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica, under the supervision of the writer.

### Questionnaire on Work Experience Programmes in Commonwealth Schools

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to obtain information on the approach to work experience in different countries in the Commonwealth, the patterns of work experience applicable, the organisation of work experience programmes, and the advantages and disadvantages of the different ways in which work experience programmes could be phased. Other sorts of information sought included the cost-benefits of work experience, the problems commonly experienced with work experience programmes, and the criteria used to assess these programmes. Suggestions as to how work experience programmes could be improved were also solicited.

The questionnaires were sent to Ministries of Education in the following countries: Australia, Bangladash, Botswana, Canada, Cyprus Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, India, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Western Samoa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

A total of 13 responses (representing 46% of the sample) were received over a four-month period. These are identified below:

Director (Class II) Participation & Equity Branch, Department of Education, Canberra, Australia.

Principal, Automotive Trades Training School, Botswana.

Director, International Relations Council of Ministries of Education, Canada.

Work Study Supervisor/Deputy Planning Officer, Guyana.

Reader, Department of Vocationalisation of Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training, India.

Senior Inspector of Schools, Kenya.

Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Mauritius.

Director of Schools, Wellington, New Zealand.

Director, Education Research Unit, University of Papua New Guinea.

Director, Polytechnic, Seychelles.

Technical Education Co-ordinator, Ministry of Education, Tanzania.

Curriculum Organiser, Government of Western Samoa.

#### Summary of Main Points

1. In capitalist countries of the Commonwealth, work experience tends to be seen as a means of preparing young people for the world of work so as to avoid the problem of unemployment. Work experience is also viewed as a means for reinforcing social values.
2. In socialist countries of the Commonwealth, devotion to the ethic of work emerges as a much stronger ideology and work experience programmes (WEP) tend to be viewed as a means of solving the problem of social inequality in society. WEP especially in schools is also seen as a way of linking education with production - an ideology which itself is geared ultimately to a process of transforming education within a wider strategy for social change.
3. The burdensome demand on developing countries to provide productive employment for increasing numbers of young people has been underscored in a recent ILO study which has projected an increase in the economically active population in developing countries to some 608 million by the year 2025. A decrease in the same population category is forecast in developed countries over this period.
4. In so far as they seek to train young people with the skills and personality characteristics to fit them into the workplace, work experience programmes, some say, may prove incompatible with the preparation of these same young people as citizens in societies where rights to equal opportunities and political participation are valued.

## CHAPTER 2: WORK EXPERIENCE: RATIONALE AND PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The schools have one final opportunity to prove their worth to the nation, in perhaps the most challenging undertaking of their history, by dedicating themselves to the preparation of students for the world of work.(1)

### Defining Work Experience

Throughout the Commonwealth 'work experience' has been interpreted in many different ways. Described as 'a unique gift to the current educational thought of India', it has been defined there as a method of integrating education with work where the accent is on education and not work: 'Work experience is not just education plus work, nor integration of work with education. Education is the fundamental aim and it has to be integrated with work. In other words, it is education through work.'(2) In some cases work experience is perceived more narrowly as simply 'job sampling', while in others, evaluation of work experience programmes has led to the conclusion that 'on balance this activity seems to be best regarded as social education rather than job sampling.'(3) Others insist that work experience should not be seen simply as job sampling; nor should it be viewed as part of any training for a particular job; and it should certainly not be seen as a means for employers to decide which young people they might like to employ.(4) Work experience has also been defined as: 'the education of the young adult in the differences between one collective institution - the school - with all the human and material supportive agencies that exist for the benefit of the pupils, and another - the factory or firm - which has its own set of supportive agencies, but where personal development of the people involved (i.e. workers) may be only a minor objective of the organisation.'(5)

Interestingly, even within a given Commonwealth country, a variety of interpretations of work experience exists. In Canada, for example, the Constitution Act 1867 gives each of the ten provinces exclusive responsibility for legislation in the field of education. There is thus no single system of education or national ministry of education in Canada as one finds in many developing countries. Thus although the educational provisions in the various provinces have some things in common, they have different characteristics, differences in ways of organisation as well as in structure.(6) In a school district in New Brunswick, for example, work experience is limited to students over 16 years of age and is designed to provide them with 'opportunities to explore areas of occupational in-service and to test their own abilities and interests.'(7) In Nova Scotia, work experience is organised for students of 14 years of age and over and provides them with 'opportunities to learn more about employment, and about the skills and attitudes necessary to obtain and hold a

job.'(8) In Newfoundland and Labrador, 'work experience education' is the term used for a programme in which students participate for school credits; there is close co-ordination between on-the-job experience and in-school experiences and activities. Work experience in Ontario does not earn a student any additional credits, although it may be a required element in a credit course. 'Co-operative education' in Ontario involves an out-of-school component of 200-250 hours and carries secondary school graduation credits for related studies. Examples include programmes in business education, technology studies, translation services (for students of French as a second language), land survey (for maths students), veterinary clinics (for science students) and urban planning organisation (for geography students).

What is apparent from the foregoing is that definitions of work experience raise issues which include distinguishing between 'education' and 'schooling', decisions on what values the school ought to be transmitting - instrumental or intrinsic, determining whether it is the proper business of the school to prepare the young for the 'world of work' or for 'employment' or for a 'career'. All these are linked to the question of whether work experience programmes fit into a framework which is correctly viewed as 'pre-vocational' or 'vocational'.

When a young person in school studies business education and is given two to three weeks' experience (as, for example, a clerk in a business establishment) is the total experience to be viewed as 'pre-vocational' or 'vocational'? King is instructive when he likens 'pre-vocational' to 'orientation' which, he says, emphasises that studies undertaken must not be viewed as 'training for the world of work, since that would be too close to subordination of school to labour market.'(9) The sense conveyed, according to King, is that of offering 'a taste of what the world of work is like without letting the school fall into the category of a vocational or Trade School.' The presumption seems to be that students who have engaged in pre-vocational studies/ experiences will proceed to truly vocational studies/experiences. 'Vocational' implies training for jobs and if this is viewed as the proper business of the school, then the emphasis becomes one of 'schooling' which implies a controlled and contingent set of practices concerned to bring about the intentional acquisition of particular skills which are valued as a means to some other ends (instrumental values).(10)

Philosophers such as Hirst and Peters, on the other hand, argue that the proper business of schools is to transmit 'education' which is centrally concerned with the development of knowledge and understanding in depth and breadth, such knowledge being valued for its own sake (intrinsic values). If learning in school is centred on preparation for a job or for employment, there is a resulting danger, it is argued, of indoctrinating pupils not educating them. 'Indoctrination' here implies unshakeable belief in certain doctrines, particularly capitalism and the pursuit of material wealth, as well as an adherence to certain methods that promote lack of respect for persons and the development of a slavish labour force which is blindly obedient to the profit motives of others. This explains why in some definitions of 'work experience', authors are at pains to emphasise its educative value and its link with 'careers' because, as Bell rightly indicates, having a career 'implies an organising life interest in which employment is an incidental part.'(11) Likewise, says Bell, 'preparation for the world of work' implies training in those skills and performances fundamental to any preparation whether for work or more

generally for life: basic skills such as numeracy and literacy and a variety of social competencies.'(12)

The implication here is that work experience programmes which are seen as part of the general aim of a school 'to prepare the young for the world of work,' would not limit a student's choice to a particular job. In addition, such programmes would be educative. Herbst, in fact, outlines a thesis that 'education is work rather than labour, and that to educate well is to work, as well as to teach people to work.'(13) Whereas labour is toil, hardship and tending to alienation, Herbst argues, work is pleasure, it has a point and purpose and the worker has a desire to produce a product that meets appropriate standards of excellence. The work process is equally as important as the product of that process. If such a view of work is accepted, then it becomes apparent why self-discipline, a sense of responsibility, conscientiousness, caring and other social attributes feature as objectives of work experience programmes.

A further point made by Bell, however, needs to be borne in mind. He says, 'There is a logical problem however in the use of "experience" as a didactic principle namely that you cannot know where you are going until you have been there. The resultant knowledge by acquaintance constituted by anecdote, impressions and partly formulated views is hardly the basis upon which rational action is justified even when put to the test of vigorous reflection. For, there is always the difficulty of determining to what extent such experience can be generalised. Therefore, a central difficulty with such programmes is determining what their general aims are.'(14) This is not an infrequent criticism of work experience programmes. Anderson, for example, highlights a national survey in Australia which has concluded that 'there was little clarity about objectives'(15) while Sinclair, from her survey of work experience programmes in Third World schools, was critical of the ambitious nature of their objectives.(16)

#### Objectives of Work-Experience Programmes

In examining more closely the objectives of work experience programmes in secondary schools in the Commonwealth, a distinction has to be drawn at the outset between work experience programmes that are 'out-of-school' (i.e. involving two to three weeks - more or less - of on-the-job experience in business, firms, etc.) and those that are 'in-school'. Typical of the latter are schools in which the central focus is on education with production. Jamaica's Jose Marti Secondary School, for example, has a work study curriculum in which academic work is combined with involvement on the part of all students in an agricultural work programme based at the school. Eradication of the stigma against manual work, the instilling of a healthy work ethic and orientation of the young to jobs other than 'white-collar' ones are cited amongst the objectives of this programme.(17)

The objectives of work experience programmes can be put into three broad categories: philosophical/pedagogic, social, and economic (see Table 2).

TABLE 2: Objectives of Work Experience Programmes in Secondary Schools in the Commonwealth

---

PHILOSOPHICAL/PEDAGOGIC OBJECTIVES

facilitate transition from school to work  
equalise work opportunities for boys and girls  
improve the opportunities of the less academically able  
improve critical thinking skills through decision-making in  
job experiences  
acquire practical experience in literacy and numeracy skills  
related to specific jobs  
motivate youth by making curriculum more relevant and  
meaningful to their own experiences  
give practical experience in area of vocational choice

SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

develop positive attitudes to practical/manual work  
instil healthy work ethic  
learn how people earn their living through experience of  
varied work processes  
enable career choice  
instil self-discipline  
develop self-confidence/positive self-concept  
learn the importance of attributes desirable in good  
employees (e.g. punctuality, co-operation)  
stem sex-role stereotyping of employment opportunities  
learn nature of social relations at work  
occupy potential drop-outs/truants  
facilitate communication between school, parents and  
employers

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

increase awareness of employers' expectations  
reduce economic costs by keeping young longer in school  
preparation for jobs (other than 'white-collar' type)  
assist youth in getting permanent employment  
enable young people to explore business and industry  
sample variety of jobs  
preparation of 'low achievers' for low status occupations  
develop agricultural basis of national economy  
enable school to become partially self-sufficient

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## Philosophical/Pedagogic Objectives

An egalitarian ideal underpins most work experience programmes, particularly those of the 'in-school' type which have been put in place by governments that subscribe to a democratic socialist ideology. Musa, then Minister of Education in Belize, in delivering a paper on national education policy said:

The Belizean child must be given an education which will promote his history and culture, and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgement and sense of moral and social responsibility. In order to accomplish this, education must effectively integrate the world of study with the world of work.(18)

This philosophy underpinned the Rural Education and Agriculture Programme (REAP), which was implemented in the Belizean rural school system in 1976. The idea was that by involvement in a curriculum built around agricultural knowledge and experiences, rural school leavers in Belize would not only be prepared for a more rewarding life in the countryside but would be able to undertake self-employment projects in agriculture. They would thus be better able to help their country to become self-sufficient in food production, thereby participating in the development of the agricultural basis of the national economy.(19) Essentially, however, REAP was designed to improve the lot of rural children in relation to their urban counterparts.

When the Jamaican government in 1974 extended the life of junior secondary schools by two years (thereby creating the New Secondary schools) and introduced a work experience component into the grade 10-11 curriculum,(20) a major aim was to equalise the opportunities in the world of work for the New Secondary school graduates in relation to their high school counterparts who, because of the high social currency accorded the academic curriculum to which they were exposed, tended to be favoured by employers. The reasoning was that work experience would give the New Secondary school leavers employable skills that would make them more attractive to employers.

The students who go to the New Secondary schools in Jamaica are those from the lower social classes who have not passed the common entrance (CEE) or the 11 plus examination.(21) Not surprisingly, the work experience programme which was implemented in these schools tends to be associated only with the less academically able. This is not peculiar to Jamaica. In other Commonwealth countries (e.g. Australia) work experience is reserved for those youngsters who are considered less academically able. In some countries (e.g. Canada), work experience was initially mainly for special education students. In Saskatchewan, for example, these programmes were initiated 'to provide an opportunity for educable mentally handicapped students to combine school attendance with on-the-job training...'(22) The target population for these programmes gradually widened to include potential drop-outs and other students who were not responding to the regular school programme. In New Zealand, work experience units in state secondary schools cater for 'the need of students of very limited academic ability during their first two years of secondary schooling. Their programmes of study are specially devised for non-achievers, and the work experience they have is normally in places of

work where the levels of skills are not high.'(23). The Department of Education and Science in Britain, however, has insisted that work experience 'should be provided for the whole ability range of pupils, not just those considered to be non academic.'(24) This practice applies in Guyana where students between the ages of 14-18 in community high schools and multilateral schools participate in what is referred to there as 'work study.'

To 'improve critical thinking skills by making observations and drawing conclusions about job site experience,' and to 'acquire practical experience by writing, speaking, listening and in mathematics as these relate to specific jobs'(25) are among the objectives cited for work experience programmes in Canadian school districts.

### Social Objectives

Many developing countries with a history of negative attitudes towards practical/manual work have the development of positive attitudes towards physical/manual work and the attainment of a healthy work ethic as objectives of their work experience programmes. The programmes in Jamaica's New Secondary schools, Guyana's community high and multilateral schools, and Solarin's 'Mayflower' school in Nigeria are but a few examples. Giving young people a chance to find out what it is to be at work, to see how different workplaces are organised, what the work processes are, and to learn the nature of social relations at work and the role of trade unions at the workplace, feature as objectives of work experience particularly in the more developed countries. The development of acceptable work habits and attributes is stressed amongst the objectives of work experience programmes in both developed and developing countries. In Guyana 'work study teaches the students how to behave in a work setting. The student learns the importance of time, respect for authority and working desirably alongside his/her fellows,'(26) while in Nova Scotia, students on work experience are expected 'to learn the importance of punctuality, honesty, courtesy, responsibility, reliability, co-operation and other such attributes desirable in a good employee.'(27) Because in some countries, work experience programmes are implemented in schools to which society accords a lower social status, promoting more healthy self-concepts and developing self-confidence in the young people become important social objectives. It is mainly in developed countries, however, that work experience programmes serve a more custodial function, either by providing an alternative means of occupation for youngsters prone to truancy or by becoming a repository for disruptive youths.

Anderson refers to research on Australian adolescence in which it was found that problem behaviour was greater amongst unemployed out-of-school youth. Some work experience programmes are designed to compensate for the social disadvantage that predisposed these youths to unemployment.

