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**The Primary School Leavers Problem in Zambia;  
Official Policies and Attempted Solutions  
Since Independence**

by

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To

My Mother, Dailesi Banda

and

In memory of my late grandfather,

JEPHITA PHIRI.

This dissertation of Chikomeni Japhet Banda is approved as fulfilling part of the requirement for the award of the Master of Education degree of the University of Zambia.

Signed:..... Date:.....

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I, Chikomeni Japhet Banda, do declare that this  
dissertation has never before been submitted for  
a degree in this or any other University.

Signed:.....



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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to critically examine the government's policies towards the primary school leavers problem in Zambia since independence. The primary school leavers problem is a result of the policy of education expansion adopted at independence. This policy was a response to both manpower needs of a newly independent state and the demand for education by the people. The successful implementation of this policy has led to the primary school leavers problem. There has been a mismatch between the expansion of the primary sector and the secondary sector of the school system. This has led to a situation where many thousands of primary school leavers are unable to enter secondary schools every year. These school leavers have very few chances to either continue with their education or to be productively absorbed in the economy.

The Government has attempted several policies to try to arrest the situation. In Chapter Three, we examine those policies which have attempted to solve the problem within the school system either by offering more education facilities, to absorb as many school leavers as possible, or by reforming the school curriculum, to produce school leavers who are equipped with relevant skills for employment or self-employment. There is very little evidence to show that these efforts have made any significant contribution to mitigate the plight of the primary school leavers.

The introduction of mass 'solutions' outside the school system also had negligible impact on the primary school leavers problem in Zambia. In Chapter Four, we show that organisations like the Zambia Youth Service, Zambia National Service and the Rural Reconstruction Centres, have proved to be inefficient in their training programmes and unjustifiably expensive. Such programmes just frustrate the Youths.

The training of school leavers by the small scale community based training schemes has proved to be more successful than these other training schemes. However, these schemes only affect a very small proportion of school leavers due to lack of means to expand their services. Government policy towards these community based training schemes has not been very clear for a long time and only a few schemes have benefited from the help which is offered by the government.

This study concludes that the ultimate solution to the primary school leavers problem lies in the solving of the economic problems, which are the root cause of the school leavers problem. However, since this is a long term thing, the study recommends that as a short term measure, the government, particularly the Ministry of Youth and Sports, should do everything possible to help improve the running of those training schemes that have proved successful in training primary school leavers in skills which enable them to play a useful role in the economy.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the study

The first ten years of Zambia's independence saw tremendous progress in the field of education. Starting with one of the lowest education profiles on the continent, by 1974 Zambia could pride herself on one of the highest profiles. Many new schools both primary and secondary were built at a very fast rate to meet the needs of a newly independent state. Enrolment figures in these schools increased at an equally fast rate. However, while the output of secondary schools was absorbed in the middle level administrative posts and post secondary institutions, it was soon realized that the output from primary schools could not easily be absorbed either in the economy or the secondary schools.

A large annual number of primary school leavers could neither be taken on for further education nor find employment in the modern sector of the economy.

Expanding existing secondary school facilities has done very little to solve the problem of the primary school leavers, most of whom have not benefited from such expansion. The matching of educational output to manpower needs has become increasingly questionable as a determinant of expansion policy, especially when the economy cannot create enough jobs

for those who need them. The primary school leavers phenomenon has come to be viewed as a major symptom of the failure of the whole education system to bring about economic development. In terms of policy, what official action has been taken to solve or ameliorate the primary school leavers problem in Zambia, and indeed to rectify the shortcomings in the educational policy in line with the proclaimed Humanist strategy of development? This important question requires urgent attention.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study is an attempt to examine critically the Zambian government's policies towards the school leavers problem since independence, in the context of national development strategy. The implementation of policies designed to 'solve' the problem will be assessed in relation to their stated objectives and results. This study has been restricted to a critical analysis of policies and attempts at implementation, rather than being an evaluation of school leaver projects in the field. I shall attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the causes of the primary school leavers problem in Zambia?

Here I shall attempt a definition of the primary school leavers problem and try to identify its causes. I shall also try to examine the various views which have influenced the government to adopt certain policies on the problem.

2. In the light of the definition and causes of the problem, what have been the government's policies towards it since 1964?
3. How have these policies been implemented on the national level?

My concern here will be with those policies which have been directly implemented by the Government.

4. Why have these policies failed to solve the problem or How successfully have these policies been implemented?

#### Review of Related Literature

The primary school leavers problem is not new in Africa. A considerable amount of research, conferences and general debates have addressed the problem over a period of at least twenty years. The origins of the problem can be traced back into the colonial times.

The educational policies which were introduced in East and Central Africa restricted Africans' progress through the educational system. Colonial governments wanted only a small number of Africans in the supportive roles in administration, economy and police force. Structural barriers and lack of facilities meant that very few Africans went further than the primary school. Commenting on Kenya, King picks out the examination system as the most effective of these barriers. He observes that,

"Between 65-75 per cent of standard four children never went on for the last four years of primary education ... In the late 1950's and early 1960's, this took roughly 100,000 children out of the education circulation each year."

The many who were thrown out of the system and those who had no chance of going to school were expected to make their future in the villages. However, this is what most Africans who had some western education least expected from their education.

Reacting to colonial restrictions and genuine economic needs of an independent state, the Zambian Government embarked on a massive programme of education expansion. New primary schools, secondary schools, and post-secondary institutions were opened to give as many people as possible the chance to have an education. Enrolment in these institutions rose at a very fast rate.<sup>3</sup>

This rapid expansion of education in Zambia as else where in Africa, especially at the primary level, led to a development where primary schools produced so many people that only a small fraction of them could be offered further education in the secondary schools.<sup>4</sup> As Callaway has noted, this development is combination of two factors.

"Firstly, most African States have experienced a high rate of population growth and demand for education. The demand has led governments to offer primary education to as many children as possible."<sup>5</sup>

It was estimated in 1963 that between 50-80

per cent of the children of school going age were in schools. On the other hand, the economic growth rate of most African States has been so slow that it is difficult to offer enough secondary school places or create enough new jobs for the rising numbers of job seekers.<sup>6</sup> Callaway further argues that the implication of this situation means that African states will face the problem of unemployed school leavers for a long time.<sup>7</sup> In Zambia, for example, it has been estimated that about 100,000 Grade VII School Leavers could not find places in Form I in 1977 alone.<sup>8</sup> This is expected to be the trend every year and the figure would even be larger if one included those who leave school before reaching Grade VII.

