Prerequisites for a Rural Employment Policy in French-speaking Black Africa

P. LOBSTEIN [1]

JUST AS EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION in general is heavily dependent upon economic development, so in rural areas it is inconceivable in the absence of a rural development policy. Not a great deal of theoretical work has yet been done on rural employment promotion, since it is only in quite recent years that employment has come to be recognised as an essential part of the humanitarian purpose behind development.

A number of conditions have to be satisfied before it is possible to draw up a realistic national policy of employment in rural areas and launch the various practical projects involved. These prerequisites will be discussed in the present article only as they affect the French-speaking countries of Africa south of the Sahara, and are treated under the following headings: administrative machinery, statistics, financing problems, educational structures, problems of income and motivation, and the role of technical co-operation. A final section outlines some of the practical problems to which the main types of rural promotion project give rise.

Administrative machinery

The essential problem, both at the centre and at the regional level, is to secure proper co-ordination between the administrative institutions in charge of rural development and the bodies responsible for manpower planning and organisation. A brief reminder of the way administrative machinery evolved in the French-speaking countries of black Africa will make it easier to understand the problem.

During the colonial period, the various territorial authorities were responsible for co-ordinating the work of all the technical departments,

[1] Expert, International Labour Office.

in particular those of agriculture, stock breeding, and waters and forests, which were organised on the European model. The colonial authorities also controlled the provident societies giving assistance to the peasants, as well as dealing with manpower problems.

This concentration of power at the centre only partially survived independence. Some of the structures inherited from the past proved incapable of meeting the new demands made upon them by development. The early stages of independence therefore saw the emergence, alongside the traditional technical departments, of certain non-centralised development bodies, but the consequent lack of co-ordination and the retention of the cumbersome machinery of the old agricultural services rendered the whole system inefficient and led, at a later stage, to the adoption of structures better suited to development needs.

It was thus that a number of specialised bodies came into being (state-owned companies, departments, semi-governmental organisations of various kinds), enjoying a certain freedom of action and the same flexibility of operation as private companies, and therefore in a position to intervene rapidly at the local level. The National Rural Development Company (SONADER) in Dahomey, the Rice-Growing and Palm Oil Development Companies (SODERI and SODERPALM) in the Ivory Coast, the Regional Development Offices (ORD) in Upper Volta and the Central African Republic, the Development Aid Companies (SORAD) in Togo, and the Integrated Priority Action Zones (ZAPI) in Cameroon—although differing in conception—were all set up with the same fundamental purpose of replacing inadequate administrative machinery and regionalising development.

An idea that has come to the fore during the past few years is that of " integrated development ", by which is meant the integration of structures and resources serving development ends in order to ensure the most efficient co-ordination of all the factors which contribute to higher standards of living. Integrated development requires appropriate administrative machinery both at the centre and at the regional level. Such machinery at present is usually too cumbersome in the French-speaking African countries, where civil servants account for a large proportion of all salaried employees.

The need for central co-ordination between the administrative bodies in charge of development in rural areas [1] and the services responsible for manpower planning and organisation [2] is obvious. Unfortunately no such co-ordination exists, and the only way to achieve it is by strengthening

[1] Departments of Agriculture, Stock Breeding, Waters and Forests, and Co-operatives, grouped under the Ministry of Rural Development; of Public Works and Hydraulic Power, under the Ministry of Public Works; and of Territorial Administration, under the Ministry of the Interior.

[2] Departments of Planning and Statistics, and the Ministry of Labour; also research centres in some cases.

the planning services and giving them the status of a ministry in countries where planning still remains the responsibility of the Ministries of Finance or Economic Affairs.

The most satisfactory solution would seem to be to bring planning, as a ministry of State, under the office of the President.[1] This would give it the necessary authority to ensure liaison between the other ministerial departments—which tend to be unenthusiastic about the planning authorities and consider them a " disturbing late-comer in the apparatus of government ".[2]

It is at the level of the Ministry of Planning that a human resources division can ensure proper co-ordination between the administrative bodies in charge of rural development and the services responsible for manpower planning and organisation. A division of this kind already exists in several countries under different names (Human Resources, Human Promotion, Social Planning, etc.). With its additional responsibilities for co-ordinating and supervising rural " animation " and " human investment ", the Human Resources Division is well placed to study the problems of rural employment, in liaison with the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Labour. It will be this division's task, where appropriate in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour, to draw up a national employment policy.

At regional (" departmental ") level the problem is different, since the bodies dealing with manpower questions are seldom represented there. One labour inspector per department is a luxury and usually a single inspector is appointed to cover several departments.