Improving communication between the school, the home and the workplace is an objective of many work experience programmes such as that in Seychelles where there is a drive 'to promote communication between schools, employers, parents and students and others with an interest in worker education, such as the unions and employment services.'(28)

## Economic Objectives

Some schools in New Zealand have received grants to assist them in setting up work experience schemes for 'reluctant returners' i.e. young New Zealanders who return to school because they are unable to find employment. In cases like this, Nash argues, 'work experience schemes do help to keep children in school which is less costly and arguably better all round than their being unemployed.'(29) Since some work experience programmes are implemented only in lower status schools with an intake from amongst the less academically able in the society, it has been argued by some that what these programmes succeed in doing is prepare these young people for low skilled or unskilled jobs. There is a tendency for the work experience programme in Jamaica's New Secondary schools to be viewed in this light. In Ontario, where vocational courses involving work experience are offered in regular comprehensive schools, in the case of the majority of students who take these courses, 'their attitude toward work and experience obtained in real work situation tends to prepare them quite well for low status occupations.'(30) In Newfoundland and Labrador, some work experience programmes are viewed as 'exploratory' in that they provide 'an opportunity to observe and sample systematically a variety of conditions of work for the purpose of ascertaining one's interest, aptitude and suitability for particular occupations.'(31) Getting to know what employers expect of workers, permitting employers to participate in the educational process 'by inviting their suggestions as to how the school curriculum might be infused with greater relevance to the world of work,'(32) and providing young people with an opportunity to obtain permanent employment, are also cited as objectives of work experience programmes. Finally, 'in-school' work experience programmes, such as in the Jose Marti Secondary School in Jamaica, usually have as an objective the task of making the school at least partially self-sufficient, so that reliance on government funds can be reduced. The policy is well established in Guyana where 'in keeping with the national policy of increased agricultural production, the school's agriculture programme has taken on a new character in which production is one of the major goals. While there is no intention to degrade achievement in academic subjects, adequate exposure to, and mastery of, skill areas such as agriculture and the related fields of home economics, industrial arts and business education are now given high priority. Of importance too is the socialisation purpose, introducing work into schools we are building appropriate habits among our students and preparing them for production which is a direct contribution to the nation's food security. It is also a means of generating funds that guarantee development of education despite the prevailing economic crisis.'(33)

### Summary of Main Points

1. Work experience has been interpreted in a variety of ways ranging from 'job sampling' to 'social education' to learning the differences between the school and the workplace as organisations. Increasingly, its educative aspect is stressed.
2. Historically, work experience programmes have tended to be associated with the less academically able, but gradually over time in both developed and developing countries, the ability range for these programmes has widened.

3. Work experience programmes have a range of objectives that fall into three broad categories: philosophical/pedagogical, social, and economic.

4. Philosophical/pedagogical objectives relate to ideals of equalising opportunities, facilitating the transition from school to work, and the motivation of young people through the study of curricula which are relevant to their experiences.

5. In some developed countries, the curbing of disruptive youths, and engaging the interest of potential drop-outs of truants feature among the social objectives of work experience programmes.

6. The development of positive attitudes towards physical/manual work features as an important social objective in work experience programmes in many developing countries. Learning the nature of social relations at work, and the nurturing of desirable attributes in good employees (e.g. punctuality, co-operation) are other social objectives of these programmes.

7. Some 'in-school' work experience programmes are designed to enable the school to become partially self-sufficient.

8. Economic objectives of work experience programmes range from facilitating youths in getting permanent employment, awareness of employers' expectations, and exploration of business and industry to assisting in the development of the agricultural basis of a developing country's economy.

9. In this study, work experience is understood as 'Opportunities on a compulsory or voluntary basis for full-time secondary school students to engage in work as part of their education programme even though they may not have as yet chosen a particular career.'

### CHAPTER 3: WORK EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOLS: CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, case studies will be presented of schools in Africa and the Caribbean which have programmes that expose students to actual situations on the school premises, be it in course of the study of practical subjects or as part of an arrangement in which a socially and economically meaningful component of education or training is integrated with one of production.

In presenting these case studies, the context that gave rise to the particular case of work experience being brought on stream is described, followed by a description of the infrastructural requirements or inputs. Where the information exists, the study indicates what the processes were, and what evaluation has revealed.

#### Production for Economic Self-Reliance in Zambian Schools

##### Context

In Zambia food production by the people themselves is a vital necessity. Since the majority of the people get little formal vocational education, it has been argued that production should be included in schools' curricula alongside practical subjects with a vocational orientation. A major justification for this is that the traditional academic curriculum does not satisfy the needs of most pupils who will terminate school at an early age. Given the shortage of resources, it is also incumbent on educational institutions to be as self-reliant as possible.

The Educational Reform document of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Zambia identifies vocational goals for grades 8 and 9 related to production. The pupils 'will be engaged in actually making useful products rather than token items in their productive activities, such as agriculture, carpentry, metalwork, or supplying services...the curriculum of the new grades 8 and 9 should, therefore, cater for those who will enter the world of work, and those who will join vocational training programmes.'(1)

The programmes of general senior secondary education are also vocational in orientation. The document states that they, too, should prepare students for life since most of them, 'after completing their National Service, join the world of work. The introduction of practical skills and the idea of education and production are even more relevant here and should be pursued in more depth than at the first stage.'(2)

The traditional way of organising food production in schools has been to keep it as an extra-curricular activity by, for example, attaching Young Farmers' Clubs to schools or getting pupils in boarding schools engaging in 'useful work' at week-ends or during afternoons. This approach met with a measure of success particularly in mission schools with the necessary resources and with knowledgeable staff committed to making it work. In many other cases, however, as Shanks points out, this approach 'degenerated into compulsory labour for the pupils working on a school garden in no way more educationally beneficial or productive than many experienced at their home.'<sup>(3)</sup> Shanks points out some main conflicts which this 'extra-curricular' approach to production brought about. Not only are few pupils and staff willing to participate, he says, but it also becomes difficult to maintain high academic standards while managing a worthwhile production unit which involves many persons in the school community.

Following the policy that all schools in Zambia should have production units, production is now included on the timetable and treated as a separate subject. The Educational Reform document states that, 'production which undermines or counteracts the learning function of an education institution will not be acceptable.'<sup>(4)</sup> In detailing the possible educational and social benefits of production work in schools, the document stresses the need for productive work to be organised as an integral part of the teaching and learning programmes. There should, for example, be a link between the syllabuses in the practical subjects and production unit work.

#### Objectives of Production Units

The Educational Reform document stresses the formation of attitudes and increasing motivation towards national development. Also emphasised are objectives relating to the teaching of personal qualities, e.g. discipline, self-reliance, leadership, respect for labour, self-satisfaction, a sense of belonging and achievement through appropriate activities, and collective endeavour. Other objectives include a demonstration of the relationship between theory and practice of food production and the development of individual talents which would otherwise not have emerged through the normal curriculum subjects.

#### Inputs

The amount of land available to schools vary. Shanks reports that one urban school had to cultivate around and between classrooms due to lack of land space while other schools had as much as 20 acres. Other essential inputs for the production units are:

- (a) Adequate water supply.
- (b) Adequate finance for initial establishment of enterprises as well as working capital needed to cover items such as foodstuff, seeds, pesticides, fertilisers and marketing costs.
- (c) Equipment, tools, machinery.
- (d) Special buildings for livestock, food storage and storage of tools and machinery.

(e) Enthusiastic leadership on the part of the principal or the organisation.

(f) Adequately trained personnel.

### Organisation and Management of Production Units

All the schools utilise some form of committee system for the control of production unit work, but this varies from school to school. For example, a school could have both a steering committee and a management committee. The appointed head of the food production unit usually acts as the chairman of the committee, but otherwise his responsibilities may be within any department in the school. The principal and deputy may be ex-officio members of the committee. The number of other staff members varies from two to four. The school bursar or representative of the commerce department is usually a member. The agricultural science department may be represented on the committee or its staff serve as advisers. Some schools also have student representatives on the committee.

The function of the committee is to plan the general policy and arrange for the supply of materials, etc. The head of the unit issues termly or weekly directives to the teachers in charge of work groups. Work may be organised on a class basis within the timetable, or on an hourly basis for afternoon or evening work (e.g. vegetable garden, field crops, poultry, pigs). Although in a few schools only teachers with light teaching loads are required to be involved in production work, in most schools everyone is involved as part of their normal work load. The number of production periods varies from one to three a week. Many schools exclude or reduce the involvement in production of pupils preparing for external examinations.

Shanks reports a problem in the organisation of the day-to-day production tasks in that there are sometimes many more pupils available than the tasks demand. For example, there is a limit to the amount of digging, hoeing or planting that needs to be done, and such tasks only become intensive at certain times of the year.

### Evaluation

From an evaluation of Zambian schools with production units, Shanks concluded that only four of those visited could be considered as approaching the standard of production and educational benefit necessary to really justify the efforts expended on them. Of the remainder, nine were clearly attempting to build up a satisfactory production unit with educational aims in view. Nine others were considered to be of limited value, although they were producing some food. Six were definitely falling short both in terms of productivity and educational benefit.

Shanks makes special mention of one school - a boys boarding school in a rural area - that had an efficient and comprehensive production unit. Its produce included broilers, layers, eggs, beef and pork, rabbits, carrots and green bananas. Although its expenditure on field crops and broilers exceeded income, its income from layers, rabbits, cattle, pigs and vegetables exceeded expenditure. In terms of produce sold to cover costs, and that consumed in the school, the output of the production unit was

considerable. In addition, says Shanks, 'the range of activities and interests such a unit as this generate demonstrates well the potential educational value of production units in schools.'<sup>(5)</sup> Factors that contributed to the success of this school are identified by Shanks as follows:

- (a) An exceptionally enthusiastic and well-informed principal.
- (b) The involvement of the head of agricultural science department in the production unit work.
- (c) Promotion of self-reliance measures through the exploitation of the expertise and interest of other staff members.

An example given of the latter is the construction of a biogas generator using animal dung as fuel which enabled the school to do away with the use of costly bottled gas.

In many of the schools visited, the following were identified as difficulties which prevented the effective operation of the production units:

- (a) Inadequate land space and poor soil quality.
- (b) Poor water supply: inadequate funds to buy pipes, build tanks, etc.
- (c) Absence of adequate financial capital for the initial establishment of the unit, and working capital to cover the cost of seeds, pesticides, fertilisers, etc.
- (d) Inappropriately designed buildings erected for housing livestock, food storage, etc.
- (e) Inadequate organisation of the supply of tools; haphazard distribution.
- (f) Poorly maintained equipment.
- (g) Inadequate yields in crops due to thefts and use of improper planting techniques and after-care.
- (h) Expense and shortage of feeds leading to decline in livestock rearing.
- (i) Minimum or non-existent involvement of agricultural science departments in food production.
- (j) Negative attitudes on the part of parents, students and teachers.

With respect to the last point, questions have been raised as to the usefulness of work in production units in terms of material output and the educational value to the pupils. Zambian parents have consistently regarded school gardening and agriculture as a waste of time. The students, whereas they like practical subjects in the curriculum, generally do not like production unit work. The teachers question how they, with their training in subjects quite unrelated to food production,

can be expected to become good managers of food production activities which require specialised knowledge, technical ability and some business competence. Many teachers believe that educational objectives are inevitably sacrificed in production unit work where, by the nature of things, the aim is to be productive and profitable.

## Training for Self-Reliance in Lesotho

### Context

Before Lesotho became independent in 1966 almost all schools founded and run by churches stressed Bible reading and the arts rather than science. After independence, the shortcomings of the educational system were thrown into relief when the country needed teachers of the science, doctors, engineers and technicians of various kinds. The government submitted a proposal to the World Bank to set up workshops and other rooms for practical subjects in six pilot schools. The World Bank agreed and the Training for Self-Reliance Programme was implemented. The subjects were agriculture, typewriting, bricklaying, basic handicrafts, home economics, metalwork, needlework, technical drawing, and woodwork. The last of these is the subject of the next case study.

### Woodwork Teaching Objectives in the Training for Self-Reliance Programme

Himmelheber(6) identifies seven objectives that can be pursued through the teaching of woodwork. These are:

- (a) To provide pre-vocational training in skills in joinery and carpentry which provide a sound base for vocational training in schools (e.g. LTI Maseru, Leloaleng, Leribe).
- (b) To teach the virtues of craftsmanship (e.g. accuracy, tidiness, simplicity, economy) alongside technical and craftsman's skills.
- (c) To give students the skills that would enable them to tackle commonplace problems such as how to repair a jamming door or replace a broken window-pane.
- (d) To enable the practical application of knowledge from other subject areas (e.g. physical science, mathematics).
- (e) To develop creativity.
- (f) To teach students to treat craftsmanship with as much respect as white-collar work.
- (g) To teach co-operation.

### Inputs

Given that the Training for Self-Reliance Programme was a World Bank project, new buildings were erected and workshops equipped in the six pilot schools at a cost of several million dollars. Experts were called in to develop syllabi for the new programme. Himmelheber writes:

The incoming experts slightly modified the one used 'back home' and then introduced it into the school. No discussion took place about the objectives and teaching methods of subjects such as woodwork or domestic science.(7)

Programmes were introduced for teaching woodwork and metalwork at the National Teachers Training College. Due to lack of adequate land space for agriculture and inadequate supply of typewriters, no training was provided in the areas of agriculture and typewriting.

### Process

The students, in preparation for the Junior Certificate examination, study woodwork practical, woodwork theory and woodwork drawing. In woodwork practical, the students do exercises and undertake project work. The exercises involve practice in the making of joints out of small pieces of timber. Project work is supposed to serve a functional purpose (e.g. the making of a coat hanger or key stand). In woodwork theory, students learn about the various tools in a workshop as well as about timber technology. During woodwork drawing the students draw articles they are going to make in the practicals. The teacher does the planning and designing, and students, for the most part, are simply required to copy down the drawing or model designed by the teacher.

### Evaluation

Himmelheber points out that in the second phase of the Self Reliance Programme another ten schools were added to the original six pilot schools. At the time the article was written (1983) the consolidation phase had been reached. Now, says Himmelheber, 'we are heading for Phase IV and still nobody seems to really know what 'self-reliance' means....'(8) The didactic form of instruction that dominates woodwork classes does not serve to develop the kinds of skills and qualities that foster self-reliance (e.g. how to work with others, how to design and plan a project, how to make decisions individually or collectively, how to use existing techniques etc). In fact much of what is taught in practical work is considered irrelevant by the students since the sorts of projects they are required to do are what was required of the O-level syllabus in Britain some twenty years before. In short, if the project work were organised as a team effort, involving groups of students working together to produce marketable goods on however a limited scale, then these young people could be said to be experiencing in a workshop situation the processes of the workplace in the 'real world of work'. As it stands, according to Himmelheber, the teaching of woodwork in Lesotho schools is rapidly becoming established as just another academic subject.