Most of these young boys and girls leave school with no clear view of what they will do with themselves. They have no skills which they can offer for a wage and are too young to be employed in manual work. Many researchers, particularly in the 1960s, pointed out that these school leavers are over-ambitious, hoping for jobs beyond their reach which are mainly available in urban areas. This has led to mass and unplanned migration of young people from rural areas to urban areas.<sup>9</sup> When they reach towns, the jobs they had hoped for are nowhere to be found. This leads many of the primary school leavers into frustration which in some cases ends up in delinquent behaviour.<sup>10</sup> It has further been argued that many of the primary school

leavers, despite the situation they find themselves in, are unwilling to scale down their expectations to low-status jobs which may be open to them.<sup>11</sup>

However, more recent research has tended to disagree with some of these findings. King observes that the phenomenon of primary school leavers migrating to urban areas was a feature of the late 1950s and early 1960s. With the expansion of secondary schools, it is now secondary school leavers, with their better education, who migrate to urban areas, not primary school leavers.<sup>12</sup> Wallace and Weeks, working in Uganda, have refuted the argument that primary school leavers have failed to scale down their aspirations and that they are not willing to work with their hands. In their study, they found that many primary school leavers in actual fact do engage in self-employment involving manual labour, like helping in the fields of their parents, selling in markets, and as apprentices in small scale industries.<sup>13</sup> Similar findings have been reported in Zambia. Out-of-school youths, both in rural and urban centres, are actively involved in the informal sector of the economy as apprentice carpenters, tinsmiths, vendors of various commodities and helping their parents and relatives in their fields.<sup>14</sup>

Several ways and means have been attempted to try to solve the unemployment problem of the school leavers. During the colonial times, the reaction to this problem was to try to give Africans the type of education that would give

them 'a skill to live by', or to offer on the labour market for a wage. Much of the advisory literature on African education at this time had emphasized vocational or industrial education for the Africans. Practical subjects like carpentry, masonry, bricklaying, agriculture, etc., were to be taught to Africans.<sup>15</sup> However, industrial education for the Africans did not take much root mainly because the Africans thought that this was an inferior type of education designed to deprive them of the benefits of skilled participation in the modern economy.<sup>16</sup>

When independent African States began experiencing the problem of unemployed school leavers, the initial policies that were being implemented were to some extent similar to the colonial policies.<sup>17</sup> Both educators and politicians looked at the school curriculum as being unsuitable. They recommended a curriculum that would give those who pass through it some skill either for employment or self-employment. Tanzania offers a good example of a country that clearly expressed this policy.<sup>18</sup> The primary school was to be made self-contained and not a 'catchment area' for secondary schools. Practical subjects like agricultural science were to form the base of this education for self-reliance.<sup>19</sup> The success of such policies has not been clearly seen. Foster had previously criticised such policies, arguing that schools as agents of socialisation and role reproduction cannot be expected to create jobs.<sup>20</sup>



Such policies can only work if the economy can absorb those with skills. As long as the economy does not do this, such policies only create useless semi-skilled people.

Another aspect of policy on school leavers had been to introduce training programmes for the out-of-school youth. These programmes were of two types: Those with emphasis on recreation and those with emphasis on vocational or on-the-job training.<sup>21</sup> The recreational programmes were based on the assumption that if school leavers or idle youths in general are kept busy, this will keep them out of anti-social activities. This led to the formation of movements like, cultural clubs, drama clubs, Boys Scouts, etc.<sup>22</sup> These clubs may help reduce delinquency but they do not, in any significant way, help create employment and are mainly restricted to urban areas where organisation and facilities are easily available.<sup>23</sup>

From the early 1970s there has been a shift in policies on out-of-school youths from introducing programmes which are predominantly recreational to vocational programmes.<sup>24</sup> Vocational training programmes are offered by both private organisations or directly by government departments. One important aspect of this type of education is that it is trying to use what resources exist in the local community, including youthful manpower, to bring about development.<sup>25</sup>

Most governments have introduced training schemes to train school leavers in various skills which are directly run by government departments. These schemes may be semi-military or fully military. They emphasize vocational training, discipline and community service.<sup>26</sup> A good example of such programmes in Zambia would be the Zambia Youth Service which operated between 1964-1971.<sup>27</sup> The current Zambia National Service and Rural Reconstruction Centres are also examples of such programmes. These offer skills mainly in the agricultural field with the aim that the graduates will be self-employed in the rural sector of the economy.<sup>28</sup> Very little critical appraisal of the effectiveness of such schemes has been made. However, the observation has been made that they face financial, administrative and recruitment problems and that their impact on the problem is very difficult to assess.<sup>29</sup>

The literature reviewed so far seems to attribute the problem of unemployment of school leavers either to the education system or to the absence of relevant skills in the school leavers. This line of approach has, however, been questioned by some scholars. These scholars have attributed the problem to the economic structures of most African States.<sup>30</sup> African countries inherited capitalist modes of production and the unemployment problems being experienced are the normal problems of capitalist development.<sup>31</sup> Lasting solutions to these problems can only be realised with the revolutionary transformation of

the economy from capitalism to socialism. These other efforts are seen as mere delaying tactics to avoid the solution.

From the above review we can see that the problem of training and employment of school leavers is a very complex one where no single policy or training scheme has yet provided a solution. It is a problem which has to be tackled from various angles.

#### Methods of Study

This study is based largely on library sources. Official records and reports were examined. I also consulted published secondary sources and unpublished material. A great deal of information came from news stories, features and letters to the press. The data for this study were located in the following places:-

1. University of Zambia Library,
2. National Archives of Zambia,
3. United National Independence Party Archives,  
Freedom House, Lusaka,
4. Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail Libraries  
and
5. The Ministry of Education and Culture and the  
Ministry of Youth and Sports, Headquarters.

Wherever possible, personal interviews with officials who have been involved with policy formulation or implementation, were carried out to clarify or supplement the documents.

### Organisation of the Study

The study is comprised of six chapters. After the introduction in Chapter one, Chapter two deals with the origins and characteristics of the primary school leavers problem in Zambia, and examines the various theoretical views that have influenced policies on the problem.