There is none the less the problem of co-ordinating development work within the department. The prefect, as the representative of the central government, is responsible for this co-ordination, since economic and social development cannot be treated in isolation from the political context. But his duties are heavy and in recent years a number of countries (Mali, Dahomey, Senegal) have created the post of development assistant to help him out. The role of the development assistant is to promote development in the department. He ensures co-ordination between all the technical and social departments engaged and exercises administrative control over the activities of the development companies.

In this way sectoral programmes can be efficiently co-ordinated. The wastage of resources that occurs in the absence of liaison at departmental level is best illustrated by the case in which several wells were dug in the same village under different budgets. This was because there was no co-ordination between the programmes of the different agencies involved.

---

[1] See the conclusions of the seminar held in Natitingou (Dahomey) in February 1969 under the auspices of the Ministry of Rural Development and the Institute of Research on Cotton and Textiles.

[2] Yves Goussault: " Rural ' animation ' and popular participation in French-speaking black-Africa ", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 97, No. 6, June 1968, p. 541.

Errors of this kind can also be avoided by setting up a departmental planning commission, a consultative body which is usually established when the plan is being drawn up, but which may continue to serve afterwards. Headed by the prefect and the development assistant, the commission brings together the representatives of the various bodies active in the department and gives them an opportunity to see the development programme as a whole.

The appointment of a development assistant thus permits better liaison between the political authorities and the rural development machinery, while the establishment of a departmental planning commission enables the inhabitants of the rural areas to participate in regional development work through their representatives.[1]

Distribution difficulties are usually encountered in getting officials to man this machinery, since there is a superabundance of staff in the towns and a distinct shortage in rural areas. An effort should therefore be made, by means of persuasion and above all by providing material incentives, to ensure an equitable coverage of the whole country. The possibility cannot be excluded of the government remedying the shortage of staff in the rural areas by resorting to a policy of compulsory postings: the problem mainly concerns teachers, nurses and midwives, who dread the isolation of the remoter posts.

Statistics

An employment policy for rural areas presupposes the availability of basic statistics. Data on human resources may usually be obtained from the national statistical services, but they cannot always be used in their crude state because they are out of date. This is the case in Dahomey, for example, where almost all the demographic statistics date from the 1961 census.

It may be useful to outline the chief tasks of a statistical service, which may be attached to the Ministry of Planning or may be constituted as an autonomous office:

— collecting and preparing the statistical data required for drawing up and supervising the implementation of development plans;

— co-ordinating the statistical methods, resources and work of the public administration and the organs under state control (e.g. the Social Fund);

— carrying out statistical work and surveys necessary for economic and socio-economic studies;

— publishing statistical reports and collecting adequate national and international statistical documentation.

---

[1] See République du Dahomey: *Plan de développement économique et social, 1966-1970* (Cotonou, 1966).

Since the existence of such a service does not always ensure that recent statistics are obtained, many details concerning the labour force, employment, migration and income have to be requested from the planning authorities and the development companies. The Ministry of Labour, often better informed on urban problems than rural ones, seldom possesses statistics on the rural labour force, except in the case of plantation workers.

Statistics may be collected according to the following schema:

A. General information on the rural population:
   (a) ethnic origin, age and sex of rural inhabitants;
   (b) geographical distribution (density variations);
   (c) population trends (births, deaths, comparison between population growth rates in rural and urban areas).

B. Categories of rural workers:
   1. *(a)* agriculture, including stock breeding;
      (b) forestry;
      (c) fishing;
      (d) other rural activities.
   2. For each category, distribution of workers according to:
      (a) employment status (employers, self-employed workers, family members, wage earners, day-labourers);
      (b) occupational category and level of skill;
      (c) main types of cultivation (monoculture, diversified agriculture, stock breeding, mixed farming);
      (d) main types of farming (plantation, family-type farming conducted for profit, subsistence farming, and according to acreage).

C. Types of rural employment:
   (a) nature and extent of seasonal unemployment and rural underemployment;
   (b) principal forms of non-agricultural employment in rural areas.

D. Rural migration:
   (a) permanent, temporary, seasonal;
   (b) internal, international;
   (c) characteristics of migrants (age, sex, educational level).

E. Availability and shortage of skilled manpower in the rural sector:
   (a) personnel of government services responsible for rural economy;
   (b) teaching and research staff;
   (c) extension workers and rural animation staff.

F. Incomes in rural areas:
   (a) income from agriculture;
   (b) income from crafts, trade, transport;
   (c) comparison of wages in the traditional and modern sectors.