The West Indies College in Jamaica

### Context

The West Indies College (WIC), a Seventh Day Adventist institution, prides itself in being the initiator of the work-study concept in Jamaican education. Established in 1919 it started off with only 27 students, but from the outset several industries such as baking, farming, dairying,

sheet metalwork and printing were established. Students worked part-time in the laundry and kitchen, and all students had to put in two hours of unpaid labour a day.

The worldwide economic depression of the 1930s adversely affected the school, but the poverty of the time was alleviated by the production of the school farm and bakery. In the late 1930s, Wednesday was declared a non-instructional day at the school when students had to put in a full day's work in the industries, especially the farm. The farm thrived, producing vegetables and crops of all kinds. This helped to lay the groundwork for later years.

From humble beginnings, the institution has flourished. Today it is a complex housing a college, a primary school and a high school with an enrolment of approximately two-and-a-half thousand. Among the students, especially those in the college, are some from about 30 countries.

'To cultivate within students a wholesome respect for the dignity of labour' is one of the objectives of the West Indies College (Bulletin 1978-1980, p.7). Work, study and religion, according to the philosophy of WIC, combine to make up the whole person, because all three contribute to the cultivation of body, mind and spirit.

### Inputs

WIC spreads over 200 acres, most of which is given over to farming. Crop cultivation has declined in recent years, largely on account of heavy losses due to theft. A number of students, however, still obtain employment on the farm.

Self-sufficiency is a marked feature of the institution. WIC is able to meet 93% of its expenses from the community, the alumnae, and the sale of products from the farm and industries. The remaining 7% of expenses is met by the Governing Board.

WIC provides opportunities for students of Seventh Day Adventist faith whose families cannot afford to pay the cost of their education, to work their way through school right up to university level if they so desire. There are instances of students working full-time for a year on campus to save up to continue their high school or college education.

The current practice is that needy students who gain on-campus employment work up to four hours per day. Whatever money they earn is credited towards their account with the college. Such outstanding amounts of their account that students are unable to meet by their labour have to be provided by the students themselves, their relatives or by some other means. If a student leaves the College with credit to his account, the money can be transferred (within two years) to the account of an immediate relative. If this is not done within the two-year period, the credit reverts to the college.

Work may be assigned in the service departments (i.e. cafeteria, laundry, maintenance), in the administrative offices of the college, on the farm, or in the industries (i.e. college wood products, WESTICO products - bakery, food processing, cannery - the printing press, sheet metal shop and college store). The sheet metal shop makes beds, burglar bars, galvanized roofing etc. for use at the college, while WESTICO makes

cereals and canned products consisting of vegetable protein meals made from soya. These are distributed by two local distributors to all parts of the island, and have become standard products on supermarket shelves.

The college press is another thriving industry, printing Seventh Day Adventist materials for all parts of the world, as well as printing yearbooks for local schools and a variety of books, periodicals, calendars and stationery for use throughout the island as well as abroad.

### Process

The day begins early at WIC, usually at 5.30 a.m. followed by worship at 6.00 a.m. The high school students do academic studies between 7.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. during which time the college students man the services and industries. Between 12.45 p.m. and 5.00 p.m., the high school students do their work duties while the college students engage in their academic studies. This work-study routine is followed except on occasions when, for example, the college press has orders to fill which necessitate certain students working much later hours.

The writer interviewed past students of WIC, now employed full-time at WESTICO and in other industries, who recalled the exacting nature of the work-study programme in the high school which, by evening, left many of them quite exhausted. They expressed no regrets and were convinced that without the opportunity offered them by WIC they would not be where they were.

Obviously, over the years, WIC, has had its fair share of 'drop-outs'. A major reason given for this is that some students enter under the misapprehension that life at WIC is easy and are unprepared for the stamina, determination, self-less service and dedication that the college requires of them in order to succeed.

Though the use of student labour has advantages, there are also disadvantages. During the examination periods especially, a number of students request time off work to study or do not turn up for work at all. This inevitably leads to disruption in industrial activity. As a result, there has to be constant retraining of new student workers which does not facilitate optimum efficiency and productivity.

### Evaluation

The work-study programme at WIC is judged by top administrators at the college to be cost-effective. Undisputedly, institutions with work-study programmes like that of WIC do lessen the burden on a government's purse strings. For example, funds for a new library were raised by the alumni and by businesses and private citizens. Needless to say, too, the economic burden on parents is lessened by the work-study programme because it enables students to support themselves in fair measure.

What is striking about WIC's work-study programme is the variety of useful skills that people can attain in the process of their education - skills they can use later on when pursuing further academic studies. For instance, a well-known Member of Parliament worked in a printing press to help pay for his expenses while studying abroad. Medical students have worked in bakeries; theologians have done carpentry; and there are many other examples.

## The Jose Marti Secondary School

### Context

That the Jamaican government in the 1970s was bent on emphasising education and productive work is evident in the Five Year Education Plan (1978-83). The Plan envisages that throughout the five years of secondary education, each student will pursue 'Studies and work experience in at least one technical/vocational area.' Special emphasis was to be placed on attitudinal changes with a view to developing positive attitudes towards work:

To achieve the necessary attitudinal changes special efforts must be made to redress some of the imbalance chronic in the educational offerings. Thus, productive work will be given emphasis so that the school can be seen to be a functioning economic unit, with each student having a role in the productive process. Production in the education system is linked to overall national goals.(9)

Thus, one of the objectives of five years of secondary education at the time was 'developing and implementing a school production programme with accent on economic production and co-operative activities.'(10) The goals of the productive work programme were further delineated as follows:

The first goal of the productive work programme in secondary schools is self-sufficient. The programme will concentrate on producing foodstuff for the school cafeteria, as well as maintenance of the buildings, grounds, equipment and repair and replacement of furniture. In accordance with the second goal of producing a surplus, students and teachers will seek to produce and market food, goods and services in the community. The third goal is to influence parents and families to take part in food production programmes and other productive work programmes on a community basis.(11)

The school in which these goals were most effectively implemented was the Jose Marti Secondary School, a gift from the people of Cuba. It was built by a group of Cubans along with Jamaicans, and was almost fully equipped before it was handed over to the Jamaican government in 1976.

The Jose Marti Secondary School incorporated features of both the high school and new secondary school systems in Jamaican education in that it constituted an amalgam of academic work and practical activities. It was geared towards counteracting the stigma against academic failure and instilling in the students a feeling of self-worth together with the conviction that they all had something of value to offer the world. Involvement in all types of work necessary for the functioning of a community was geared to instilling in students an appreciation of the value to society of all persons, regardless of the type of work they do.

### Inputs

The design of the school building was modelled on that of the Cuban school in the countryside as described by Morales and Araujo.(12) It was 'people-oriented' in that it took into consideration the fact that the

students and some of the staff had to live there for most of the year. Its two blocks - one, the living area, the other, the study area - were linked together by an attractive recreation area. There were six dormitories for boys, four for girls (housing altogether 560 students) and two dormitories for staff members. There was also a health centre with male and female wards and facilities for medical and nursing staff. A large, spacious kitchen and a dining area completed the outlay.

The study area, apart from classrooms, contained three well equipped science laboratories, an industrial arts unit, and a home economics unit equipped with tables and other furniture made by the students. There were four staff rooms, a lecture theatre used for both study and recreation, and facilities for track, football, hockey, cricket, basketball, volleyball, and other sports.

The school was situated on 177 acres of farm land. The farm itself occupies 150 acres with piggery, dairy, poultry and agronomy units all managed by students with the help of supervisory staff. Fish ponds were constructed and an aquaculture programme began in the 1983-84 school year.

Although all the teachers in the school were trained, their only experience of a productive work programme was a visit they paid to Cuba to see how the programme worked in the Cuban educational system. The principal had a strong commitment to the ideology of education with production.

### Process

The curriculum was based on a work-study programme which combined work on the farm with academic studies. 'Work' consisted of typical everyday duties which a child or adult could be expected to do in a normal daily routine. Duty rosters were posted on the notice board identifying students who were responsible for doing such things as washing, cooking, cleaning, and serving in the dining area. Every three weeks the canteen and household duties were rotated. Groups of students were also assigned to whatever jobs that were necessary for the smooth running of the community, no distinction being made between boys and girls.

Students did agricultural work for two-and-a-half hours a day either from 7.30-10.00 a.m. or from 1.30-4.00 p.m. Times in between were spent on the usual subjects in the New Secondary school curriculum, but at Jose Marti there was an emphasis on the vocational subjects - home economics, accounting, farm management and business education.

When the school opened in January 1977, it was geared to a roll of 700 boarding and day students. For two terms it had 500 students, 150 of whom were day students and the rest boarders. In order to have island-wide representation, students were selected from every parish.

The admission of day students was eventually suspended for a number of reasons. First, there was the problem of transporting students to school by 6.30 a.m. Second, day students developed a habit of getting to school late on purpose to avoid doing their share of duties on the farm. This often led to feelings of resentment on the part of the boarders who had to

take on additional tasks. Third, differences in the academic performance of day and boarding students became apparent because day students had to travel considerable distances which reduced their study time while boarders had special times scheduled for 'prep' in the evenings. However, the factor which prevailed most against the government's attempt to maximise the use of the school, related to the structure of the school plant itself. The septic tank had been built for a maximum capacity of 500 students.

Much has happened since 1977. When the government lost the 1980 election, one of the first actions of the new government was to break diplomatic relations with Cuba. In the years that followed, pressure was put on the Jose Marti school, dubbed since its inception the 'Cuban school', to increase its intake and revert to taking in day students. The principal resigned at the end of the 1984-85 school year. His successor, who had taught at the school since its inception, served as principal for one year and then resigned. Neither could bear to see a school that had achieved considerable success at self-sufficiency disintegrating before their eyes for political motives.

### Evaluation

The principal, in an interview with the writer, described the advantages of the residential facilities at Jose Marti which eliminated the transportation problems that beleaguered many Jamaican school children in rural areas and overcame problems of irregular or late attendance, Friday absenteeism and the 'drop-outs' suffered by other schools. Furthermore, in the days when the productive work programme was functional, students were better off physically in terms of diet, nutrition and adequacy of living conditions, and emotionally in terms of the bonds and relationships that developed. For many students Jose Marti was more 'home' than their real homes, as witnessed by the reluctance of many to return home during the holiday periods.

Another advantage of the Jose Marti curriculum, pointed out by the principal, was that costs were low since the students did much of the work themselves. It was not that their labour was exploited since the students only produced enough for their own needs, but by generating a degree of self-sufficiency, much of the burden of keeping children at school was removed from the taxpayer.

The recurrent cost of maintaining the upkeep of the school premises was kept to a minimum by the students who, besides paying a maintenance fee each term, undertook whatever electrical, furniture and structural repairs they could. Furthermore, because the school was residential, the students developed a pride in it as their home and maintained vigilance for any act of vandalism.

An evaluation of the work-study programme in 1984 revealed that the school was operating under certain constraints, such as inadequate funding from the government and lack of equipment. This situation arose because of severe losses in the productive work programme experienced since 1980. Foodstuffs, cattle, fish and other produce were stolen, resulting in the loss of thousands of dollars which were needed to meet the recurrent costs of the programme. The study further revealed that the objectives of the programme were being met in terms of preparing students for the world of work, achieving some degree of self-sufficiency, and maintaining a balance

between the academic and the practical. However, the objective of encouraging young people to enter agricultural careers was not being realised.(14)

### The Role of the Principal

The success of the school's work-study programme was due in no small measure to the quality of leadership given by the first principal. He had a genuine belief in the ideal of self-reliance and an unquenchable thirst for trying out new ideas. The aquaculture project was a witness to this. He saw it not simply as a means for self-sufficiency in the school itself, but as a way of reaching out to the community. In addition, eggs were supplied at prices much below the market value, and the school dairy provided both the school and the immediate community with milk.

The principal envisaged that in time the various projects would yield such profits that the school would be able to generate its own budget. Had he continued in the school, and had the school received the support of the government, such an objective might well have been realised.

### The Rural Education and Agriculture Programme (REAP) in Belize

#### Context

Belize, with an area 8,866 square miles and a population of only 152,000, is a land of tremendous potential. Since the early 1970s the government has made special efforts to orientate its educational system to agriculture in an attempt to harness this potential. For example, it has decreed that secondary school syllabuses should be orientated towards those sciences which are relevant to the development of agriculture.

There are some 203 primary schools in Belize, about 78% of which are located in the rural areas. As in other ex-British Caribbean territories the primary school curriculum follows the British model of academic training mainly in mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, the arts and religion. Drop-out rates, however, are high, and for almost half of the pupils primary education is terminal. Between 40-50 per cent of the rural children do not go beyond the eighth grade.(16) Reasons given for this have ranged from the quality of instruction and poor educational facilities to the low level of teacher education. Only about 35% of Belize's primary school teachers are trained.

#### Rationale and Objectives

In a system that has for so long structured school curricula towards college and university education, only a very small percentage of rural children can be expected to overcome the economic and social constraints that block their aspirations. It is hardly surprising that many of them leave school ill-equipped for further education or for the world of work. In the hope of redressing the plight of these rural youths, the Belizean government in 1976 launched the Rural Education Agricultural Programme (REAP), 'a project that will create the attitudes and provide the skills necessary for young people to make meaningful contributions to the agricultural development of the country.' (Government of Belize, 1977, p.54).

The main objectives of REAP are:

- (a) Counteracting a perceived tendency for rural school-leavers to aspire to living and working in urban areas or abroad by encouraging, through REAP, a positive interest in and respect for rural careers, and a pride in living and working in rural communities.
- (b) Making it easier for children to learn traditional subjects by integrating REAP areas of study with these, to make a bridge between the children's rural experience and the academic subjects.
- (c) Making use of action-based teaching methods to encourage children to develop their own learning and problem-solving skills.
- (d) Encouraging better nutrition by including practical learning of how to grow and eat nutritious food (e.g. vegetables, small animals, poultry).

(Undated Ministry of Education and Sports document pp.3-4)

### Inputs

Each pilot school had an Outdoor Education Centre (ODEC) consisting of a new building, garden, crops, rabbit hutches, etc. for the practical application of learning in an agricultural setting. These ODECs were later replaced by more secure storage units. A number of these units were built during the 1981-1982 school year. Heifer Project International (HPI) supplied at cost, feeders, wire, chicks, baby rabbits and some feeds. CARE (the Co-operative American Relief Everywhere) supplied project schools with equipment, some agricultural supplies, transportation support and some financial assistance in the construction of the ODECs. Peace Corps volunteers served as both technical support/co-ordinators of the pilot schools and as lecturers in the REAP training programme. The Belize Ministry of Education had the responsibility for training teachers and principals in the pilot schools and supplying an education officer to manage the project.