Chapter Three deals with government policies since 1964. In this chapter our focus is on policies of an educational nature, that is the expansion of the secondary school system, curriculum innovations, the extension of the period of basic education, correspondence education and the repetition of grades.

Chapter Four deals with policies directed at the out-of-school youths, with emphasis on the introduction of such programmes as the Zambia Youth Service, Zambia National Service and Rural Reconstruction Centres.

Chapter Five deals with community efforts to help the government solve the out-of-school youth unemployment problem. In this chapter emphasis is on the government's policy towards community based school leavers training efforts.

Chapter Six is the concluding chapter and is mainly a summary of the policies and schemes discussed in the previous chapters. In this chapter some recommendations on an improved approach to a policy for primary school leavers is given.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ORIGINS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRIMARY

#### SCHOOL LEAVERS PROBLEM

In this chapter we shall try to examine the origins of the primary school leavers problem in Zambia. To do this we shall focus our attention on the educational developments that have taken place since independence. Our discussion will try to explore the theoretical framework in which education has been operating and how policies have contributed to the rise of the primary school leavers problem.

The modern education system in Zambia, like other former colonies in Africa, was imposed by the colonial government. Among other functions, education served the colonial capitalist socio-economic structure by training people to help man the administration and to staff the private economic concerns owned by the colonialists.<sup>1</sup> Because of the relatively small size of the wage labour force needed in the colonial capitalist economy, the education system also produced people who could not manage to get employment in this sector. The restriction of access to the meagre higher education places was achieved by making the system highly hierarchical, segregative and competitive in which each lower stage prepared a small group of students for entry by a selective examination to the next level up.<sup>2</sup> Those ejected from the school system joined those who had never been to school and formed a pool of cheap labour at the disposal of the employers in the capitalist system.

This is the education system that Zambia inherited at the time of independence: An education system which was basically intended to serve the capitalist socio-economic order. Educational development in post-colonial Zambia, can be seen as a huge expansion of the hierarchical structure of the colonial times. In essence, 'the education policy of the new government may be described as the massive expansion, elaboration and desegregation of existing colonial structure.'<sup>3</sup>

There were several reasons why Zambia pursued an expansionist policy of education development. Firstly, Zambia was just following the commonly held view of development that assumed a direct link between educational expansion and economic growth.<sup>4</sup> According to this strategy of development, Zambia needed a large number of educated people to serve in the economy or to bring about economic growth. This meant the expansion of the education system, particularly at the post-primary level. The following remark by a UNESCO commission on educational development in Zambia shortly before independence clearly indicates this line of thinking. The commission called for,

'expansion of education for Africans to rectify the discrimination and exclusion of the past, particularly post-primary education upon which depend access to professional skills, to high and middle ranks of administration, industry and commerce.'<sup>5</sup>

The report further stated that the role of primary education would be to ensure a large supply of possible secondary school

entrants.<sup>6</sup> Though only an advisory document, this report greatly influenced policy makers to adopt an expansionist policy. The policy of expansion was not only linked to economic development but also to the promises the political leadership made to the people and the people's own demand for more education facilities.<sup>7</sup> The government was determined to fulfil the promises made, while the people were anxious to have education for their children which they saw as a passport to a better future, but had previously been denied them by the colonial system. It is important at this stage to note that by adopting an expansionist strategy of development, Zambia committed itself to a policy which needed an ever increasing budget for both capital and recurrent costs. This is evident in the large amounts of money which were devoted to education from the Emergency Development Plan (E.D.P., 1964) to the Second National Development Plan (S.N.D.P., 1972-1976).

The Emergency Development Plan (E.D.P.) and the Transitional Development Plan (T.D.P.) initiated the government's policy of education expansion by allocating large sums of money to be used, in a short period of time, to open new schools where none existed and to expand the existing ones.<sup>8</sup> In these development plans, education was a top priority over other sectors. Financially, projects in the education sector approved in the T.D.P. exceeded by a long way expenditure in the other sectors, for example, £5.3m was spent on new projects in the education sector compared to £1.8m spent on similar projects in the health

and social welfare sector.<sup>9</sup> The T.D.P. aimed at accelerating the expansion efforts initiated during the E.D.P., especially at the secondary level, to meet the manpower requirements.<sup>10</sup> Between 1966 and 1967 the plan envisaged to have 120 new Form I classes per year.<sup>11</sup> At the primary level, the plan aimed at 'four years primary education for all by 1970', and to have at least 75 per cent of those completing lower primary schooling to go on to upper primary schooling.<sup>12</sup>

The government launched a coherent education plan during the First National Development Plan (F.N.D.P., 1966-1970). The plan aimed at creating enough places to ensure primary education for every one by 1970, a 100 per cent progression rate through the primary system for urban schools and 75 per cent for rural schools. The plan also aimed at expanding the secondary system to provide relevant manpower for development.<sup>13</sup> The S.N.D.P. continued with the efforts initiated during the First National Development Plan. The Plan called for increased facilities to offer 80 per cent progression from Grade IV to Grade V and 24 per cent progression from Grade VII to Form I.<sup>14</sup>

By the early 1970's the education system had expanded tremendously and was beset by serious problems. Ironically, these problems were a result of a fairly successful implementation of post-colonial policies which aimed at resolving colonial shortcomings. However, the planned goal of universal primary entry by 1970 was not achieved.

Though there were an increasing number of educational facilities, access to these facilities was not open to all children who needed them. For example, the rapid increase of population and migration to urban areas led to the crowding around limited primary school places creating a serious shortage of places.<sup>15</sup> The poor siting of schools, particularly in rural areas, made such schools inaccessible to some children. Regional disparities in the provision of primary facilities still existed. Progression ratios at both primary and secondary levels, were not maintained due to various reasons, like the slow rate of building programme, lack of trained teachers and general lack of funds due to budgetary restrictions.<sup>16</sup> The slow rate of building new facilities was also experienced at the secondary school level. This in turn affected the progression ratio from Grade VII to Form I which either remained stagnant or slightly increased. This left too many school leavers who could not enter secondary schools. In most cases these Grade VII school leavers have very remote chances of obtaining salaried or wage employment in the modern sector of the economy on the basis of their education.<sup>17</sup> It was relatively easier in the first few years of independence for primary school leavers to obtain wage employment, but this is no longer possible because such opportunities have been far outstripped by the number of school leavers.