G. Future demand for skilled manpower in rural areas:
   (a) aims of rural development programmes;
   (b) need for skilled manpower generated by such programmes.

H. Training opportunities:
   (a) capacity of existing training centres;
   (b) expansion required to meet demand.

While information is usually available on the rural population and categories of rural workers, it is more difficult to obtain data on types of *rural employment* and on *underemployment.*

Rural activities may be divided into four groups:

— strictly agricultural and directly productive activities;
— various non-agricultural activities (construction, chopping firewood, cooking, minor tasks, etc.);
— paid craft work (full-time or occasional);
— social activities, leisure and rest.

It has not yet been possible to quantify these data in the African countries. There are no precise underemployment figures.[1] Estimates of the extent of underemployment have necessarily to be based on the studies of working time in agriculture, expressing work cycles in units of time, regardless of the artificiality of the method. The statistical data are obtained either from the various research institutes in Paris [2], or by field surveys which require observations spaced out over at least a year.[3] Detailed information by crop is to be found in the three-volume *Techniques rurales en Afrique. Les temps de travaux*, published jointly by the former French Ministry of Co-operation and the Office for the Development of Agricultural Production (BDPA) in 1965.

The concept of underemployment remains difficult to define in rural Africa. It is not always possible to apply the classification adopted by the

[1] Edgar Raynaud: *Investissements humains, illusions et réalités.* Essai de problématique sur le sous-emploi rural et les conditions objectives de son utilisation à des fins d'accumulation du capital (Paris, The Hague, Mouton & Cie, 1969).

[2] The Institute of Tropical Agronomy Research (IRAT); the Institute of Research on Oils and Oleaginous Plants (IRHO); and the Institute of Research on Cotton and Textiles (IRCT).

[3] See P. Mueller and K. H. Zevering: " Employment promotion through rural development: a pilot project in western Nigeria ", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 100, No. 2, Aug. 1969, pp. 111-130.

International Conference of Labour Statisticians (visible underemployment and invisible underemployment, the latter being subdivided into disguised underemployment and potential underemployment).[1] The North Dahomey peasant, for example, performs small tasks during the dry season which appear to him essential: looking for termites to feed his chickens, protecting them from sparrow-hawks, cutting straw and thatching the roof of his hut with it, fetching millet from the granary for his evening meal, and so on. It is difficult to tear him away from these activities, even if he seems underemployed by the standards of industrial countries.

Statistics on *migration* are sometimes non-existent and often inaccurate. Migration may be classified as internal or international according to the geographical limits within which it takes place, and as permanent, temporary or seasonal according to its duration and frequency.

Studies on migration in Africa enable four main categories to be distinguished:

— the exodus from the countryside to the urban centres;
— migration from one rural area to another;
— international migration;
— seasonal migration.

The exodus of young people from the countryside, so often described from a qualitative point of view, was the subject of a quantitative study in the Ivory Coast.[2] The survey carried out there by ILO experts might serve as a model for other countries.

Shifts between rural areas are typical of the spontaneous or organised migratory movements by which peasants abandon densely populated areas where the soil is exhausted in favour of barely populated virgin land or areas where manpower is in great demand.

International migration may be either long-distance or merely a matter of crossing and recrossing national frontiers. The latter variety, which takes place along bush trails, is not subject to any form of control and statistics concerning it are unreliable.

The search for higher money incomes than those provided by local agriculture leads peasants to undertake seasonal migration which may be internal (as in Senegal) or international (the Mossi from Upper Volta to the Ivory Coast and Ghana). Migration of this kind may lead to permanent settlement in the host area.

---

[1] In this connection see the resolution concerning the measurement of underemployment adopted by the Ninth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, 1957 (*Official Bulletin* (Geneva, ILO), Vol. XL, No. 8, 1957, pp. 367-369), and ILO: *Concepts and methods of measurement of underemployment*, Meeting of Experts on Measurement of Underemployment, Geneva, 1963 (mimeographed document MEMU/D.1).

[2] Louis Roussel: " Measuring rural-urban drift in developing countries: a suggested method ", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 101, No. 3, Mar. 1970, pp. 229-246.

Migration statistics should also include details about the migrants themselves: age, sex, occupation, educational level.

Statistics on *rural incomes* are scarce and usually more concerned with agriculture than with income from crafts, trade or transport. Income and expenditure surveys have been carried out in several French-speaking African countries with the help of the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies.