Training of teachers was done largely through workshops, the length of which varied from two weeks to two days. Between July 1976 and February 1979 some ten workshops were held at which teachers were trained in the use of equipment and record-keeping. They were also given agricultural skill training and introduced to principles of curriculum development. Twenty similar workshops were held between July 1979 - June 1982.

### Programme Implementation: Process

REAP was instituted in 1976 by a unique intra-ministerial and international agency group comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sports, Social Welfare and Natural Resources (Agriculture), CARE, HPI, and the U.S. Peace Corps. This group later was formalised into the REAP Advisory Committee (REAP-AC).

REAP was conceived in three phases. During the pilot phase (July 1976 - June 1979) it was agreed that the international aid agencies would provide

the buildings, technical and material assistance, and logistical support. During this phase, REAP was piloted in eight primary schools in three of the six districts in Belize and in one secondary school. The latter, however, withdrew in 1977, largely on account of difficulties in articulating the REAP curriculum with its traditional academic curriculum. The main thrust of the district level phase (July 1979 - June 1982) was the expansion of REAP to all six districts in Belize with the gradual transfer of much of the technical and material assistance and logistical support from foreign agencies to the government ministries, community groups and service organisations. This transfer is expected to be completed sometime during the national level phase which began in July 1982 'and will be an on-going programme of undeterminable length.' (REAP in Belize - Ministry of Education, Belize publication, October 1983, p.6). During this last phase, REAP is expected to expand into as many rural primary schools as possible as well as into urban schools. One urban school joined the programme in 1984. In 1983, there were 51 REAP schools throughout Belize with 7,984 pupils involved in the programme (Overview of REAP, Ministry of Education, Belize publication, 21 November 1983, p.2).

The core of REAP consists of Learning Activity Packs (LAPs) which are outlines of lessons for appropriate grade levels in which teachers are given performance objectives related to a REAP area of study, suggested activities, instructional materials required and reading references. These LAPs are developed around nine areas of study: land and water; soil; health and nutrition; ecology; animals; village study; weather; plants; agricultural practices. These serve as the 'threads' to integrate the academic subjects - language arts, maths, social studies, science, art and craft, and music. Teachers are required by the Ministry of Education to plan their lessons and to blend these LAPs with their lesson plans. Students in REAP schools are required to spend 50 hours per school year doing supervised agricultural practice.

### Evaluation

Massey reports that various measures were taken to assess the learning outcomes of pupils in REAP schools in comparison with those at non-REAP schools but these proved unreliable. A comparison of the scores of REAP and non-REAP students in the maths and language arts portion of the primary school leaving examination, revealed significant differences between the scores of REAP and non-REAP students in the language arts tests. But the fact that the scores of REAP students were higher than those of non-REAP students could not be attributed to REAP.(17)

The objective of teaching children scientific problem-solving methods has not been achieved since none of the LAPs were designed with that end in mind. Furthermore, the formal integration of the REAP curriculum with the ongoing curriculum was not accomplished. A survey of parents, teachers and students from a representative sample of REAP schools revealed in excess of 90% positive responses to REAP. Parents said that the programme had influenced their children's diets, and that the new agricultural methods learnt could improve efficiency, thereby making farming a worthwhile occupation. All eight pilot schools were successful in growing vegetables and raising chickens. Seven made profits and the other broke even. Community involvement (e.g. in building of the ODECs) was 'impressive and worthwhile.'(18)

In terms of REAP students opting to work in rural areas, a survey was conducted of 148 school leavers from eight pilot schools and 11 non-REAP schools. These were the first group of school leavers to complete a REAP programme. The survey revealed that most REAP graduates wanted to proceed to further education in the Belize College of Technology. Almost all the girls from REAP schools wanted to pursue careers in secretarial and commercial fields, while most of the boys wanted training in a skilled manual trade. Out of 36 REAP students who responded to the item on the questionnaire, only three expressed interest in further studies in agriculture. When asked about their employment preferences, only two boys expressed interest in farming. The writers of the report (Ministry of Education, Belize, 1982) said, 'This is perhaps a disappointing finding in a view of the hopes that a REAP education might encourage more young people to move into careers in this field.' (p.11)

REAP, however, may have had some influence on attitudes towards the community. More REAP than non-REAP school-leavers were involved in the community and had some project going (e.g. poultry-raising, bee-keeping).

A study by Edmond (19) which investigated the influence of REAP on attitudes to agriculture and rural employment, revealed no significant difference between students in REAP and non-REAP schools. However, students and teachers in REAP schools considered the programme valuable in helping families to prepare better diets and teaching the young how to become self-employed. Edmond also found that of a random sampling of REAP students, 80% had remained in rural Belize. Opportunities for rural employment, however, were limited, and some of the students had had to resort to such occupations as child care. The main problems experienced by students in REAP schools were lack of proper clothing for doing agricultural work, scarcity of tools and equipment, inadequate cleansing facilities, poor first aid provision, and theft of crops.

## Overview

Six of the 9 countries responding to question 2 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) said that work experience on school premises is organised mainly in practical subjects, as in the case of the study of woodwork in Lesotho schools. But which practical subjects lend themselves best to work experience of this nature? Typical responses were:

Technical skills e.g. carpentry, masonry, plumbing - Tanzania, Botswana

Agriculture - Tanzania, India

Any subject, but especially practical subjects like woodwork, metalwork, automechanics, building construction - Mauritius

Home economics, industrial arts, agricultural science - Western Samoa

Industrial arts, carpentry, home economics, motor mechanics, agriculture, business studies - Guyana

Interestingly, Western Samoa also identified 'cultural studies' and 'language arts - English and Samoan' as practical subjects and 'science and biology' and 'environmental studies' were identified likewise by India.

In terms of the ways in which each subject incorporates work experience into pupils' learning, the responses were not very specific. Nevertheless, some indication was given by Guyana:

In Industrial Arts pupils construct school furniture and other articles which prepare them for the experience of the world of work. Catering for mass games and other social functions do likewise for students of Home Economics.

This trend is also evident in a number of secondary schools in Jamaica where in industrial arts classes students make school furniture and do electrical repairs and similar types of work in the wider community. Earnings from such services are put back into school projects.

As has become evident from the case studies, in-school work experience has a long history, but not many programmes have survived as long as the West Indies College. Why they were discontinued is instructive. Brizan,(20) for example, describes the Bernadette Bailey Secondary School which was established in Grenada in 1980. Work-study, he tells us, is the guiding principle of the school but no indication is given of how it was implemented in practice. Maurice Bishop, the late Prime Minister of Grenada, once said that 'Education and production are inextricably linked and in fact productive work is the only real foundation of true knowledge.'(21) But with his death, that thrust in the educational system came to an end. In the late 1960s Knox College, an elite, partly boarding high school in Jamaica, was hailed as 'a centre of education innovation.'(22) In those days it operated a co-operative work programme which required students to spend between 8-15 hours a week on the school farm or in work centres engaged in food production, food processing, food preparation and serving, laundering, maintenance and construction. Thirty of the college's 100 acres of land were intensively developed for farming and livestock rearing. A small food processing plant was established with facilities for slaughtering livestock, processing milk, making baked products and storing vegetables and fruits. The work programme, which sought to eradicate contempt for work, met with the same sort of negative attitudes on the part of students and their parents as Shanks identified in Zambia. A main reason for its eventual collapse was parental resistance to their children having to work on the farm and doing the sorts of duties which maids and gardeners were employed to do at home. However, the construction and maintenance work centre had a far-reaching impact on the school community. Classrooms, office furniture, staff housing and other buildings are still monuments to the achievement of students who worked in that centre.

Although the evaluation of in-school work experience programmes - as in the case of all innovations - tends to be weak or non-existent, there is sufficient evidence to lead to the reasonable conclusion that such programmes do achieve a blend of the practical with the academic in secondary school curricula. Research has revealed the positive impact of certain programmes (e.g. in terms of influencing the diet of the children and their families as in the case of the REAP programme in Belize). There is no doubt that leadership in the institution is a crucial factor. However, it has to be noted that some in-school work experience programmes have been discontinued not because of a failure to achieve objectives or any inherent weakness in their conception, but largely for political reasons.

## Summary of Main Points

1. In-school work experience programmes often meet with initial difficulties on account of lack of adequate inputs such as inadequate land space for agricultural programmes; inadequate water supply, especially in urban areas; inadequate finance to purchase foodstuff, tools, machinery, etc; and lack of trained personnel to implement programmes effectively.
2. The success of some in-school work experience is impeded by negative attitudes on the part of students and their parents towards practical/manual work.
3. Theft of produce on an excessive scale has thwarted the success of some in-school work experience programmes.
4. There is a danger of the educational goals of a school being sacrificed for the economic goals of production.
5. The instructional methodology employed often does not foster the achievement of ultimate goals. For example, self-reliance as an ultimate goal can hardly be achieved in situations where the form of instruction is didactic and teacher-centred.
6. Leadership in the institution is crucially important if an in-school work experience programme is to succeed.
7. Evaluations of in-school work experience tend to be weak or non-existent. Nevertheless, some evidence exists that these programmes have succeeded in creating a balance between the academic and the practical in-schools' curricula; enabling schools to become at least partially self-sufficient; and influencing the lives of children and their families (e.g. in their diet).
8. Some in-school work experience programmes are discontinued for political motives.

## CHAPTER 4: WORK EXPERIENCE OFF SCHOOL PREMISES: CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, case studies will be presented of work experience which involves students in community or voluntary services or on-the-job experience in industry or business enterprises. Examples will be drawn from the Caribbean, Australia and England.

In presenting these case studies, the context will be briefly highlighted, followed by an elucidation of the objectives of the particular programme. The structure and organisation of the programme will be then described. Evaluations of the programmes are also given, in some cases drawing on several sources.

The last part of the chapter takes the form of an overview based on the case studies and data from the questionnaire on work experience. It gives a general picture of practices in Commonwealth countries in relation to the approach to work experience; the patterns of organisation; what say students have in their work experience placements; whether or not they are paid for work done; and the sort of problems they encounter.

### Jamaica's Work Experience Programme

#### Context

Although in the colonial era there was an awareness of the need to link education more closely with production, in the 1970s politicians and educators were still insisting that the Jamaican education system did not reflect a realistic balance between the needs of economic development and the actual training provided. The Prime Minister at the time, for example, spoke of the need to 'train a population that can find employment and economic satisfaction' - a task which necessitated 'a radical restructuring of the training content of the system.'<sup>(1)</sup>

This restructuring was brought about in some measure in 1974 when the government extended junior secondary education by two years with the introduction of the grade 10-11 programme. This is practical and vocational in orientation and geared to equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for coping with the realities of everyday living. An integral part of this further training is the Work Experience Programme (WEP).

#### Objectives of the WEP

The WEP releases grade 11 students between 16-17 years of age from school for approximately 21 days to get experience in the world of work. These

students are placed in work stations or agencies in the public and private sectors to sample a realistic employment situation linked as closely as possible to their vocational areas of study.

The objectives of the WEP are identified as follows:

- (a) To create in the student a positive self-concept, and a positive attitude toward others, school and work by providing a meaningful and relevant learning experience.
- (b) To foster in the student an understanding of the importance of developing acceptable work habits, good grooming and the need for self discipline.
- (c) To provide practical experience in a work setting that enables the student to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for employment.
- (d) To facilitate the transition between school and employment by enabling the student to continue school and at the same time receive supervised training in a real work situation.
- (e) To enhance greater student awareness of the complexities and importance of inter-personal relationships on the job.
- (f) To enable the student to enter the world of work with an increased measure of competence.
- (g) To provide the student with increased opportunities to enter an occupation related to his/her vocational areas of study.
- (h) To bridge the gaps between the school and the working community.(2)

#### Structure and organisation of the WEP

Each school participating in the WEP has at least one work experience teacher appointed to administer the programme in terms of locating work stations, liaising with employers, placing students for work experience and supervising them while they are at their work stations. Larger schools may have two work experience teachers.

While students are on work experience, they come under the supervision of the employer or the work station supervisor. The work experience teacher is expected to monitor the students' activities, performance and progress at the work stations by making at least one visit a week to the work stations and writing up a final report. In selecting a work station, the work experience teacher has to consider:

- (a) Whether it is located near the school or is at least accessible by available transportation at a reasonable cost.
- (b) Whether the students' work experience may lead to permanent employment.
- (c) Whether the work station offers opportunities for meaningful and relevant work experience and for developing the students' abilities.

Students are given pre-work experience orientation by guidance counsellors who are responsible for the dissemination of career information and for the development of career awareness on the part of the students. Counsellors are expected to help ensure that students' choices of vocational areas are sound. Proper guidance on their part should help alleviate or perhaps eliminate the problems caused by students being placed in vocational areas in which they have no interest.

### Evaluation

Studies of Jamaica's work experience programme (3) have revealed that it helps students to develop good work habits, gives them experience of the working world, and succeeds in training many students in useful skills. However, it falls short in terms of enabling students to find out if they have made the correct vocational choices because there are insufficient workplaces to enable students to sample a variety of jobs.

There are a number of constraints on the achievements of objectives set for the WEP. Many students complained of having to do menial tasks like cleaning and sweeping up offices or factories instead of getting on with the job in which they were supposed to be getting experience. Furthermore, the work stations to which some of them were attached did not enable them to work in areas related to their vocational training. Inadequate supervision at the work station did not facilitate students in getting full benefit from their work experience. In rural Jamaica, the greatest difficulty that students on work experience had was financial embarrassment. Since they were not paid while doing work experience, they had difficulty in finding money to buy lunch or pay the cost of transportation to work. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that their work stations were located several miles from their homes.

One of the WEP objectives is that of facilitating entry to an occupation related to the students' area of vocational choice. But to what extent do students select careers related to their area of vocational training? One study(4) has shown that the majority of students in all vocational areas except agriculture opted for careers in their vocational areas (see Table 3). Agriculture is viewed by secondary level students and their teachers as a course for low achievers, and most agriculture students seek white collar jobs in agriculture or choose careers unrelated to agriculture.(5)

Obtaining employment in rural areas is also problematic. Of a random sample of 48 grade 11 school leavers in the 1979-80 academic year, for example, only 14 had obtained employment in their vocational areas (Mattis 1981). Drawing on the same study, Table 4 shows the extent to which employers believed that the schools had prepared students in their vocational areas and in desirable work habits. Their views on the students' leadership qualities and the extent to which they were qualified for ready employment are also shown.