It is not easy to ascertain the magnitude of the unemployment problem among primary school leavers. Although

a very large number of primary school leavers do not have wage employment in the modern sector, this does not necessarily mean that they are not economically active. Some migrate to urban areas for a short period and if they fail to secure wage employment return to their villages and help their economic activities.<sup>18</sup> In this context it may be argued that the primary school leaver situation is not a problem because school leavers still have opportunities in the non-formal, including peasant farming, sector of economy. However, the problem emerges when it is examined in the context of the general aims of education as viewed by the society.

It is the general expectation of both parents and pupils that education should lead to social and economic mobility. As Dumont has argued, parents do not send their children to school so that they become just like them.<sup>19</sup> They expect their children to be economically and socially better off than themselves. In this light primary education no longer leads to the expected occupational and social mobility. Another aspect of the problem can be seen in the expansion policy of the school system. As we have seen above, one of the driving forces behind expansion was the alleged inexhaustible need for educated manpower in the modern sector of the economy. It has been proved that the absorptive capacity of the wage sector of the Zambia economy, as most third world economies, is not enough to accommodate the ever increasing number of school leavers, particularly primary school leavers.<sup>20</sup> What does one do about

people who have been prepared for what they cannot get in the modern sector of the economy? As Carnoy has argued,

'if children do not get jobs in the modern sector, the schooling they have taken does not prepare them for the tasks they will perform in the traditional agricultural or marginal urban sectors of economic activity.'<sup>21</sup>

This leaves the primary school leavers trying to find something useful to do and exposes them to situations which may lead to anti-social behaviour or being exploited as cheap labour in the capitalist economic structure.<sup>22</sup>

The consequent dilemma of this situation has been the widespread public discontent with the education system. The public is calling for more schools both primary and secondary to ensure that its children reach levels of education which leads to employment.<sup>23</sup>

Popular complaints over the selection process at the Grade I, Grade V and Form I entry points in the system have been aired. The policy makers seem to have realised that the expansion of educational facilities to the people has finally encountered its inevitable financial and physical limits. As long ago as 1969, President Kaunda, in his opening address to the First National Educational Conference, expressed this situation in the following words:

'the wider our school system expands, bringing in more and more children, the greater grows the people's desire for more. The demand for education is inexhaustible; our means for satisfying it are not.'<sup>24</sup>

This idea of limited resources for educational expansion was fully incorporated in the Second National Development Plan (S.N.D.P., 1972-1976), a document which largely completed the massive expansion programmes begun by its predecessors, and proposed very little new educational investment. The S.N.D.P. also called for post-primary training for those school leavers who are ejected from the system.<sup>25</sup> This training was to be a skill which could be used in wage employment or self-employment.

A serious policy response of the Ministry of Education to this crisis in the education system, was the publication of a set of proposals for educational reform, Education for Development, in 1976.<sup>26</sup> This document is a critical evaluation of the existing education system, a criticism which was influenced by experiences of other countries which are attempting to revolutionise their systems of education, and by Zambia's own experiences.<sup>27</sup> The proposals represented an interpretation of a socialist education system for Zambia. They proposed that the system of education should be based on collective and egalitarian organisational lines, not on the existing hierarchical and elitist lines.<sup>28</sup> The proposed reforms called for the elimination of the gap between study and work which is so apparent in the existing system.



The document also called for the elimination of the ejective selection system which leaves so many in the cold.<sup>29</sup> The document expressed several radical policy directions in education whose realisation lay in the assumption that Zambia is in the process of transition to a socialist society.<sup>30</sup>

The 1976 proposals were subjected to a public debate to test what the people wanted. In 1977 the government came up with a new document ostensibly reflecting the feelings expressed in the national debate.<sup>31</sup> This document, as Clarke has observed, is by contrast a rejection of the radical proposals of 1976.<sup>32</sup> The existing hierarchical structure is to be maintained with its highly competitive selection system. The document calls for skills training for those who will drop out of the system. The dual nature of the economy and the difficulty of accommodating those with education in such an economy is accepted.<sup>33</sup> This is a clear demonstration that socialism in Zambia exists only on paper and that there is very little political will to challenge the inherited capitalist structure. The UNIP government has failed to make a bold decision which would put the country on a clear course of educational and national development. It seems that the government has opted to follow educational policies which will not help solve the unemployment problem of the primary school leavers, but will make it even worse.

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### CHAPTER THREE

#### "SOLUTIONS" FROM WITHIN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

In this chapter we shall focus our attention on those policies which have been directed at solving the primary school leavers problem by introducing changes in the school system. We shall specifically look at the policy of secondary school expansion, repeating of grades in primary schools, age of entry to school, correspondence education as an alternative to formal schooling, and finally we shall examine the issue of universal basic education and the introduction of work oriented curriculum in the school system.

#### Expansion of the Secondary School System

The first public reaction when Grade VII selection examination results are published is the general outcry for more secondary schools to absorb the many thousands of school leavers who are not selected for Form I. The Government is faced with the demand for expanding educational facilities not only at secondary school level, but all educational levels. As Mehra has observed, there are two most important factors that influence the expansion of the secondary system in Zambia, these are, the social demand for such facilities and the government's manpower policy.<sup>1</sup> The government feels obliged to satisfy the people's demands for more secondary schools and the critical shortage of educated manpower that faced Zambia at independence is one of a few facts about Zambia which has been voiced loudly by many

people.<sup>2</sup> It is from these two perspectives that policy on expansion of the secondary system has been determined, and as we shall see later on, the Zambian government has yet to strike an acceptable balance between these influencing factors.

Because of the above mentioned influencing factors, the government embarked upon a massive programme of secondary school expansion.

From the Emergency Development Plan through the Transitional Development Plan to the First National Development Plan, a high priority was put on the expansion of secondary education. For example, out of a total education expenditure of K2,232,000 during the Emergency Development Plan, K1,486,000 was set aside for the expansion of the secondary school system.<sup>3</sup> In the 18 months period of the Transitional Development Plan, the Ministry of Education was allocated K13,542,000 which represented 20 per cent of the budget.<sup>4</sup> These efforts were continued when the First National Development Plan was launched in 1966.