It is difficult to compare the income of a peasant and that of a wage earner in the modern sector, because there is usually little information available about the proportion of peasant income represented by self-consumed production. This has been estimated at 85 per cent in Upper Volta and 51 per cent in Madagascar.[1]

In terms of money incomes, the disparity is very wide. The income of a peasant in Borgou (Dahomey), for example, works out at 35.40 francs CFA per working day (a net income of 6,025 francs CFA for 170 working days), whereas a worker on a kenaf plantation in the same region gets 125 francs CFA per day. The difference is still greater if peasants' incomes are compared with urban wages, since the SMIG (guaranteed minimum interoccupational wage) is always somewhat higher than the SMAG (guaranteed minimum agricultural wage).

The list of statistical desiderata given above is exhaustive and represents an ideal which would require a perfectly equipped statistical service to attain. Such a service does not exist in most of the countries under consideration. The scope of statistical research has therefore to be extended gradually, and this implies the establishment of a list of priorities. During the first stage, research should concentrate successively on the demographic characteristics of the population, categories of rural workers and migration (points A, B and D of the schema) and should be based on censuses carried out according to the principles and recommendations of the United Nations.[2]

Types of employment and income (points C and F), as well as underemployment, should be studied during the second stage by means of sample survey questionnaires.

Lastly, special surveys should be made to analyse the shortage of and demand for skilled manpower, together with opportunities for training (points E, G and H).

Financing problems

The first problem here is essentially one of decentralisation. Even during the colonial period a reform had been introduced to place the

[1] These percentages are taken from reports submitted to the Conference on Popular Participation in Development organised in Niamey in March 1969 by the Common African and Malagasy Organisation (OCAM).

[2] United Nations: *Principles and recommendations for the 1970 population censuses*, Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 44 (New York, 1967).

budget partly on a departmental footing. In addition to paying what was known as the fiscal minimum tax to the Treasury, the peasants also paid a local tax which was used immediately in their administrative district for infrastructure works or social amenities of direct benefit to the local population (schools, dispensaries, etc.).

This system has disappeared in some independent countries, but the need for decentralisation is nevertheless recognised, and the current trend is again in that direction, with the creation of autonomous budgets at prefecture and sub-prefecture level, work of general interest being paid for out of the national budget and work of local interest out of the departmental budget. It is obvious that taxes, which play such a large part in the life of the African peasant, are far more likely to be paid if he can actually see the services provided by the State in return.

Once decentralisation is achieved [1], the next problem is to ensure the efficient allocation of financial resources: administrative costs are usually excessive and should be reduced in favour of expenditure on actual development work, while the utilisation of material and financial resources should be strictly and regularly controlled.

Among external resources, those provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) have been especially important during the past few years in the field of employment, and deserve special attention.

The WFP has provided substantial aid to many employment promotion projects. Assistance in the form of food poses two major problems: the slowness of the administrative procedures required, and adaptation of the foodstuffs to the dietary habits of the population.

Administrative procedure can be speeded up by adding sub-projects to a project already under way. This does not require the signing of a new plan of operation, nor does the dossier have to be sent to the WFP intergovernmental committee. The WFP secretariat accepts this simplification of procedure in the case of small operations: all that is required is an exchange of letters between the government concerned and the WFP. In this way local communities who have agreed to carry out voluntary tasks with assistance in the form of food may be able to get down to work much sooner than would otherwise be possible.

Careful choice of foodstuffs during negotiations with the WFP should eliminate the wastage involved when workers will not accept certain kinds of food provided (powdered milk, for example).

In any case the assistance provided by the WFP may be considered an incentive, whether the food is distributed to voluntary workers or treated as a wage supplement.

---

[1] For the role of decentralised collectivities see Paul-Louis Audat: " Decentralization and development: experience of some French-speaking West African States ", in *African Administrative Studies* (Tangier, African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development), Documents and Monographs, Dec. 1968, 4B, pp. 31-57.

Educational structure

Until recently education in the rural areas was oriented towards the selection of an élite destined for secondary education. Rural studies were neglected, and the fact that the large majority of pupils would grow up to be peasants was simply ignored.

The irrelevance of the existing school system to the needs of development has been deplored for some years. Shortcomings include the following factors:

— unsuitability of a curriculum modelled on the French system;

— unsuitability of training given to teachers;

— structural weaknesses (overcrowded and insufficiently standardised classes, particularly with regard to age, holidays fixed on the European pattern);

— inadequate guidance facilities (children are not given a chance to discover their personal aptitudes, nor are they informed of future employment opportunities).

The unsuitability of a school system which prepares children for town rather than village life is generally considered one of the reasons for the exodus from the countryside.