The majority of employers felt that the students were lacking in the skill competence necessary for ready employment - a view supported by 86% of their vocational teachers. Both employers and vocational teachers, however, felt that the students had developed the sorts of behaviours (punctuality, co-operation, willingness to take orders etc), which were necessary at the workplace. Employers in the garment industry, large electrical firms and some other areas of business, considered that

TABLE 3: Percentage distribution of Grade 11 Students' Job Aspirations in relation to their area of vocational training (New Secondary Schools in Jamaica)

NO. OF STUDENTS	VOCATIONAL AREAS	RELATED JOB ASPIRATIONS		UNRELATED JOB ASPIRATIONS	
		FREQUENCY	%	FREQUENCY	%
10	Agriculture	4	40	6	60
6	Business Education	5	83	1	17
9	Carpentry	8	89	1	11
9	Child Care	6	67	3	33
9	Cookery & Nutrition	7	78	2	22
7	Electrical Installation	7	100	-	0
10	Textiles & Clothing	8	80	2	20
60	TOTAL	45	75%	15	25%

TABLE 4: Frequency and Percentage of Positive and Negative Responses of Jamaican Employers in relation to Grade 11 Students' Preparedness for Employment

CHARACTERISTICS FOR EMPLOYMENT	YES		NO	
	F	%	F	%
Skill Competence	4	29	10	71
Favourable work behaviour	9	64	5	36
Qualification for a job	7	43	8	57
Leadership qualities	7	50	7	50

students were inadequately prepared because most of them were unable to operate modern industrial equipment. Interestingly too, most employers revealed that they only considered students to be qualified for a job if they possessed passes at GCE 'O' level - a qualification for which they were not being prepared. Reasons given by vocational subject teachers why students could not be adequately prepared for ready employment included lack of finance, insufficient supply of materials and equipment, their own inadequacies in preparing students in the vocational areas, lack of time in the WEP and the outdatedness of the machines and other equipment in the schools.

## Guyana's Work-Study Programme

### Context

The inadequacy of labour statistics makes it difficult to quantify the level of unemployment amongst Guyanese youth between the ages of 14-19, but Table 5 can be used as a crude indication. The number of young people leaving schools with skills for employment are very few (less than 5% in 1982-3). At the same time, there is a high level of unemployment - as much as 29% in 1982-3. 'The extent of youth unemployment in Guyana would be negligible if attitudes of many young people were attuned to accepting the employment opportunities available.'<sup>(6)</sup> It appears that instead of accepting the opportunities available, many young people seek ways of emigrating.

TABLE 5: Classification of School Leavers in Guyana, 1982-83

CATEGORIES	1982-83
<u>For Employment:</u>	
a. Skilled	976
b. Unskilled	3,488
Emigrated	1,401
Unemployed	5,802
Died	40
Cannot be accounted for	8,689
TOTAL SCHOOL LEAVERS	20,272

SOURCE: Planning & Research Unit, Ministry of Education, 1985

The Guyanese government, however, has made concerted efforts to tackle the problem of employment by creating stronger links between the world of work and the school. The establishment of the community high school programme, for example, was directed towards this end. This programme aims at providing academic and pre-vocational training for a range of occupational skills necessary for gainful employment. The work-study programme initiated in two pilot community high schools underscores this objective. This programme seeks to 'link the world of study with the world of work with a circular approach which interacts with school activities and on-the-job experience. This interaction should help the student to acquire skills, knowledge and desirable attitudes while performing tasks in real life situations, thus ensuring an easier transition to the world of work.'(7)

### Objectives of Work-Study

Work-study is a co-operative undertaking by which students in their ultimate or penultimate year in community high schools and multilateral schools are attached for specific periods to an industry or business enterprise. There is also a special programme for students who have graduated from school a year and under.

The objectives of work-study are:

- (a) To provide a smooth transition from school to the work environment for the student.
- (b) To enable students to relate their classroom activity to those conducted in the work environment, thereby narrowing the gap between the theoretical and practical aspects of work.
- (c) To provide students with the opportunity to test their interest in and suitability for the occupation(s) they experience.
- (d) To inculcate in students the behaviours desirable in a work setting (e.g. respect for authority, working well with fellow workers, being punctual).
- (e) To give the school and industry/commerce an opportunity to understand how each other functions, thereby facilitating a closer co-ordination of the programmes of these two agencies.(8)

### Structure and Organisation of Work-Study

Before students go out on work-study attachments, representatives of the Work-Study Unit in the Ministry of Education meet with representatives of the business enterprise or industry. They identify areas of involvement, time for attendance and duration of attachment, and discuss general work conditions. A programme of work is drawn up which becomes a kind of syllabus to be followed by trainers, students and teachers. With the assistance of specialist and guidance teachers, the principal of the school identifies students for the various placements. An application form for work-study (Appendix C) and a National Insurance form has to be completed by each student. An orientation session is then held to outline the objectives of the programme and individual responsibilities. This

Work-study attachments are for varying periods. Some are arranged for 4-8 weeks on a full time or block period basis. Others are organised for between 6-12 weeks on a day release basis with a maximum of two days a week. Still others are for between 3-6 months (one day a week). They take place at various times throughout the school year. Day release attachments, for example, take place during term time, while 8-12 week block period attachments usually occur during August. Other block periods are arranged during the Christmas and Easter vacations.

While on a work-study attachment, regular checks are made by the work-study officer and teachers who evaluate the students' work activities using prescribed forms. A review is made at the mid-way point of the attachment. At the end of the attachment, the work-study officer organises a de-briefing session attended by students, parents/guardians, representatives of management, and representatives of the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture. Its primary purpose is to identify attitudes acquired, other outcomes, and the strengths and weaknesses of the particular attachment.

Head teachers and pre-vocational education teachers play an important role in the work-study programme. They are looked on as 'the source of motivation, leadership by example and the agent to ensure that the practical work is really a complement of the students' academic work.'<sup>(9)</sup> They also assist in preparing students for the work environment by giving them an understanding of what a particular career entails, of the qualifications needed to secure a particular job, the wages or salary appropriate for a particular job, and the scope for promotional opportunities. In addition, they have to ensure that parents understand and accept the importance of the programme, and they are required to maintain records of the students' practical performance and keep them informed of their levels of achievement.

### Evaluation

A follow-up study of the first set of graduates of the Beterverwagting Community High School who had done work-study attachments revealed the following:

- (a) Almost as many graduates were in full-time employment as were unemployed.
- (b) Some employers did not consider the community high school diploma as adequate certification for a job.
- (c) Over 93% of the graduates had high job satisfaction.
- (d) Over 80% of the employers considered that the graduates were competent, willing and displayed enthusiasm on the job.
- (e) Students in certain vocational areas (e.g. industrial arts) found jobs related to skills learnt in vocational training, but others in such areas as home economics and agriculture had jobs unrelated to their area of vocational training.<sup>(10)</sup>

Through its own on-going assessment, the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture has identified the following ways in which problems encountered in the work-study programme can be solved.

(a) The development of an adequate mechanism to maintain the effectiveness of both work-study education and industrial arts programmes.

(b) The need to involve more local craftsmen and technicians in the teaching of skills within the school system in order to minimise the lack of teachers with the technical competence for vocational skills training.

(c) The need to win greater levels of acceptance of graduates by institutions and employers.

(d) Proper placement of graduates and the development of ways to channel their inventiveness toward the creation of employment for themselves.(11)

## Work Experience in Australian Secondary Schools

### Context

High unemployment among Australian youth since 1974 has triggered a concern about the transition from school to work and stimulated state governments to introduce measures to deal with the situation. There has been an upsurge in careers education, careers guidance and other activities directly or indirectly related to improving young people's chances to enter the world of work and equip them better for it. To this end, work experience programmes are widely used in Australia.

Most work experience programmes in Australian secondary schools involve the placement of students in work stations for periods of between five to 15 days. Normally, students are involved in clerical work, technical, trades, sales or unskilled work in offices, workshops, stores and small factories. In some schools the programme is largely a separate entity; in others it is integrated with the curriculum. Thus, a work experience can provide an opportunity for study of topics of importance in the regular maths, science or social studies curricula. In Western Australia, for example, science teachers are given guidance on how work experience can be used to study various aspects of science.(12) In other parts of Australia, work experience may be one aspect of a more broadly based curriculum within the area of transition education. Cole(13) gives an example of this in a South Australian high school which has a 'transition class' consisting of a six-week 'crash course' for year 10 students leaving school during the year. Many of these students are designated 'low achievers'. They are withdrawn from their normal classes and admitted to the transition class on a full-time basis. The course content includes career guidance, work experience, communication skills, basic maths, home management/maintenance, financial management, motor maintenance, and typing. Generally speaking, 'the number of schools that have work experience programmes which are well integrated with the regular core curriculum or even with some specialised curriculum separate from transition education programs remains quite small.'(14)

## Objectives of Work Experience Programmes

Cole(15) identifies the following as the objectives most commonly described by work experience co-ordinators when reporting on their programmes:

- (a) To break down the barriers between school and work.
- (b) To give students knowledge of a variety of employment fields.
- (c) To help students gain a greater knowledge of themselves, thereby enabling them to make a more realistic assessment of their abilities.
- (d) To provide new aspirations for the less motivated.
- (e) To heighten awareness of the role education plays in future vocational pursuits.
- (f) To involve both parents and employers in the school to work transition.

## Structure and Organisation of Work Experience

In Tasmania and Western Australia, support for local school work experience programmes is provided at the state level. The Tasmanian schools work through a central co-ordinating body, the Work Experience Advisory Committee, and a State Co-ordinator. A calendar of work experience, prepared on information submitted by state and independent schools, enables the timing of programmes to be co-ordinated. An advantage of this arrangement is that centrally collated computer based information becomes available to the schools. They can get all pertinent data on work experience programmes and the types of jobs available.

The work experience programmes in government senior high schools in Western Australia are conducted by a youth education officer. This officer has at his/her disposal the facilities and resources of the Youth Education Branch of the Education Department of Western Australia as well as assistance from three state-level work experience co-ordinators. Curriculum development and materials production, the conduct of a state-wide advisory service, and the organisation of an in-service teacher development programme are the main activities of these co-ordinators. They also edit a newsletter on work experience and maintain a directory of work experience placements. The youth education officer is usually a full-time teacher attached to a school to work in both the school and the community. The conduct of personal development courses, outdoor education activities, recreational programmes, community youth work, counselling for recent school leavers, and employment-oriented transition education including work experience, career education and factory visits, constitute the major tasks of the youth education officer.

In the Tasmanian state high schools the work experience co-ordinator is typically a member of the regular teaching staff. The position is held for a period of two to three years, and is rotated among staff members as it is not a promotional post.

Individual schools provide a variety of resources which contribute to the operation of their work experience programmes. These include part of the time of a typist, office space, stationery, postage and telephone facilities.

Schools differ in their distribution of the days on placement and the number of students sent on work experience at any one time. Some operate a 'block release' whereby a complete class of students is away at the same time and normal lessons are suspended. Others operate a 'rolling' programme with only a few students being away at one time and normal lessons continue.

Straton and Murray(16) present case studies of the work experience programmes of four Australian high schools which show the different ways in which these programmes are organised. One school operated a 'rolling' WEP which involved the job placement of a small number of year 10 students each week, usually for a two-week period, while the remaining students continued their normal school work. The other three schools operated their WEP on a 'block release' basis. At one, all the students in Year 10 were away from school during the same one-week period. At another, the classes were split into two separate blocks with each block doing work experience at different times during the second term. In the fourth, the WEP was organised in two separate blocks with the students participating for one week in either the first or second term.

The type and amount of preparation for work experience differed between the four case study schools. At one school, the youth education officer was allotted four periods of English class time in which to prepare students for work experience. At another, ten periods of social studies class time were made available to the programme co-ordinator to conduct a career education course as preparation for work experience. At the third school, the WEP formed part of a wider course which examined the social science aspects of work and career planning. Students were encouraged to explore relationships between their interests, abilities and possible career choices, and to examine practical aspects of the transition from school to work including such things as writing letters of application for work and the expectations of employers in selection interviews. At the fourth school, the students were briefed on their work experience about a week before it began. The work experience co-ordinator spoke about the behaviour expected of them and their obligations to the school. They were also shown films on industrial safety and were given written information on dress, work times and safety precautions at the workplace.

During their work experience, students are asked to keep a diary in which they record details of their placement, their employer and an interview held prior to work experience, and answer questions about the organisation of work, safety and workers' compensation, payment, unions, and their own opinions about work in that field. After completing their work experience, the students are expected to record information about the school subjects and the skills required for that type of work. In this 'work experience diary' produced by the Education Department of Western Australia, employers are also requested to complete an evaluation of the students' performance.

## Evaluation

An assessment of work experience in terms of their outcomes for students revealed the following:

- (a) Work experience programmes have some influence on students in areas which are judged to be related to their employability. For example, after going on work experience, students indicated an awareness of several aspects of work which had been little in evidence beforehand (e.g. the notion of personal responsibility at work, the importance of employer-employee relationships). Straton and Murray conclude that the students 'have a more mature view of work and appropriate work related behaviour after work experience.'(17)
- (b) Work experience assists students to gain a better understanding of the process of making a career choice and helps them in making a decision about what particular career to pursue.
- (c) Some students think that work experience contributes to their social development by building up their self-confidence and self-esteem.

With respect to the educational aspects of work experience, Straton and Murray's study revealed the following:

- (a) Teachers in the four case study schools were generally supportive of their school's WEP. Some questioned the value of the WEP for more able students given the time lost from their academic studies.
- (b) Most teachers felt that one or two weeks was an appropriate length for work experience. Many saw the need for two periods, the first coming early enough to enable students to make subject changes as a result of the experience.
- (c) In the schools that operated the 'block release' WEP, a substantial proportion of the teachers visited the students at their work stations. Improved teacher-student relationships, a fuller appreciation of students' abilities and personality, and a better understanding of the world of work by the teachers leading to increased relevance in their teaching, were among the benefits which resulted from such visits.
- (d) In the school that operated a 'rolling' WEP, all the students were visited by the work experience co-ordinator only. Since the teachers were not given release from their normal duties, the benefits from involvement as noted in (c) were lost. The work experience co-ordinator, however, was able to build up good relationships with employers over the years.
- (e) A number of teachers indicated that certain units in their syllabus were relevant to work experience, but a closer co-operation between teachers and the work experience co-ordinator was essential if integration of work experience with the regular school curriculum was to take place.
- (f) Although an adequate amount of time was devoted to the preparation of the students in most schools, 'little was done in terms

of co-ordinated, systematic and personally and educationally significant follow-up to their work experience.'(18)

(g) Where a comprehensive transition education programme is operating in a school, students are more likely to receive a substantial amount of useful information about jobs and careers. This could help in overcoming job stereotyping in the occupational preferences of students both by gender and by family occupational status.

In terms of employers and work experience placements, the following emerged from the study by Straton and Murray:

(a) Procedures for informing employers of the purposes of the schools' work experience programmes, what was expected of them, including their evaluation of students at the workplace often proved ineffective.

(b) Employers generally took a narrow view of work experience seeing it largely as job sampling. Thus they tended to see their role as that of helping students to learn about a particular job.

(c) A small percentage of employers said they used the student as an extra staff member or voluntary worker at busy times or as cheap labour.

(d) In general, students were able to gain direct experience of the type of work undertaken at their workplace, but some students were reduced to doing the more menial tasks (e.g. cleaning up and running errands).