The cumulative effects of all these efforts was an impressive growth of the secondary school system in terms of both enrolment figures and distribution of schools. There was an increase in enrolment from 13,853 in 1964 to an estimated 52,472 in 1970.<sup>5</sup> Unlike during the colonial times when secondary schools were mainly restricted to urban and a few isolated rural centres, the independent government opened up secondary schools in almost every district to reach as many people as possible.<sup>6</sup>

The changes in the secondary system were not only restricted to the expansion of facilities and enrolment figures, but also to the objectives of the whole system. As Mwanakatwe has summarised, the following were the objectives and targets to be met at the end of the First National Development Plan period:

- (a) that one-third of the local primary school output proceed to Form I;
- (b) that two-thirds of all Form II output proceed to senior secondary;
- (c) that the curriculum at senior secondary level should be diversified to some extent without prejudicing the academic progress of pupils with potential for graduate or higher professional courses;
- (d) that selection for higher education in the University of Zambia and for other appropriate courses should be at 'O' level or its equivalent;
- (e) that the efficiency of secondary schools should improve through the use of better equipment and the increased supply of qualified teachers.<sup>7</sup>

We can see that these objectives and targets were clearly aimed at satisfying the people's demands for more secondary education for their children and the country's needs for educated and trained manpower. However, at the end of the Plan period,

it was realised that the targets set were too ambitious and unrealistic and that they could not be met. The most unrealistic of these targets was the progression ratio from Grade VII to Form I. Despite the increases in Form I enrolments during the plan period, the number of school leavers who could not be selected for Form I kept on increasing. This continued to be the trend throughout the Second National Development Plan. The table below shows the magnitude of the Grade VII school leavers who could not secure Form I places between 1969-1979.

TABLE 1

| PROGRESSION RATE FROM GRADE VII TO FORM I<br>1969 - 1979 |                         |                    |                           |            |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Year   | Number of<br>Candidates | Number<br>Selected | Number<br>not<br>Selected | % Selected |
| 1969   | 64,659                  | 15,175             | 49,484                    | 23.46      |
| 1970   | 67,222                  | 15,793             | 51,429                    | 23.49      |
| 1971   | 73,859                  | 15,747             | 58,112                    | 21.32      |
| 1972   | 80,506                  | 17,570             | 62,936                    | 21.82      |
| 1973   | 88,785                  | 19,762             | 69,023                    | 22.25      |
| 1974   | 97,685                  | 20,868             | 76,817                    | 21.36      |
| 1975   | 120,631                 | 21,000             | 99,631                    | 17.40      |
| 1976   | 119,000                 | 21,961             | 97,039                    | 18.45      |
| 1977   | 120,545                 | 21,628             | 98,917                    | 17.94      |
| 1978   | 127,738                 | 21,762             | 105,976                   | 17.03      |
| 1979   | 132,912                 | 22,077             | 110,835                   | 16.61      |

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, Psychological Services, Seminar Paper Presented to the Psychological Association of Zambia Seminar, August 1980, p. 6.

As already pointed out above, the First National Development Plan projected a one-third progression rate from Grade VII to Form I. This was not met. This was not entirely unexpected by the Plan.<sup>8</sup> During the Second National Development Plan, the progression rate was put at an average of 24 per cent over the plan period.<sup>9</sup> However, we can see from the above table, that the progression rate over the Second National Development Plan period dropped from 21.82 per cent in 1972 to 18.45 per cent in 1976.



There are several explanations for this trend in the progression rates, the most important being the limitations on the capital budget because of unfavourable economic conditions resulting from the low prices of copper on the world market. This in turn adversely affected the building programme in the secondary school sector. However, the situation can be described as not too bad because the 24 per cent progression rate was just an average and the actual progression rates experienced during the plan period were reasonably near the projected rate.

Though the growth of secondary school education can be described as impressive in terms of absolute numbers, it has been unbalanced in terms of regional distribution. It is worthwhile noting that the government is committed to build 16 new junior secondary schools during the Third National Development Plan, 1979-1983.<sup>10</sup> This may help narrow the regional disparities in the provision of secondary schools and will improve the progression rates from Grade VII to Form I. Though the Third National Development Plan is committed to reverse the downward trend of the Progression rate from Grade VII to Form I, the manner envisaged to achieve this seems doubtful. Apart from committing large sums of money for secondary expansion, the government expects the community to supplement these efforts through community action programmes.<sup>11</sup> Community self-help projects contributed a lot to the expansion of education, especially at primary school level, during the initial years of independence. The spirit of community self-help seems to have dampened during the course of years because of the failure by the Government to fulfil certain promises. It would be

very difficult to mobilise the people in such an atmosphere. Building a secondary school demands more work than building a primary school and people may not be willing to devote a lot of their resources to such a big task at the expense of their normal duties. This suggests that the expansion of the secondary system during the Third National Development Plan may not be as expected.

Though the policy of expanding the secondary school system may mitigate the demand for more facilities and absorb a few more primary school leavers, as a final solution to the problem, this policy is bound to fail. The country has insufficient resources, both human and financial, to satisfy the ever increasing demand for secondary school facilities. From the economic point of view, it seems that this policy would only manage to produce more educated people who cannot be easily absorbed in the economy. This is so because of the slow rate of economic growth, which means that few jobs are created compared to the job seekers. For example, the Third National Development Plan accepts that, over the course of the Second National Development Plan, the growth of paid employment in the modern sector of the economy was almost negligible.<sup>12</sup> This has been attributed to the unfavourable international economic conditions which have adversely affected local economic growth. In this context secondary school expansion would mean transforming the primary school leavers problem into a secondary school leavers problem.

### Repeating in the Primary School System

After failing to enter Form I, most school leavers have little or no chance to continue with their education. One of the few chances that exist for continuing education is the repeating of grades in Primary school. Repeating is not a new phenomenon in Zambia, but dates back to the colonial days. At independence the government issued new regulations governing the repeating of grades which restricted repeating in primary schools to Grades IV and VII. In these grades, a pupil may repeat if he is of the right age, if in doing so, he does not prevent another pupil from a lower grade from progressing into that grade. Furthermore, a pupil is not allowed to repeat more than once.<sup>13</sup>

There are several reasons why a pupil may wish to repeat a grade. The most common reason for repeating is that a pupil who has failed to enter secondary school on the first attempt may wish to have a second try. At times parents do feel that their children are not doing well at school and request headteachers to let them repeat a grade to improve their performance. In some cases repeating is encouraged by teachers in order to create room for other repeaters in the grade above.<sup>14</sup>

The problem of repeating is a complex one and not easy to accurately analyse. Though sanctioned by the government, most schools treat repeating as a school secret and give falsified information to the Ministry of Education authorities on the issue.