Most French-speaking African States have reacted against this legacy from the colonial period, but they have often come up against red tape in their own Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, schemes for the " ruralisation of education " have developed rapidly.

The term " ruralisation of education " means very different things to different countries. Some have merely ruralised the curricula with a view to easing the entry of pupils into working life, while others have tried to reform the whole system by adapting education to African needs and conditions. Here a brief account will be given of experience in Dahomey and Upper Volta.

In Dahomey the reform consists of adapting education to the environment and giving pupils at all levels an agricultural training. Fifty-four primary schools throughout the country have been ruralised on an experimental basis and provide elementary lessons in agriculture (based on observation of nature), domestic science for girls, and practical agricultural work.

In the field of secondary education, four colleges of modern agricultural education (as the ruralised colleges of general education are known) are operating in rural areas. Their curriculum is the same as that of the old colleges of general education but is supplemented by courses in agriculture and practical work in the fields (a total of six hours a week).

To ensure that schools are in a position to provide rural education, the curriculum at the teachers' training college now includes five hours a week of agricultural subjects (three hours of theory and two hours of practical work).

A final aspect of the educational reform in Dahomey is the setting up of co-operative schools, the first two of which are already operating. They provide training in crafts and agricultural subjects for students who have completed their normal schooling.

In Upper Volta the reform has been more thorough. The educational system is presently constituted as follows [1]:

(1) Basic education, consisting of—
   (a) rural education (children aged from 12 to 15 in rural areas without primary schooling) [2];
   (b) popular education (adults).
(2) School education, consisting of—
   (a) general primary and secondary education;
   (b) technical, commercial and industrial education.

The 365 rural education centres cater for children from rural areas who have had no primary schooling. Besides learning to read and write in French in three years, they are given theoretical and practical lessons in hygiene, civics, crafts and agriculture. Teachers (men and women) for the centres are recruited among holders of the lower certificate *(brevet élémentaire)* and are trained in ten months at the Kamboinsé Centre. Popular education caters for illiterate adults from urban and rural areas. Audio-visual methods are used.

General primary and secondary education has kept the traditional French structure, but curricula have been substantially altered and "Africanised", particularly with regard to history and geography. Technical, commercial and industrial education has been organised with a view to national requirements. An agricultural high school is being set up, divided into a technical section and an agricultural section. Commercial education provides training in secretarial work and accounting. Industrial education offers the choice of civil engineering or mechanical and electrical engineering.

These two types of ruralisation have met with certain difficulties in practice. Visits to primary schools in Dahomey show that the reform is being carried out seriously at that level; this is mainly due to the use of simple teaching sheets prepared by experts, and of school gardens which

[1] See *Nations nouvelles* (Yaoundé), New Series, No. 7, Mar. 1966, and *Promotion rurale* (Paris, BDPA), 1967, No. 16.

[2] Christol and Ménard: *Plan d'éducation rurale en Haute-Volta* (Paris, Société d'études pour le développement économique et social (SEDES), 1959), and *Education rurale en Haute-Volta* (Paris, SEDES, 1966).

are more or less well looked after depending on the enthusiasm of the teacher. But mere adjustment of the curriculum is not enough. In theory the child is no longer cut off from peasant life, since as soon as he starts school he is taught the rudiments of agriculture and made to work in the school garden. But will he in fact choose to work on the land rather than leaving for the town? More powerful incentives are required, such as material interest and the hope of making more money and leading a better life in the country, if young people are going to think twice about leaving or their parents are to persuade them to stay.

At the level of secondary education the problem is still more difficult. Experience with the colleges of modern agricultural education reveals the danger of artificially grafting an agricultural education on to a traditional one. Students complain that the curriculum is overloaded and dislike going out into the fields. It seems that the addition of agricultural courses and fieldwork is not enough to prepare them practically and above all psychologically for the rural environment.

On leaving the colleges students can continue their higher education, or, after a year's training, become assistant teachers in the ruralised schools, or else—and this is what the Government would like them to do—become " enlightened farmers " and heads of agricultural undertakings. Usually, however, they have not got the resources to set up as farmers, a problem they share with the graduates of the co-operative schools.

In Upper Volta the wide scope of the new rural education system poses the problem of recruiting and training qualified teachers. As already mentioned, this country has very creditably set about organising rural elementary education for young people without primary schooling—a large population group in black Africa and one for whom very little has so far been done. But are ten months of training at lower certificate level really a solid enough foundation for teaching illiterate youngsters in the bush? And will the latter be satisfied with the three years of basic education, or will not they too seek employment in the towns?