(e) Students reported that they had learnt a great deal about the job itself, the working conditions and the kinds of skills and abilities needed for the particular job. However, they felt that they had learnt little about the industrial or social aspects of work including how unions operate, the effects of modern technology, unemployment and the relative positions of men and women in a particular occupation.

## School-based Work Experience Programmes in Britain

### Context

Thousands of jobs have disappeared in the whirlpool of economic changes that have beset European countries, setting adrift large numbers of school leavers who languish in the unemployment queues. Thus 'for the first time, the young generation of Europe find the doors of a working career closed, because of a mismatch of their education and training with the skill needs of the new and emerging technologies.'(19) Jobs in the manufacturing sector have declined, and the expanding service sector has not generated sufficient employment to absorb the newcomers on the labour market. Whereas the importance of investments designed to create more jobs is acknowledged, together with the fact that steady economic growth is the only way to reduce the levels of unemployment, it is also recognised that policies focused on job creation should be supported by co-ordinated labour market, education and training policies:

It is essential to strengthen the existing weak links between school and work and industry, through accurate vocational guidance and counselling services at all states of education....(20)

The use of work experience programmes is one way in which European countries have sought to strengthen the weak links between school and work.

Any student in England and Wales who is in the last year of compulsory schooling is eligible to go on work experience. In effect this age group is from 15 to 19. Over a third of secondary schools in England and Wales(21) run work-experience schemes for their students. Thus some 15% of young people leaving school at age 16 have done work experience. With the growth of vocational courses which require a period of industrial experience, increasing numbers of 16-19 year olds are participating in work experience programmes. All the courses in the Technical Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), involving some 14 Local Education Authorities, place a strong emphasis on work experience.

Walton,(22) from a sample of 4,284 British secondary schools, found that 33% of the pupils participated in work experience programmes. Seventy three of the areas sampled organise these programmes on a block release basis; 53 utilised a day release scheme (i.e. half-day to three days a week); while 100 utilised both block and day release.

#### Objectives of WEP

The Trade Union Council's guidelines on work experience for school pupils(23) stress the importance of seeing work experience as one of the most effective ways of giving young people an understanding of industrial life. A case study written by a teacher who co-ordinated the work experience programme in her school emphasised that 'the main objective is not to place the pupils in situations which could be regarded as vocational training, but to ensure that they see a variety of activities in order to gain an understanding of the way of life involved in several occupations.'(24)

Watts(25) categorises the objectives of WEP in British schools as follows:

- (a) Motivational (e.g. 'to enable aspects of the school's curriculum to become more meaningful and significant to the young person').
- (b) Social-educational (e.g. 'to develop skills in applying for a job').
- (c) Vocational (e.g. 'to orientate young people to the differences between school and work'; to broaden their knowledge of the range of occupations that could be chosen').
- (d) Anticipatory (e.g. 'to enable the young to experience some of the stress and strains of work so they know what to expect').

(e) Placing (e.g. 'to enable the young to get permanent jobs').

(f) Custodial (e.g. 'to provide an alternative for truants').

Most studies on work experience in British schools stress that the school-based WEP is not geared to vocational training. Vocational training, however, is the emphasis of the Manpower Services Commission's Youth Training Scheme (YTS) which offers every 16-year-old school leaver a one-year traineeship part of which involves work experience on employers' premises. School-based work experience is primarily an educational activity and may stress the need to make the experience an integral part of the broader curriculum. For example, it has been advocated that teachers should use work experience 'to help develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that form part of their subject.'(26)

#### Structure and Organisation of WEP

There is considerable variation in the way in which individual schools structure and organise their work experience programmes. Typically, in schools that have their own schemes,(27) the WEP is conducted by one or two teachers who have the task of canvassing new employers, and informing all employers of the objectives of work experience, students' eligibility, hours of work, safety and insurance needs. They also have to seek parental consent and interview students for placements as well as give them guidance on acceptable behaviour at the workplace. They also have to visit every student while on work experience, check on students' and employers' report forms on completion of placements and follow up on any queries from the students, their parents or the employers.

Length of placements also vary. Some schools operate a block system for one week in which all participating students do work experience in the same week. Others operate a half-day placement over a period of about nine months. Project Trident, however, insists on placements for a continuous period of three weeks:

We believe that a block period of three weeks is the minimum needed for a young person of this age to settle into a strange environment, make proper working relationships with fellow workers and supervisors, learn to do a worthwhile job adequately, accept the routines and disciplines of the workplace, and enjoy a full sense of achievement in being a productive and responsible member of a working group.(28)

With the increasing numbers of young people participating in work experience programmes, competition for placements poses a problem. One way of alleviating this is through a system of all-year allocation of places which enables one-week experience placement to be used by different schools throughout the year. Usually this involves some central organisation to co-ordinate planning by individual schools. Industrial liaison officers fill this role, making arrangements with industrial, commercial and service employers for programmed schemes. Through discussion, they reach agreement with the providers on the content, administrative arrangements, timing, number of pupils, working conditions etc. Once a full programme of schemes has been arrived at for the term or year, the industrial liaison officers distribute the work experience

opportunities as equitably as possible between the schools within their Local Education Authority. In this they are assisted by careers officers who have the responsibility to make the necessary contacts with the schools. Every effort is made to ensure that the wishes of each school are reflected as fully as possible in the sharing of places. Each school has the task of selecting suitable students for each scheme, and for giving them adequate preparation for work experience.

While on work experience, 'a visit by an interested teacher is encouraged'(29) and each student reports the experience in a pupil report. A debriefing session on return to school usually involves a sharing of experience with others in the class, drawing on information in pupil reports. The pupil reports are eventually returned to the industrial liaison officer who uses the information in reviewing the particular area of work experience. Employers reports are used likewise. These are passed, via the appropriate careers officers, to the schools for subsequent discussion with the students.

### Evaluation

In assessing how young people view work experience, Watts drew on student essays and taped interviews made available by Project Trident. That work experience had some motivational effect on the youngsters was evident. The necessity to work hard to obtain qualifications that employers looked for in applicants for a job was evident in the following comment made by one student:

When we went back to school I was more conscious of the fact that if I didn't do well in my exams I just wouldn't get anywhere when I went into the working field. Even to have any kind of job some qualifications are always needed....(30)

Students also observed how work experience developed their self-confidence, improved their communication with people of different ages, and made them conscious of how hard people have to work to make a living. Some reported 'feeling more adult' as a result of the experience, and learning to rely more on themselves.

Walton's study(31) revealed that 80% of the students reported having enjoyed work experience with 61% underscoring that the purpose of work experience was predominantly educational and not geared for recruitment for employment. Some 40% of these youngsters felt that work experience had a definite effect on their career choice. Neglect of safety instructions in the school and at the workplace, insufficient visits by teachers while on work experience were weaknesses identified by these students. In the study by Hitchcock,(32) loss of good employers due to poor attendance at work by students, the cost of travel if the school does not reimburse fares, the difficulty of providing realistic work experience for the brighter students, and the heavy workload of the teacher responsible for the work experience programme, were among the weaknesses of the WEP.

What constitutes an adequate length of work experience placement remains a debatable issue, despite Project Trident's insistence on three weeks. Following an evaluation of its WEP, Redborne Upper School recommended an extension from one to two weeks placement (Fitzgerald et al 1984). There

is a danger, it is argued, that if students are required to participate in multiple work experience placements in a short space of time, they would be pressed in the direction of work observation rather than direct work experience (Watts 1980).

How successful are centrally organised work experience schemes? Very successful, according to Cope, himself an industrial liaison officer in Cleveland. All secondary schools in that county, he reports, participate in the work experience schemes, although a few reject the usefulness of work experience 'mainly on the grounds that any activity that distracts the pupil even temporarily from total concentration on preparation for examinations is irrelevant, if not harmful, to the pupils' interest.'(33) The response of the overwhelming majority of the students is favourable. They see work experience largely as an opportunity to test their interest in an area for possible future employment. Their main complaints are that they receive no pay, that they have to meet cost of public transport, and that the work experience does not last long enough. Cope's study also revealed satisfaction on the part of employers with work experience. Although providers acknowledge the educational basis of work experience, there is a strong tendency for them to view the students as future employees. Lack of pupil preparedness, late notification of students for placements, late changes of placements, and unfilled places were amongst the commonest complaints of providers.

## Overview

### Approach to Work Experience

The British Education (Work Experience) Act of 1973, states:

The enactments relating to the prohibition or regulation of the employment of children shall not apply to the employment of a child in his last year of compulsory schooling where the employment is in pursuance of arrangements made or approved by the local education authority with a view to providing him with work experience as part of his education.(34)

Table 6 underscores the fact that Commonwealth countries generally see work experience primarily as an educational activity. Approaches to work experience vary not only from country to country but within individual countries. In Britain, work experience as an educational activity is sanctioned at national level, but approaches vary from one Local Education Authority (LEA) to another and practices differ between schools within an LEA. Under the Democratic Socialist Government of Jamaica, work experience was determined by national policy as being of value to the nation but a specific programme was planned by government only for secondary schools where intake was from the lower social classes and considered 'low achievers'. The prestigious high schools were left free to decide whether they wanted to implement work experience programmes or not. In New Zealand, work experience units in state secondary schools cater for the needs of students of very limited academic ability during their first two years of secondary schooling. Their programmes of study are specially devised for non-achievers, and the work experience they have is normally in places of work where the levels of skills are not high. These units receive special funding in terms of teaching entitlement, of

TABLE 6: Approaches to Work in Commonwealth Secondary Schools

APPROACH	COUNTRIES
Work experience determined by national policy as of value to the nation	Australia, India, Guyana, Tanzania, Seychelles, Papua New Guinea
Work experience chosen by pupils on a voluntary basis	Australia, Guyana, Western Samoa, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea
Work experience chosen by school for educational ends	Australia, India, Kenya, Guyana, Botswana, New Zealand, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea
Work experience chosen by school for economic ends	Guyana, Botswana, Western Samoa, Papua New Guinea

teaching spaces, and of financial assistance for visits to the workplace. Work exploration schemes in New Zealand are designed to cater for the needs of all students, whatever their ability. These schemes operate principally as a result of individual school initiatives, and no special resources are provided. Their basic purpose is to provide as many students as possible with some form of work experience so that their eventual vocational choice will be more soundly based.

In contrast to the foregoing examples, the approach to work experience in Western Samoa is more sporadic and is largely geared to raising funds for specific projects that schools wish to undertake. The curriculum organiser in Western Samoa, while insisting that work experience should become a more integral part of schooling - 'a kind of practical follow-up to theoretical studies in the formal curriculum' - at the same time advocates that 'Work preparations and products must be part of the lessons in the classroom. The products, be they materials or cultural items (dance, song, etc), must be organised into an economic activity.' It is hardly surprising, given their economic difficulties, that developing countries approach work experience for its economic ends (e.g. through productive work in high schools in Papua New Guinea).

## Papua New Guinea

### Patterns of Work Experience off School Premises

Table 7 shows that work experience in community and voluntary services is used almost as widely in commercial enterprises. The former usually takes the form of one or more students assisting in children's homes, hospitals or homes for the aged etc. in such activities as cleaning, preparation of meals, entertainment. The motivation behind this is usually that the students should give something back to society in return for the expenditure on their education. This study, however, did not unearth any accounts of work experience in community and voluntary services. All the case studies in this chapter, for example, are of the type where students participate in work experience in an industry/business enterprise.

TABLE 7: Patterns of Work Experience Conducted off School Premises in a Sample of Commonwealth Countries

PATTERN OF WORK EXPERIENCE	COUNTRIES
In community and voluntary services	India, Guyana, Western Samoa, New Zealand, Sri Lanka Mauritius, Kenya
In commercial enterprises	Australia, Kenya, Guyana, Botswana New Zealand, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania

### Phasings of Work Experience

The practices vary so greatly that it is difficult to say which phasing is most frequently used. There appears, however, to be a preference for a block release of between two to three weeks. Jamaica's WEP is of three weeks' duration - the period recommended by Project Trident in Britain. Yet there are a number of schools in Britain which operate a block release of one week, and some schools in New Zealand, Britain and Tanzania operate a day-release scheme. Block release can extend as long as one month (e.g. in Kenya and Guyana) usually during vacations. Mauritius, Tanzania and Sri Lanka also use vacations for work experience, while work experience is all-year-round in some schools in Papua New Guinea.(35)

Clearly, the optimum length of work experience in any context will depend on such factors as the needs and interests of the young people participating, the learning objectives of the school's programme of work, the extent to which the school timetable can accommodate work experience, and the needs and interests of the employers. Ideally, the length of work experience placement should depend on the objectives of the programme

itself, but in reality the employers' considerations often carry most weight. It is worth noting, however, that various studies of student and employer satisfaction with work experience all suggest that the minimum period for a 'satisfactory experience' is one week.(36)

#### Advantages of Different Phasings

Block releases were perceived overall as having the greatest advantages. When these are held during vacations, work experience does not affect academic work (Kenya). Not only do longer block releases allow for 'a better assessment of the students' abilities in the particular skill area,' but also 'good performers are retained on a permanent basis by the agencies' (Guyana). 'There is more to recommend a two-week span than an isolated week as there is a greater opportunity to gain a realistic impression of the pattern of working life' wrote Hitchcock.(37) Teachers in Australian schools thought that one or two weeks was an appropriate length for work experience. Furthermore, Australian teachers who participated in a block release programme saw such benefits in improved relationships with their students, a better understanding of the world of work, and increased efforts to make their teaching relevant to the working world.(38) As for the advantages of the one-day-a-week phasing, it is easier to fit into the timetable, it facilitates planning, it is less disruptive of the students' school work, it provides some continuity and it gives students the opportunity to experience work throughout the whole year.

#### The Effect of the Examination System on Work Experience

In some Commonwealth countries (e.g. New Zealand, Jamaica), work experience programmes are reserved for the less academically able. Because these students do not take national examinations, their work experience is unaffected by the examination system. In Jamaica, for example, different types of certification segregate New Secondary school students (for whom the Work Experience Programme is designed) from the high school students. The latter study for regional or external examinations at 'O' and 'A' levels which are generally preferred by employers, and tend to give more favourable consideration to educational activities subject to formal examinations than to work experience. This concern underlies the following response from India: 'If the work experience is an internal examination subject, the students and teachers take it seriously, if it is an external examination they take it more seriously, but if it is a non-examination subject, it is not taken seriously at all.'

#### Organisation of Work Experience Programmes

As Table 8 indicates, the use of a work experience officer or teacher is the most frequently used way of organising work experience programmes in Commonwealth secondary schools.

TABLE 8: Organisation of Work Experience Programmes in a Sample of Commonwealth Countries

MODE OF ORGANISATION	COUNTRIES
Each specialist teacher makes arrangements for students for whom he/she is responsible	Western Samoa, Botswana, Papua New Guinea
A work experience officer/teacher is responsible for making contacts with employers etc.	Australia, Kenya, Guyana, Botswana, New Zealand, Mauritius, Tanzania, Papua New Guinea

Guyana has a work-study supervisor based at the Ministry of Education who functions rather in the same way as the school-industry liaison officers in the LEAs in Britain. There is, however, a heavy reliance on principals and teachers in Guyana just as the school-industry liaison officers rely on the administrative and professional staff of the area careers officers for back-up administration and contact with individual schools.