This is so because repeating is practised even in grades where it is not supposed to be by law. However, in 1970, the Ministry of Education conducted a pilot study on the problem of repeating in primary schools in Lusaka and Luapula regions.<sup>15</sup> According to this study, repeating is a common practice in many grades. Repeaters who are in grades where repeating is illegal are kept secret from the Ministry officials. In the Lusaka sample, for example, none of the schools reported the presence of repeaters in their official returns, when in actual fact these schools had between 4 - 16 per cent repeaters. The same situation, though on a smaller scale, was found in the Luapula sample.

Taking these samples as fairly representative of the urban and rural situation on repeaters, we end up with percentages far in excess of the reported figures. This is very true particularly at Grade VI level where we have ten per cent repeaters against the reported one percent. The table below gives the reported and actual percentages of repeaters in Grades IV and VII.

TABLE 2

| NATIONAL REPEATER RATIOS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS<br>1970 |       |                   |                     |
|---|-------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Sex   | Grade | Actual Percentage | Reported Percentage |
| BOYS  | IV    | 9                 | 3.5                 |
|   | V     | 5                 | 0.4                 |
|   | VI    | 10                | 1.1                 |
|   | VII   | 17                | 12.2                |
| GIRLS   | IV    | 6                 | 2.8                 |
|   | V     | 4                 | 0.5                 |
|   | VI    | 11                | 1.3                 |
|   | VII   | 16                | 11.0                |

Source: ME/101/7/70, 'Repeaters in Primary Schools':

Report on Repeater Problem based on Pilot  
Studies in Lusaka and Luapula Regions by  
J.D.B. Eerdmans, July 1970.

Repeating, at the rate that is being practised in Zambia, is bound to have negative repercussions on the primary school system. Though not easily supported by empirical evidence, we would assume that repeating would tend to create a lot of pressure on the limited resources of the school. Repeaters stay in school for a longer period than the stipulated seven years in the present primary school system. For example in the school-leaver biographies' collected from first year Education students at the University of Zambia, it was revealed that some repeaters go down from Grade VII to repeat Grade VI or even Grade V, and some do this more than once.<sup>16</sup> This prolonged stay means that more money than planned is spent on the same children. This is the money which could be used in the education of other children who are being denied the chance. Since most repeaters are 'invisible' students, most schools have a population beyond their capacity in terms of the rooms and equipment which is available to them. In such a situation the quality of teaching is negatively affected.

Repeaters at whatever level, put the non-repeaters in a less advantageous position when it comes to both learning and examinations. Since they are familiar with what is being taught, they may influence the pace of learning to the disadvantage of non-repeaters. Though very little study has been

carried out on the secondary selection examinations, it can be expected that they would do better than non-repeaters.

In his case study of Mwinilunga, Hoppers found that most school leavers prefer to repeat grades and that by repeating, one has a better chance of being selected for secondary school.<sup>27</sup>

As a solution to the primary school leavers problem, repeating is not very effective. It is true that a few who manage to repeat, are given a 'second chance to achieve what they had failed to achieve and that these students benefit from it'. However, the number of repeaters is negligible compared to the number of school leavers who are unable to obtain places to repeat.

We can further argue that repeating has few benefits because selection to Form I is, in addition to one's performance, determined by the most crucial factor, the availability of Form I places. This means that if there are few Form I places only a few Grade VII school leavers can be selected for secondary school. In other words, repeating just makes competition for secondary school places even stiffer.

#### Age of Entry to Primary School

One of the most popular arguments that has been advanced to explain the plight of primary school leavers is that they leave school while too young to be employed anywhere.<sup>18</sup> One way to solve this age problem might be that children should enter school later than is the practice now. Pursuing this line of thinking,

the Ministry of Education in 1966 issued regulations on the age of entry into Grade I. The Ministry's directive was that,

'a child shall not be of an appropriate age for enrolment as a pupil in Grade I unless:-

- (a) in the case of a scheduled school, he will, on the 31st March of the year of enrolment have attained the age of five years but not have attained the age of six and one-half years;
- (b) in the case of an unscheduled school, he will on the 31st of January of the year of enrolment, have attained the age of seven years but not have attained the age of nine years'.<sup>19</sup>

In selecting children for enrolment, the Head was expected to give preference to younger children in the case of scheduled schools and older children in the case of unscheduled schools.<sup>20</sup>

As we can see these regulations were different for schools which affected mainly non-Zambian children, and those which were predominantly for Zambians. To bring all schools under the same regulations, the Ministry of Education in 1972 issued further directives to the effect that Zambian children would be eligible to enter Grade I in formerly/<sup>scheduled</sup> schools if on 31st January they had attained the age of seven years.<sup>21</sup> This directive was to become fully effective by 1975.

The ruling on the age of admission to Grade I has not been easy to implement. The major problem with the implementation of this policy has been the absence of birth certificates especially for children born in rural areas and out of hospitals. Although it is mandatory by law to register the birth of children, most parents do not obey this ruling and the government has no clear mechanism to enforce this law.<sup>22</sup> In the absence of birth certificates, parents are expected to swear an affidavit to prove the age of their children. This practice, as Mehra has pointed out, gives the parents a chance to cheat on the ages of their children seems to be beneficial to the parents in the face of the shortage of Grade I places and the annual increase in the demand of places. Even if the law on birth registration was strictly enforced, it would be after seven years that the first full national cohort of seven year old children with birth certificates would prove their eligibility to enter Grade I.

The argument that primary school leavers leave school too young for employment is a valid one. But from the above argument we can conclude that the most important factor about the school leavers problem is not that they are too young but what role can they play in the economy. The best way of dealing with this problem would be to increase job opportunities through accelerated economic growth. It would also be necessary to give the primary school leavers the relevant skills that would make them useful in the economy.