Nevertheless, however imperfect they may be, all these attempts to increase the relevance of education in rural areas are capable of further development.

Finally, how is the problem of co-ordinating manpower planning policy with education policy to be solved? Co-ordination of this kind is absolutely essential if young people are to be oriented towards jobs of which the country stands in need.

It is not enough to determine general labour force requirements in the medium and long term in all sectors of activity and at every level of skill. A decision also has to be taken regarding intermediate and senior staff, the demand for whom will influence the number of students admitted to secondary, technical and higher education.

In practice it is the Ministry of Planning that is best placed to calculate educational requirements on the basis of the demand for manpower in the various occupational categories. A human resources commission, consisting of representatives from the departments concerned, can help it in this task. But the trouble starts once the Ministry of Education has to be convinced of the Ministry of Planning's wisdom with regard to the provision of scholarships, foreign studentships, or the numbers receiving education. The presumed needs of the economy are not the sole criterion as far as the Ministry of Education is concerned: the " social " demand for education also carries weight.[1]

The future demand for various kinds of supervisory staff in rural areas (engineers, foremen, instructors, " animators ") also has to be estimated and appropriate training facilities organised, if necessary by increasing the capacity of existing agricultural educational establishments or by setting up new schools.

Problems of income

In discussing the role of an incomes policy in drawing up a national rural employment policy, account has to be taken of the inadequacy of the information currently available on the subject of income and its utilisation.

Statistical data on income are comparatively scarce. Information about income and the way it is spent is an invaluable indication of socio-economic behaviour, yet it is virtually unobtainable in the majority of African States. Self-consumed production, consisting mainly of foodstuffs, accounts for a large part of peasant income, yet it is usually estimated only roughly, the surveys that are conducted being concerned merely with money incomes.

Data on the utilisation of income is of precious assistance in understanding the motivations of rural populations. The main categories of expenditure can be listed as follows:

— spending on necessities (food, clothing, taxes);
— traditional and prestige spending;
— non-productive spending (on imported goods, alcohol, tobacco);
— savings (cattle, jewellery, tontines);
— productive investment (in farming, housing or trade).

Expenditure for prestige purposes and traditional festivities accounts for a large proportion of rural income, to the detriment of productive investment. So-called transfer expenses are also considerable. In a typical budget of the Maradi region in Niger, presents make up 45 per cent of total expenditure and receipts. The proportion of income available for

[1] See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: *Manpower forecasting in educational planning* (Paris, 1967).

productive investment in the same region is estimated at 15 per cent, and at only 7.5 per cent in the areas of Upper Volta where rural development teams are at work.[1]

There is still very little incentive to invest. The peasant first provides for his basic needs, and devotes any surplus to enhancing his social prestige through traditional expenditures and the purchase of manufactured goods. It follows that if peasants are to consent to the increased spending necessary to improve production they need encouragement through the provision of credit facilities for the purchase of equipment, seeds, fertilisers, insecticides, and so on. In order to arrive at a better utilisation of rural income, training officers must organise educational programmes and peasants must have access to stores which would assist them in adopting a rational pattern of consumer spending.

Governments should introduce realistic incomes policies taking due account of the factors which make people act as they do. The process of modernisation affecting the townspeople and wage earners passes the rural areas by, yet one of the aspirations felt by the peasants is precisely to destroy the barrier which separates them from the urban world. Thus the choice of occupation is influenced by the desire for personal profit, an improved standard of living, greater social prestige, and security. In order to promote rural employment, governments must seek by every possible means to increase peasant incomes and agricultural wages, while at the same time improving the image of farming as an occupation by appropriate psychological methods.

Another weapon in the armoury of development is taxation. Tax reductions in favour of certain categories of income, selective import duties or remissions: these are measures which can be used to encourage agricultural activities, increase certain types of production and guide consumption in desired directions.

Problems of motivation

The problem of securing effective popular participation in rural development is one which crops up every day in Africa. The chief incentives to participation seem to lie in the satisfaction of material needs, so it is important that new needs should be created. But other factors such as compulsion and the spirit of emulation cannot be ignored.

It is only as a result of rural animation that peasants begin to participate consciously in development work. Any project which does not have the full support of the peasants concerned runs the risk of failure.[2] It is therefore up to the rural animation team to engender this feeling of

[1] Data submitted to the OCAM Conference mentioned above.

[2] See Roland Colin: "L'animation et le développement rural en Afrique noire francophone", in *International Archives of Sociology of Cooperation* (Paris, Bureau d'études coopératives et communautaires), No. 20, July-Dec. 1966, pp. 133-199.

commitment, though exercising the greatest care in so doing owing to the suspicion and reserve with which any form of government initiative is viewed by the peasantry.