All accounts of work experience programmes underscore the considerable load involved in the effective administration of work experience programmes. Leaving it to one or two teachers in the schools to take on this responsibility, as is the case in Jamaica and India, often leads to an excessive demand on the time and efforts of teachers who are already hard-pressed with normal work duties. Moreover, where large numbers of schools are involved, lack of co-ordination can lead to competition over available placements. Work experience teachers in Jamaica have reduced this problem by forming associations at the parish level through which activities related to the work experience programme can be co-ordinated. There is much to be said, however, for the form of central organisation as exemplified in Cleveland in Britain. Worthy of note is the 'management style; employed. The emphasis on minimal imposition from the centre... and the retention of responsibility and discretion by the individual schools for their own philosophy for work experience and for its internal handling, are fundamental... and may be regarded as having been instrumental in its success. Without it, there could well be an unfavourable reaction from some schools to what might be interpreted as yet another uninvited demand on their time and resources from an outside source.'(39) At the same time, as Cope says, the central authority cannot be too laissez-faire as schools may be inclined to adopt an uncritical approach to their attitude towards work experience and their administration of the programme.

Where work experience programmes remain more sporadic, as in the case of Western Samoa, it is appropriate for specialist teachers to make the necessary arrangements. However, some thought needs to be given to the status of these teachers. They should be persons who are held in high esteem in the school to avoid creating the impression that work experience is unimportant. The support of the principal cannot be stressed too

highly. The principal sets the tone for the programme and his/her views on the value of work experience will inevitably influence the extent of its acceptance.

### Payments to Students on Work Experience

In most of the Commonwealth countries sampled in this study, payments are not given to students on work experience. This is the case for Australia, India, Kenya, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea. In Tanzania any payments given are not made to the students but are deposited in the school accounts. In Jamaica it is left to the discretion of employers to give students something towards lunch or bus fares. The TUC guidelines on work experience in British schools stress that work experience is not paid employment and the students do not replace the workers, hence no payment can be expected. For the most part, students on work experience in Australia are not paid: Queensland, in fact, has legislation which debars payment. However, in Victoria payment is a legislated requirement. The students there are viewed as employees and are covered by workers' compensations. They are not, however, paid at the going rate.(40) The same applies to Guyana, Western Samoa and Mauritius where payments made to students are at minimal rates. In Guyana and Mauritius students are allowed to keep their payments, but in Western Samoa the money is given to staff responsible for the fund-raising activity for the particular project for which the students worked to raise funds.

### How much say do Students have in their Work Experience Placements?

Again, practice on this varies. In the SSCEP schools in Papua New Guinea, students have no choice, but in schools where work experience is chosen on a voluntary basis, students are given some choice. In some schools in Kenya where work experience is done during the vacations, students have the final say on whether they wish to participate or not. In India, students have 'limited say,' while in Guyana students select their areas of attachment according to their interests and options done at school. In Sri Lanka students have little say; in Botswana they have none; and in Western Samoa their say is 'not much - for cultural reasons: adults make decisions, young ones obey and implement.'(41) In general, schools in Australia arrange placements with employers, but there are instances where students make the initial approach. In New Zealand, all decisions about work experience programmes are made by the school authorities, and practice varies from school to school. In Britain, in LEAs which have school-industry liaison officers, it is they who make the arrangements with employers but at the school level some choice is given to students within the range of available placements.

### Problems Encountered with Work Experience Programmes

Because work experience programmes are rarely evaluated in any systematic way, reliable data on problems are hard to come by. Nevertheless, Table 9 gives some idea of what they are. Lack of incentive (on account of there being no pay) and poor supervision at the workplace are commonly experienced. Having to do the more menial tasks at the workplace, unrealistic expectations of students by employers, and transportation problems (incurred particularly by students in rural areas) are other

TABLE 9: Problems encountered in Work Experience Programmes in a Sample of Commonwealth Countries

NATURE OF PROBLEM	COUNTRIES
Students were unable to work in areas related to their vocational training	Guyana
Employers had unrealistic expectations of students	Guyana, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Papua New Guinea
Students encountered financial difficulties	Mauritius
Other workers expected students to do the more menial tasks	Botswana, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Seychelles
Students had no incentive	India, Guyana, Botswana, Mauritius, Seychelles, Sri Lanka
Poor supervision of students at the workplace	India, Guyana, Botswana, Mauritius, Seychelles, Papua New Guinea
Insufficient employers willing to place students	India, Botswana
Inefficient transport system for rural students	India, Guyana, Botswana, Tanzania
Competition from other training programmes	Mauritius

common problems. These problems are similar to those of Jamaica's work experience programme, though the study by Jennings-Wray and Teape(42), showed that students being unable to work in areas related to their vocational training was perceived as a more grave problem than is implied in Table 9 where only Guyana reports this problem. Competition from other training programmes appears to be a problem only in Mauritius. It is, however, a serious problem in Jamaica. Since 1982, when the Jamaican government introduced the Human Employment and Resource Training Programme (HEART),(43) school-leavers (largely from the prestigious high schools) involved in the on-the-job training which the HEART programme offers, have competed for places in private and public sector enterprises with the grade 10-11 students who participate in the work experience programme in New Secondary schools. Incentives in the form of tax benefits accrue to employers who participate in the HEART programme, and this motivates them

to offer placements to HEART trainees rather than to the New Secondary school students. Tertiary institutions, such as the College of Arts, Science and Technology in Jamaica which has work experience as an integral part of most of its programme, are another source of competition.

Interestingly, only developing countries are identified in Table 9 as experiencing problems with their work experience programmes. This is not to say that developed countries in the Commonwealth are exempt. In the British case study, for example, it was pointed out that students perceive 'no pay, early starts, the difficulties and cost of public transportation, etc.'(44) as being problems of work experience. However, because practices in developed countries vary so much from one place to another, information on problems would have had to be ascertained at the state or county level, and this study was not designed to procure such data.

### Summary of Main Points

1. Work experience chosen by the school for educational ends is the approach adopted by most of the Commonwealth countries sampled in this study.
2. In this study, the only instances where work experience is chosen by the school for economic ends are in developing countries.
3. Work experience in an industry/business enterprise is the pattern most widely used by both developed and developing countries in the Commonwealth.
4. A block release of two or three weeks is the way in which work experience programmes in developed and developing countries are most commonly phased.
5. Block releases allow for a better understanding of the world of work and facilitate a better assessment of the students.
6. A work experience teacher/officer is frequently made responsible for organising work experience programmes in Commonwealth secondary schools.
7. In most countries, students on work experience are not paid. In the few cases where they are, they are paid reduced rates.
8. There is a wide variation in the extent of the say that students have in their work experience placements. In some countries the final decision is theirs, while in others they have no say at all. Cultural practices dictate in some instances.
9. Lack of incentives for students and poor supervision at the workplace are problems that most developing countries in the Commonwealth appear to experience in relation to their work experience programmes.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The lack of evaluation studies creates a difficulty in making conclusive statements about work experience programmes. Admittedly, in some countries (e.g. Guyana and Jamaica) detailed criteria for assessment of students on work experience have been worked out. These are supplemented by summative evaluation forms completed by employers. The school-industry liaison officer in the British case study drew on reports by students and employers in his assessment of the various schemes. In Kenya, too, employers submit reports to the schools, but in Botswana we are told that what takes place is 'only verbal assessment randomly between institution - student - and workshop managers.' Part of the problem lies in the absence of clearly defined criteria for assessment of work experience programmes which could be used from country to country. Using the objectives as a criterion is clearly problematic since the range of objectives for work experience programmes is very wide and emphases differ from one country to another. Measuring the achievement of objectives is an additional problem as some, especially the social ones, are not directly measurable. Notwithstanding these problems, assessments of the worthwhileness of work experience have generally been made in terms of the benefits gained from doing work experience or being involved in the programme in some way. What are these benefits?

### The Benefits of Work Experience Programmes

#### Cost-Benefits: Hidden Costs

Opinions vary on this. A British careers officer is reported to have said, 'It is difficult to see what benefit could possibly arise. Work experience is superficial and temporary, permanent employment is a worker's livelihood. Work experience cannot convey the pressure of having to go to work, to perform competently, to hold down a job. Work experience is a novelty, employment is a habit. Work experience cannot show to young people the pressures on workers any more than observing their own teachers in situations of stress.(1)

From a review of the results of several empirical studies of career education programmes for high school students in the USA, each of which had a substantial work experience component, Steinberg concluded that such programmes did not generally have any impact on the level of students' basic educational skills, employability or employment. Furthermore, he said, 'There is no evidence that information about the world of work cannot be as effectively communicated in the classroom.'(2) A respondent from India, however, wrote, 'Although the cost of providing work experience is more than any other regular subject in the school system, looking to its contribution to all aspects of learning, behavioural

changes, and employability, it has become indispensable in the school curriculum.'

That work experience programmes are costly is beyond doubt. This is particularly so in developing countries of the Commonwealth where they tend to be integral parts of vocational education geared to training in employable skills. This requires the provision of trained teachers in the vocational areas and well equipped workshops which are adequately maintained and supplied with equipment, tools and materials. There are also a number of 'hidden costs' - Australia, for example, pointed to 'risk of injury and need for compensation' and 'the need for protective clothing,' India identified 'raw materials brought by students from home,' and both India and Jamaica underscored 'the utilisation of community resources' and 'on-the-job experience in industry.' Guyana and Australia pointed to the cost of staff time in monitoring and supervising young and inexperienced students - a cost which is not usually budgeted for either by the firm or the Ministry of Education. Such costs are to some extent balanced out by benefits accrued in being able to make personal use of articles manufactured, and the sale of articles in school fairs and exhibitions (India). Both India and Guyana underscored how earnings by students could contribute to their being able to continue their studies. The case study of the high school on the West Indies College complex in Jamaica is a further example of this.

The cost benefits of work experience from the perspective of New Zealand is worthy of note:

In the first instance the cost per pupil of catering for the needs of a student in a work experience unit is significantly costlier than providing for the same student in the main stream of the school. In the long term, however, there would be clear cost benefits. Many students in work experience units would find survival in the main stream particularly difficult. Their self images would be further damaged, and their sense of alienation against both the school system and the wider community would deepen. Cost benefits, therefore, arise principally from avoiding the social consequences of this kind of damage.

### Student Benefits

Some countries identified personal and social benefits that students derive from work experience. India, for example, pointed to an 'acquaintance with problems and needs of family and community,' and the development of a co-operative attitude as well as 'change in attitudes towards work.' The Australian case study provided some support for the claim about the enhancement of the social development of some students. Most countries, however, saw student benefits in terms of what they had learnt about the world of work and how work experience contributed towards their getting employment. Some typical responses were:

- (a) Opportunity to make practical contact with the world of work, to develop an understanding of the work environment and to broaden their perspective regarding work opportunities. (Australia)
- (b) Being better prepared for future employment. (Botswana)

(c) Even after one week pupils are much more mature and have a far more realistic attitude to their future employment.(3) (Britain)

(d) Students are able to focus their attention on the needs of specific sections of the world of work in a way their colleagues in the main stream of the school are unable to match. Their individual vocational needs receive more attention than do those of their peers in the main stream and it is very common practice for them to find employment directly as a result of their experience in their work experience units. (New Zealand)

### School Benefits

Schools derive several benefits from having work experience programmes. They can respond more directly to special needs of students. This is summed up well in the response from New Zealand. 'It is the aim of most New Zealand schools to make every effort to meet the disparate needs of as many individual students as possible, and work experience units provide one mechanism for achieving this for a significant number of people. If the school were required to meet the needs of these young people within the main stream it would be a most testing exercise. In short, work experience units provide schools with the resources and the authorities required to meet the special needs of a group of students who would have great difficulty in coping with main stream education at the secondary level.' Australia also referred to 'greater motivation of students' as a school benefit.

A second benefit is that work experience programmes make it possible for students to receive training and exposure to equipment and facilities (in industry/private enterprise etc.) which the school cannot afford. Moreover the school can make use of the skills and knowledge of qualified members of the community to supplement and enrich vocational instruction - especially in cases where there is a shortage of teachers in vocational areas. The closer relationship with the world of work induces schools to adapt their curriculum so that it becomes more relevant to the needs of employers and the working world generally.

Promoting self sufficiency is of benefit to schools that have work experience programmes on their premises. India pointed to the fact that 'schools can become self-sufficient as regards cleaning, repairing, decoration etc.', and that they can produce articles for daily use - notebooks, files, etc. Elsewhere, the author has underlined the 'substantial degree of self-reliance' on the part of West Indies College in Jamaica and of the Jose Marti secondary school in its heyday:

A visitor to these two institutions today cannot but be impressed by how they manage to thrive on their own initiative in an age when schools have to close because of lack of government funding to repair sanitary conveniences, repair vandalised buildings, broken furniture....(4)

Similar experiences are reported in Guyana where, through classes in woodwork, students in a large number of schools have begun fulfilling contracts for furniture not only for the Ministry of Education but for the general public. The income generated from such activities is spent on such things as fencing school compounds, and repairing and making school

furniture. 'The significance of this in an era of economic crisis is that financial dependence on central government will be reduced, and partial self-reliance among schools promoted.'(5)

### Employer Benefits

Work experience programmes provide an opportunity for employers to participate in curriculum decision-making in schools, particularly by making suggestions for changes in the curriculum to meet their specified needs (Jamaica). Much still needs to be done, however, to promote this sort of participation. Australia considered that employers' benefits were 'probably minimal other than the long-term benefit of taking on new employees who have had some experience in the world of work. However, in some cases employers actually use work experience to select future employees.' Other typical responses were:

- (a) Gets raw hands with positive attitudes towards work - cheap labour. (India)
- (b) Getting better qualified trainees. (Botswana)
- (c) Free and cheap labour. (Tanzania)
- (d) Many employers provide permanent employment for young people whom they have met earlier on work experience. The employer, then, has had an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a prospective employee in a way not possible when that employer is dealing with a normal member of the work force. (New Zealand)

Who, then, benefits most from work experience? This is difficult to determine in any precise way, but one tends to agree with the Australian viewpoint that the employers' benefits are minimal. Given that programmes are so short, it is hardly likely that in a work experience lasting one, two or even three weeks, employers can get as much from trainees as from their regular experienced employees. One suspects that the costs on the part of the employer outweigh whatever benefits accrue (e.g. the costs incurred in cases of injury while a student is on the job, and the repair of equipment damaged by inexperienced hands). In instances where tax benefits are given, clearly the employer wins the day; otherwise, it appears that most benefits accrue to the students and the school.