Correspondence Education: Supervised Study Groups

Correspondence education, as an alternative to formal schooling, has existed in Zambia since the 1950s.<sup>24</sup>

Up to the mid 1950s, this type of education was being offered only by externally based Correspondence Colleges.<sup>25</sup> At Independence, correspondence education was still entirely in foreign hands with some local representatives. Just before independence the government was making plans to offer correspondence education. This was a result of a series of commissions of inquiry which recommended that the government get involved in correspondence education as a means of offering more educational opportunities to the people. The most notable of these commissions of inquiry were the Sheath Commission of July 1963, the Lockwood Committee of November 1963 and the UNESCO survey of December, 1963.<sup>26</sup> The general theme of these commissions was that correspondence education was very necessary to supplement the existing educational facilities and as a means to educate the masses, who were too old to enter normal schools, for national development.<sup>27</sup>

The recommendations of these commissions acted as a springboard upon which the independent government based its programme of correspondence education. In 1964, through the Ministry of Education and as part of the Adult Education Section, the government established the correspondence Course Unit which moved to Luanshya in 1966. It was this Unit which became the National Correspondence College in 1974.<sup>28</sup> Initially

the College aimed at improving the educational standards of people who were already in employment and to teach adults how to read and write. The students who enrolled with the college at this stage studied mostly through night schools. Night School education did not prove attractive to the primary school leavers because night school education is considered inferior to formal secondary schooling.<sup>29</sup>

The College has undergone several changes in the emphasis of its activities since its establishment in 1964. From 1964-1970, the emphasis of the college was mainly on adult education. The College offered normal academic subjects at both primary and post-primary levels. Between 1970-1976, due to the increasing number of primary school leavers, the college broadened its activities by introducing a special programme specifically designed and directed at this category of people. Since the adoption of education reform proposals, the role of the college is expected to expand drastically. The college is expected to expand on its present enrolment figures and introduce new courses which will offer both professional and technical subjects.<sup>30</sup> It is also expected that the college will work hand in hand with other government bodies to increase its services. To facilitate its new role during the reform era, the college will move from Luanshya to Lusaka.<sup>31</sup> Since the education reforms have yet to take root, we shall focus our discussion on the 1970-1976 period and concentrate specifically on the primary school leavers.

### Supervised Study Groups (S.S.G.)

The first correspondence studies scheme specifically designed to accommodate Grade VII school leavers was introduced in 1968 - but was, after two years, abandoned due to poor planning and other technical problems.<sup>32</sup> In 1972 a new form of correspondence education for school leavers was introduced. This was the S.S.G. This scheme is supervised by the Correspondence College which supplies study materials, guidance as well as keeping records on the students' progress.<sup>33</sup> The S.S.G. are a special form of correspondence education where pupils meet in a classroom situation to study, following a common timetable. These classes are manned by supervisors who ensure that the students follow their time-tables and post the study material back to the College for correcting. The supervisors are not necessarily trained teachers and are not expected to teach the students they supervise.<sup>34</sup>

The S.S.G., follow the same curriculum as normal secondary schools. Most of these study groups operate from primary school classrooms when these are free or from any other appropriate rooms. In terms of current expenditure per student per annum, the S.S.G. is much cheaper than the expenditure in a normal secondary school. In 1972 the government spent less than K50 per student per annum in the S.S.G. scheme, while in the same year, the recurrent expenditure per pupil, excluding boarding, was K212.74 and K316.74 including boarding in a normal secondary school.<sup>35</sup>

It was government's intention that each district should have a maximum of 200 students registered under this scheme, but due to the high concentration of school leavers, especially in urban areas, some district have more than this number. Due to poor location of the study group centres, particularly in rural areas, where they are restricted to administrative centres, they mostly have very few students.<sup>36</sup>

#### Performance of the S.S.Gs.

In 1972 the S.S.G. had 1,300 students enrolled in Form I and of this number 791 wrote the Form III examination in 1974 at the completion of the three years duration of study. A drop out rate of 44.51 per cent was experienced.<sup>37</sup> Of the 791 who sat for the examinations, 8.85 per cent managed to obtain a full certificate while 70.3 per cent had referral passes.<sup>38</sup> The performance of this initial group was not very encouraging. The most critical problem facing the S.S.G. is the high rate of students who drop out of the programme. The rate of drop outs is higher in the rural areas than in urban areas. The table below gives the up to date national drop out rate of the S.S.G. by region in 1974.

TABLE 3

| NATIONAL DROP-OUT RATE OF THE INITIAL S.S.G.<br>BY REGION, 1974 |                      |                                       |          |               |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|---------------|
| REGION  | Students<br>Enrolled | Students who<br>wrote<br>Examinations | Drop-out | Drop-out<br>% |
| Lusaka  | 175                  | 152                                   | 23       | 13.14         |
| Western   | 150                  | 109                                   | 41       | 28.00         |
| Kabwe   | 195                  | 137                                   | 58       | 29.74         |
| Eastern   | 150                  | 101                                   | 49       | 32.00         |
| Southern  | 150                  | 93                                    | 57       | 38.00         |
| N. Western  | 150                  | 79                                    | 71       | 47.00         |
| Luapula   | 30                   | 15                                    | 15       | 50.00         |
| Copperbelt  | 200                  | 96                                    | 104      | 52.00         |
| Northern  | 30                   | 10                                    | 20       | 66.67         |
| TOTAL:  | 1,130                | 792                                   | 438      | 38.76         |

Source: Ministry of Education, Supervised Study Groups:  
Statistical Report 1972-1975, p. 17.

There are various reasons why most students leave the S.S.G. Programme. According to several provincial reports,

- (a) because most of their supervisors are not qualified enough to help them;
- (b) students get frustrated because of poor communication between their centres and the College. This is true mainly for rural centres.

(e) some students manage to enter normal secondary schools;

(d) some get married or drift to unknown destinations.<sup>39</sup>

As an alternative to formal secondary school education, the S.S.G. is aimed at the right target and offers the same curriculum as a normal school. However, several issues should be raised on this scheme as a viable solution to the primary school leaver problem. The Government may spend less money on the S.S.G. scheme than it does in normal secondary schools, but we cannot justify this because the performance of the scheme is far from impressive. As has been noted above, the scheme is bedevilled by a high drop-out rate and the general examination performance, as seen from the 1974 figures, is very poor. It is quite clear that a student stands a better chance of getting a junior secondary school certificate if he studies in a normal secondary school than if he studies in the S.S.G.