The African peasant continues to lead a life in which religion and natural phenomena play a large part. He will refuse to participate in any way and indeed will react negatively to development if his traditional values are offended by clumsy attempts at assistance.

Numerous taboos affect peasant productivity. Mourning for a close relative may prevent a man from cultivating the land for several months. Work in the fields is sometimes banned during festivities in honour of gods or ancestors. But native custom also has its positive side. In Dahomey, for example, on certain market days which are sacred, everyone has to put in a certain amount of work on behalf of the community. In nearly all African countries mutual aid plays an important part in agricultural work. Permanent or temporary mutual aid groups, formed according to age, operate in rotation, the host farmer providing the participants' food and drink.

But traditional obligations, and the way work is organised under the extended family system, have not suppressed the desire for independence of the younger generation, who are in fact increasingly seeking to free themselves from family constraints by setting up on their own account. This " modernist " trend, together with the movement towards private ownership of land, gives new importance to the interest motive and the idea of personal profit. The peasant will work harder if he can expect to reap such profit and realise his dream of building up a flock, buying imported goods, or whatever it may be.

The so-called " target-income " mentality is thus tending to disappear.[1] The basic motivation of the rural population is above all economic. The success of a development project depends on a large, guaranteed and immediate increase in incomes, which implies that any rural employment policy must be linked to a policy of stabilising agricultural prices.

The role of technical co-operation

If international co-operation is to have a useful role in the drafting of rural employment policy at the national level and in implementing concrete projects, there must first be a clear desire for such co-operation on the part of the government in question, which must then provide the institutional support the international effort will require.

[1] See John C. de Wilde: *Experience with agricultural development in tropical Africa.* Vol. I: *A synthesis* (Baltimore (Maryland), Johns Hopkins Press for the IBRD, 1967). The best example of this mentality is the case of the peasant who harvested only half his cotton field because, as he explained, he had already earned enough money to buy himself the blanket and hurricane lamp he needed.

Assuming these conditions to be fulfilled, what sort of co-operation is most effective? The provision of one or more experts to help the government in drawing up its rural employment policy would be appreciated, were it not for the fact that the experts usually lack the basic tools they need for their job, e.g. vehicles for the field studies, which the majority of developing countries are not in a position to supply since they do not have enough for their own requirements. The ideal solution would be to send a team of three experts attached respectively to the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Rural Development, and provide them with adequate support in the form of general-purpose vehicles and funds.

The experts could then draw up practical schemes to be financed out of economic aid provided in the form of grants (rather than of loans which are difficult to repay).

The problem of financial and material contributions from beneficiary governments under United Nations Special Fund projects remains to be solved. Often unrealistic in their terms and difficult to obtain once the project goes into operation, these contributions are a source of friction with governments. When the financial or material commitments are not honoured, certain projects may even be temporarily or permanently halted.

Local counterparts are usually provided but often they are subsequently transferred or used for tasks other than those for which they were trained by the experts.

The award of scholarships can be a valuable form of technical co-operation, provided that candidates are chosen with care (preferably they should be the experts' counterparts) and that the studies they undertake are of immediate use and really relevant to their subsequent careers. Certain courses held in Europe might be replaced by training in pilot rural development projects in Africa. The question of scholarships should be re-examined in the light of these remarks.

Lastly, aid should be channelled into practical projects, and there is a need for closer liaison between projects sponsored by the specialised agencies of the United Nations and assistance provided on a bilateral basis.

Practical projects of rural employment promotion

Without limiting governments' freedom of action, it is possible to envisage certain types of practical project which could find a place in a national rural employment policy. The nature of such projects and suggestions for their implementation are outlined below.

I. *Integrated rural development projects* have become common in Africa during the past few years and have had a considerable effect on employment thanks to improvements in cultivation methods. The pre-

liminary studies carried out under the ILO pilot project in western Nigeria have clearly shown that integrated rural development is a prerequisite for creating employment and that in the long run the only way to expand employment opportunities in the rural areas is through increased productivity and faster growth of income.[1] In the same category come crop intensification and diversification projects, together with internal migration and virgin land development schemes, which contribute to rural employment promotion by virtue of the greater number of working days generated by the introduction of new crops and the development of subsidiary activities in the settlement areas.

The conditions required for the implementation of integrated schemes include investment, staff, rural modernisation techniques and suitable training and animation machinery. In the last analysis, however, the fate of these schemes will depend on the degree of participation they can inspire in the peasants.