### The Problems of Organising Work Experience Programmes

This study has shown that invariably a work experience teacher or officer organises work experience programmes for schools, although in some places there is a heavy reliance on the principal. In some developed countries, such as Britain, a school-industry liaison officer may have overall charge of the work experience schemes/programmes in a district or county.

That there is a considerable amount of work involved in organising work experience emerges in all accounts. Often the demands on teachers are such that workplaces cannot be visited with sufficient frequency and students are inadequately supervised. The phasing of work experience is often subject to the dictates of the employer. This can lead to the loss of involvement on the part of the teacher, as in the case of the Australian school that operated a 'rolling' programme (see page 43).

Meeting the travel costs of the work experience teacher/officer who has to make arrangements with several employers is a problem for Ministries of Education, particularly in developing countries. But perhaps the chief problem is the lack of sufficient employers who are willing to participate. To overcome this the government of Jamaica has made it a legal requirement for employers to participate in the HEART programme once their earnings reach a certain limit. They must either take HEART trainees for on-the-job experience in return for tax benefits or contribute a sum to the HEART Trust.

#### Improving the Cost-Effectiveness of Work Experience Programmes

Work experience programmes are expensive educational activities. Straton and Murray conclude that this is particularly true in the case of schools operating a 'rolling' programme where normal teaching has to be maintained for students in each class who are not away on work experience. Expense is also underscored in a national study on work experience in India, which identifies lack of resources, equipment, trained teachers, funds, material and space, as being reasons for schools being unable to implement work experience programmes.(6)

Are there any ways in which the effects of work experience programmes might be enhanced and the costs of these programmes reduced? What seems clear from this study is that too much is expected of work experience programmes. Can a one, two or even three-week programme be expected to make any significant impact on a student's 'self-concept'? A reappraisal of objectives needs to take place, be it at the state, county, government or school level to determine what achievements can reasonably be expected within a given time. The results should be made clear to all participants in the programme so as to avoid the unrealistic expectations that students often have of the programme and that employers invariably have of the students. In general, employers need to be given more detailed information (perhaps through seminars/workshops) about how work experience fits into the general curriculum of the school. They also need to be given insights into the level of skill training which takes place in pre-vocational preparation so that they may be better able to gauge what inputs should be at the workplace. In the light of the frequent criticisms of inadequate supervision at the workplace, guidance in supervision is vital for those employers who lack supervisory skills. Providing employers with assistance in developing appropriate on-the-job work experience procedures (e.g. forms of assessment that are easy to use and not time-consuming) could help to reduce employer costs.

In a further effort to enhance what students get out of work experience, placements need to be more closely tailored to the area of vocational training in school. This is not easy in countries where not enough employers are willing to participate. In such cases, some incentives for employers should be seriously considered. Additionally, particularly in developing countries, not only is it necessary to increase the numbers of work experience placements, but it is also vital to institute strategies for generating youth employment. Work experience programmes are unlikely to succeed in motivating young people towards employment if employment opportunities do not exist.

Work experience programmes could also be made more effective by undertaking a more comprehensive and systematic follow-up of students'

work experiences such as the de-briefing session in Guyana. Such follow-up should include a review of the students' reactions to their experiences so that adjustments to the programme can be made.

The organisation of work experience programmes, including liaison with employers, is a costly process in terms of the time, energy and effort expended by the work experience teacher/officer, particularly where teachers in individual schools have to make their own arrangements. Such efforts tend to be unco-ordinated and invariably result in frustration when several schools vie for the same employer. Centralisation of services for the organisation of work experience is a step that developing countries may wish to consider. The experience of Australia and Britain suggests that, when effectively maintained, such a centralised system helps to contain school costs.

#### Summary of Main Points in the Study

1. In capitalist countries of the Commonwealth, work experience tends to be seen as a means of preparing the young for the world of work in an effort to avoid the problem of unemployment. In socialist countries, the inculcation of a healthy work ethic emerges as a stronger ideology and work experience programmes tend to be viewed as a means of solving the problem of social inequality in the society. WEP on school premises is often seen as a way of linking education with production - an ideology which itself is geared ultimately to a process of transforming education within a wider strategy for social change.

2. Work experience programmes have a range of objectives:

Philosophical/pedagogical objectives relate to ideals of equalising opportunities, facilitating the transition from school to work, and the motivation of young people through the study of curricula which are more relevant to their experiences.

Social objectives relate to the development of positive attitudes towards physical/manual work, learning the nature of social relations at work and the nurturing of such desirable attributes as punctuality and co-operation on the part of employees.

Economic objectives include facilitating young people in getting employment, undertaking job-exploration activities within commerce and industry, and contributing towards the development of the agricultural basis of a developing country's economy.

3. Some evidence exists that in-school work experience has succeeded in creating a balance between the academic and the practical in school curricula, enabling schools to become at least partially self-sufficient, and impacting on the lives of children and their families (e.g. influencing their diet).

4. In-school work experience programmes often encounter difficulties on account of lack of adequate inputs initially (e.g. inadequate land space for agricultural programmes; inadequate water supply; inadequate finance to purchase foodstuff; tools, machinery; and lack of trained personnel to effectively implement the programme).

5. Work experience chosen by the school for educational ends is the approach to work experience adopted by most of the Commonwealth countries sampled in this study.

6. The subjects which lend themselves best to work experience are 'practical subjects' (e.g. woodwork, metalwork, automechanics, building construction, home economics, agricultural science and business studies). Cultural studies, language arts, science, biology and environmental studies have also been identified as 'practical subjects' suitable for work experience.

7. There is a tendency for work experience programmes to be organised for the less academically able, despite a declared policy against this practice in some countries. The examination system therefore has relatively little effect on work experience except that where it is not 'examinable' many students consider it to be a less important educational activity than subjects which are examined.

8. A block release of two to three weeks is the way in which work experience programmes in Commonwealth schools are most commonly phased. Block releases tend to be preferred as they allow for a better understanding of the world of work and facilitate better assessment of the students.

9. The problems most commonly experienced in work experience programmes are lack of incentives for students, poor supervision at the workplace, employers' unrealistic expectations of students, students having to do menial tasks, and difficulties in getting transport to and from the workplace in rural areas.

10. Students and schools appear to benefit more from work experience programmes than do employers. However, the evidence for this is not conclusive. Student benefits include the development of an understanding of the work environment and being better prepared for employment. School benefits range from greater motivation of students to making it possible for students to receive training and exposure to equipment and facilities in industry etc. which the school cannot afford. Employers' benefits include getting better qualified trainees and being able to use work experience to select future employees.

11. Apart from actual costs of providing, equipping and maintaining workshops, and supplying adequately trained teachers, there are 'hidden costs' that are often not budgeted for in work experience programmes (e.g. compensation for injury, the use of community resources, the time spent by staff in monitoring and supervising students). These hidden costs are balanced out to some extent by such benefits as being able to make the school more self-sufficient by the sale of goods and service, by providing 'earn as you learn' opportunities for some needy students, and by avoiding the social consequences of damage to the self-image of less academically able children who find it difficult to succeed in the system.

## Conclusion

The brief for this study did not require any recommendations to be made. But if I were to make a recommendation it would be that the best policy in both developed and developing countries is not 'to leave work experience

programmes severely alone!' (Sinclair), but that Commonwealth countries should endorse them as worthwhile educational activities. They are indeed costly enterprises, but due to weaknesses in the way in which they have been organised and implemented in the past, insufficient attention has been given to reducing the cost of these programmes and maximising their benefits. The benefits to be derived are considerable, and it is likely that we will see more attempts to integrate work experience with traditional curriculum subjects as the approach through social studies in a comprehensive boys school in London described by Fortune et al.(7) More directly, if the cutbacks in educational expenditure in developing countries like Jamaica continue, schools will have no alternative but to work their way out of the economic morass by their own efforts, particularly if their pupils come from families which cannot finance school programmes. In-school work experience which links education with production (with the thrust on the educational being promoted) seems to me an inescapable reality for the very near future. As Van Rensburg(8) has maintained, all school subjects can be given a practical and productive orientation.

The benefits of off-school work experience as outlined in this study underscore the worthwhileness of programmes of this kind. To improve their effectiveness, consideration could be given to introducing schemes for seconding into industry/private enterprise those teachers who have responsibility for work experience programmes.

Finally, a vast amount of knowledge of work experience programmes in Commonwealth countries and other parts of the world remains untapped. This study has barely touched the surface. Much of this knowledge, however, has been lost due to lack of documentation. It is the writer's hope that in future those who undertake initiatives in work experience will make provision for evaluation of these programmes and that the knowledge gained will be widely disseminated.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE ON WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES IN COMMONWEALTH SCHOOLS

Country \_\_\_\_\_

Position held by person completing questionnaire \_\_\_\_\_

Work Experience: Opportunities on a compulsory or voluntary basis for full-time school students to engage in work as part of their education programme even though they may not have as yet chosen a particular career.

1. Please indicate ( ) below which of the following approaches to work experience you have in your country.
  - (a) work experience determined by national policy as of value to the nation ( )
  - (b) work experience chosen by pupils on a voluntary basis (e.g. to further a desired career) ( )
  - (c) work experience chosen by the school for educational ends (e.g. improve students' attitude towards work) ( )
  - (d) work experience chosen by the school for economic ends (e.g. generate income for the school) ( )
  
2. Please indicate ( ) below which of the following patterns of work experience apply in your country.
  - (a) work experience conducted on the school premises.
    - (i) in course of study of practical subjects (skills training) ( )
    - (ii) as part of education with production programme to supply needs of school, sell products to outside agencies, etc. ( )
  - (b) work experience conducted off school premises
    - (i) in community and voluntary services ( )
    - (ii) in commercial enterprises ( )
  
3. (a) Are payments made to pupils by employers? Yes ( ) No ( )  
(b) If yes, are these payments at the going rate? Yes ( ) No ( )  
(c) Is the pupil allowed to keep the payments? Yes ( ) No ( )  
If no, what happens to the payment?



9. What subjects in the curriculum lend themselves best to work experience?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. In what ways does each subject incorporate work experience into pupils' learning?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What would you say are the COST-BENEFITS of work experience?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Are there any 'hidden costs' of work experience that people are usually unaware of (these are the type of costs which would make work experience programmes appear less costly than they really are)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. How do the following benefit from work experience?
  - (a) pupil
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) the school
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (c) the employer

14. The following are problems which commonly arise in work experience programmes; which apply in your country?
- (a) students were not able to work in areas related to their vocational training ( )
  - (b) employers had unrealistic expectations of the students ( )
  - (c) students encountered financial difficulties ( )
  - (d) other workers expected students to do the more menial tasks ( )
  - (e) students had no form of incentive (e.g. no payment from employers ( )
  - (f) poor supervision of students at the work place ( )
  - (g) not enough employers willing to take students on work experience ( )
  - (h) students in rural areas encountered difficulty in getting to work on account of inefficient transport system ( )
  - (i) competition from other training programmes ( )
15. What criteria do you use in your country to assess work experience programmes?

16. How can work experience programmes be improved?

Thank you for your co-operation.

Dr. Z.D. Zennings  
University of the West Indies  
Kingston  
Jamaica

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear

I am conducting a study on Work Experience Programmes in Commonwealth Schools on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. I would be grateful if you could arrange for someone who is knowledgeable in the area to complete the enclosed questionnaire. I would also be pleased to receive any short reports, evaluation reports, etc. that have been done by your Ministry of Education or other research body on the Work Experience Programme. Since I have been given a limited time in which to complete the study, I would be grateful if the questionnaire (along with the reports) could be returned to me by August 1, 1986.

Please accept my gratitude for any assistance you can offer. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Zellynne D. Jennings (Dr.)  
Senior Lecturer  
University of the West Indies  
Faculty of Education

16th June 1986

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF WORK-STUDY APPLICATION FORM

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL DEVELOPKENT  
AND CULTURE

A. STUDENT'S NAME	SEX	FORM	AREA OF SPECIALISATION AT SCHOOL		
B. SCHOOL NAME	DATE OF BIRTH		HOME ADDRESS		
C. NAME AND ADDRESS OF WORK-STUDY AGENCY			STUDENTS ACTIVITY ON WORK-STUDY		
D. DURATION OF ATTACHMENT		HAS N.I.S. FORM BEEN FILLED OUT			
FROM:		( ) yes ( ) no			
TO:					
E. NAME OF MOTHER:		NAME OF FATHER:			
OCCUPATION:		OCCUPATION:			
HOME ADDRESS:		HOME ADDRESS:			
WORK ADDRESS:		WORK ADDRESS;			
F. NAME OF GUARDIAN		PREVIOUSLY ON WORK-STUDY AT:			
HOME ADDRESS:					
OCCUPATION:					
WORK ADDRESS:					
G. LEVEL OF ENTRY BEHAVIOURS					
Use key to Evaluate the student. Tick under the Appropriate Box below.					
A = Always B = Often C = Sometimes D = Seldom E = Never					
BEHAVIOUR DESCRIPTION	A	B	C	D	E
1 WORKS WELL WITH OTHERS	4	3	2	1	0
2 IS REGULAR AND PUNCTUAL AT SCHOOL					
3 SOCIALISES WITH OTHERS					
4 KEEPS TO THE TASK TO ITS FINALITY					
5 CONTROLS EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR					
6 ACTS IN A LEADERSHIP CAPACITY (VOLUNTARILY)					
7 TRIES OUT NEW OR DIFFERENT IDEAS OR WAYS					
8 IS NEAT AND CLEAN IN APPEARANCE AND DRESS					
9 HELPS OTHERS					
10 RESPECTS THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS					
11 CONFORMS TO SAFETY RULES IN THE SCHOOL					
12 COMMUNICATES WHEN LATE OR ABSENT					
H. Please comment on student's level of performance in his/her pre vocational area.					
State if the student has any special home circumstances.					

I. THE SCHOOL: (Please complete)

1. We wish to recommend this student who is a bona fide student of this school for Work Study attachment.
2. Guidance was given to this student and it is most likely that his/her conduct and application to work would be desirable.

Signature of Specialist Teacher.....

Date.....

Signature of Headmaster/Headmistress.....

Date.....

J. THE STUDENT: (Please complete)

1. I am interested in being exposed to training in the field of.....through the Work Study programme
2. I pledge to be regular, punctual and to conduct myself in such a manner as to uphold the good name of my school and community.
3. I understand and appreciate that I would not receive any wage or salary as a Work-Study student.

Signature of student.....

Date.....

K. THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

1. I agree that.....who is under my control undergoes this Work - Study exercise.
2. I shall endeavour to ensure that he/she is regular, punctual and well-behaved during the period of Work Study.
3. I understand all the other terms and conditions of this Work Study exercise.

Signature of Parent/Guardian.....

Date.....

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

1. Interviewed student on.....
2. Application for Work Study considered ( ) yes ( ) no  
Reason/s for Rejection.....  
.....

Signature of Work Study Officer.....

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