II. " The development of a country requires in the first place that its entire rural population should be engaged in productive work throughout the year. " [2] Many African countries have tried to achieve the goal of full employment through *human investment schemes.* Quite recently some States have again turned their attention to this method, though confining it to local operations in rural areas based on voluntary labour. The aim is to reduce seasonal underemployment in the short term and to provide new employment in the longer term. One example is the construction of the Dassa-Zoumé dam in Dahomey, which will make it possible to introduce market gardening and pisciculture.

The conditions found to be necessary for the success of the operations in Dassa-Zoumé are essentially similar to those required for like schemes in the neighbouring countries: the willing support of the peasants, with no question of forced labour; participation in work not requiring much skill; the availability of capable technical staff; and permanent upkeep of the finished construction by the local population.

Locally, the success of human investment schemes depends very largely on the psychological preparation of the inhabitants by the animation staff. This presupposes a knowledge of local customs and the aptitudes of the different ethnic groups for collective work, besides insight into motivations, the most important being the need of the villagers to feel that they are building something from which they are going to benefit directly.

Management of workers engaged in a human investment scheme is more difficult than that of workers who are paid normally. Voluntary workers must be treated with greater tact and flexibility. The work site

[1] Mueller and Zevering, op. cit.

[2] René Dumont: *Chine surpeuplée, Tiers monde affamé* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1965).

often resembles a fairground, complete with tomtoms, but there is no good reason why this should be changed.

Some of the chief practical problems are listed below:

— Supplies of materials must be carefully planned, since voluntary workers are easily discouraged if transport difficulties prevent the regular arrival of cement or tools at the bush work sites.

— Heavy machinery supplementing traditional methods should be used with caution. Voluntary labour is nearly always unskilled: earth is moved and dikes are dug with the aid of wheel-barrows, shovels, picks, small baskets carried on the head, etc. Quite apart from its high cost, the use of heavy machinery may well discourage the majority of volunteers who no longer see the point of what they are doing. It should only be brought in as a temporary measure.

— Where work is organised on a rota system (by neighbourhoods, or by villages if several villages are involved), careful account must be taken of local markets and traditional ceremonies if the site is not to be deserted on certain occasions.

Among the purely human problems are:

— Overseers. It is preferable to appoint a villager as site foreman, so that technical staff do not have to deal with questions of discipline. These are decidedly tricky, since volunteers are more difficult to handle than wage earners (though it is important that working hours should be respected as far as possible).

— The ethnic composition of the labour force. It is advisable to avoid situations in which ethnic groups who notoriously fail to get on are working on the same site;

— Assignment of work according to social criteria. Some workers may be forbidden by local custom to work at certain times or places.

Lastly, the organisation of voluntary rural schemes requires planning machinery to co-ordinate and supervise the human investment involved and to ensure that the communities concerned receive the material supplies they need.

III. *Practical projects for the development of crafts in rural areas* are linked with the modernisation of agricultural methods. Modernisation brings with it a demand for new equipment and, by increasing peasant income, a demand for improved living accommodation. Local crafts are being developed to meet the new requirements.

Traditional craftsmen who are no longer able to meet the demand will be retrained on the job, while new craftsmen will be trained in workshops, especially in the wood and iron trades. It will thus be possible to satisfy locally the demand for animal-drawn farm implements, furniture and hut improvements.

Projects of this kind could be carried out in all areas where agriculture is being modernised and the use of draught animals for farm work is spreading. They require skilled personnel and light equipment suitable for bush conditions, besides very detailed co-ordination by the planning authorities.

Conclusions

It can be seen from this brief analysis that the general conditions required for drawing up a national policy of employment in rural areas are as follows:

(1) co-ordination at government level, by the Ministry of Planning, of the activities of all the institutions responsible for the development of rural areas and for manpower planning;

(2) co-ordination at regional level, by the administrative authorities and the regional planning commission, of the activities of these same institutions and the development companies;

(3) the existence of an efficient statistical service;

(4) implementation of an incomes policy;

(5) decentralisation of state financing;

(6) adaptation of education to the rural environment, and co-ordination of manpower and educational planning policies;

(7) peasant participation encouraged by appropriate rural animation schemes;

(8) international technical co-operation backed by financial assistance.

It is obvious that no government will embark upon such a policy and carry out concrete projects of rural employment promotion unless it is convinced of the need for action at three different but vital levels: to educate the producer, to perfect the training of supervisory staff, and to adapt its own institutional machinery to the needs of development.