Apart from the above problems the scheme faces serious problems of under-qualified supervisors and poor communication between the centres and the College. These are the two most crucial factors on which the success of the scheme is heavily dependent. Some locations are in such remote places that postal services are almost non-existent. Because of poor siting of centres, the scheme affects a negligible number of school leavers in the face of many thousands who could benefit from it had the centres been better located.

In her evaluation of the S.S.G., Buckley argues that in terms of examination results, the scheme is doing much better than other forms of correspondence education, for example, night schools.<sup>40</sup> This might be true but how should success of a scheme be determined? Should it be determined by the number of certificates it is able to give to its participants? Or should it be determined by what the participants are able to do with the certificates? We can argue that academically S.S.G. graduates are relatively better off than primary school leavers but when it comes to employment opportunities, they face similar problems. A few S.S.G. graduates may be accepted to enter normal secondary schools to continue with their education or enter some training programmes which are still open to Form III certificate holders. However, such chances are fast becoming fewer every year. We can therefore conclude that schemes like the S.S.G., which is aimed at offering academic training not related to employment or self-employment, lead to the production of 'dormant certificates' and further frustration for their holders.

#### Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.)

The idea of universal basic education (U.B.E.) is not a new one in Zambia. It has been expressed in various forms and on various platforms by educationists, government and party officials. The national development plans have, in one way or the other, aimed at contributing towards the attainment of this goal. Most recently, the idea of U.B.E. was a subject of

public debate in the general context of the education reform exercise.<sup>41</sup> Following this public debate, the government has committed itself to the policy of nine years of basic universal education to all eligible children in Zambia. The policy to offer U.B.E. can be traced from two main sources. Firstly the idea of U.B.E. originates from the thinking in the political circles. It has been U.N.I.P's aim since at least 1962 to offer U.B.E. as one way of bringing about equality in society and as a means to economic advancement through education.<sup>42</sup> Secondly, this policy is aimed at absorbing the ever increasing number of young school leavers who cannot enter secondary schools. The argument is that with a prolonged stay in school and a vocationally inclined curriculum, schools will have graduates who are more mature to face the realities of the world and who will possess skills for employment, self-employment for further training.<sup>43</sup>

The government has proposed to achieve the goal of nine years of U.B.E., which includes seven years of the present primary system and two years of junior secondary school, in phases. No timetable has been fixed when this goal will finally be achieved. The first phase towards realising the goal covers the period of the Third National Development Plan, 1979-1983. During this period the government hopes to ensure that all children of the right age are enrolled into Grade I and proceed to Grade VII.<sup>44</sup> In his study to attempt to gauge the impact of population growth on the development and cost of first level education, Mehra has pointed out that the realisation of the



first phase of U.B.E., will depend on an enormous expansion of both lower and upper primary classes.<sup>45</sup> This is a very crucial prerequisite because presently not all children are able to enter Grade I or complete Grade VII because of a shortage of Grade I and Grade V places. The chances to enter and complete secondary school after Grade VII are very remote.<sup>46</sup> This is a fact which the government is fully aware of.

The need to expand the facilities for Grade I and Grade V over the Third National Development Plan, if the first phase of U.B.E. is to be achieved, is both urgent and enormous. Table 4 gives a projected picture of what is needed to complete phase one of U.B.E. during the Third National Development Plan.

TABLE 4

| PROJECTED PRIMARY CLASS PATTERNS,<br>THIRD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1979/83. |            |             |              |             |            |             |              |
|---|------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Year  | Grade<br>I | Grade<br>II | Grade<br>III | Grade<br>IV | Grade<br>V | Grade<br>VI | Grade<br>VII |
| 1979  | 3985       | 3976        | 3898         | 3840        | 2945       | 2916        | 2863         |
| 1980  | 4085       | 3985        | 3976         | 3898        | 3205       | 2945        | 2916         |
| 1981  | 4185       | 4085        | 3985         | 3976        | 3465       | 3205        | 2945         |
| 1982  | 4285       | 4185        | 4085         | 3985        | 3725       | 3465        | 3205         |
| 1983  | 4385       | 4285        | 4185         | 4085        | 3985       | 3725        | 3465         |
| Projected<br>increase   | 400        |             |              |             | 1040       |             |              |

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, Planning Unit.  
1979.

The above class-patterns are based on an assumption that the government will open 100 new Grade I classes and 260 new Grade V classes every year.<sup>47</sup> However, the 1979 Grade I classes fell short by 141 classes if all eligible children were to be enrolled.<sup>48</sup> Because of the anticipated financial problems, we can assume that the projected expansion of primary classes will fall short of targets.

Since U.B.E. is an integrated system involving two junior secondary classes, it means that there should also be expansion at this level to accommodate as many as possible of the graduates from the expanded primary system. The table below gives the projected secondary school classes and enrolment over the plan period.

TABLE 5

| PROJECTED SECONDARY CLASSES AND ENROLMENT, 1978-1983 |               |               |               |               |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  | 1978          | 1980          | 1981          | 1982          | 1983          |
| <b>A. Classes</b>                                    |               |               |               |               |               |
| Grade 8  | 555           | 555           | 685           | 685           | 685           |
| Grade 9  | 555           | 555           | 555           | 685           | 685           |
| Grade 10   | 556           | 555           | -             | -             | -             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1,666</b>  | <b>1,665</b>  | <b>1,270</b>  | <b>1,270</b>  | <b>1,270</b>  |
| <b>B. Enrolment</b>                                  |               |               |               |               |               |
| Grade 8  | 22,200        | 22,200        | 27,400        | 27,400        | 27,400        |
| Grade 9  | 22,200        | 22,200        | 22,200        | 27,400        | 27,400        |
| Grade 10   | 22,240        | 22,200        | -             | -             | -             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>66,640</b> | <b>66,600</b> | <b>49,600</b> | <b>54,800</b> | <b>54,800</b> |

Source: Republic of Zambia, Third National Development Plan  
1979-1983 (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1979), p. 345.

As has already been noted above, the construction of secondary schools was postponed on several sites because of the budgetary restriction during the Second National Development Plan.

This disruption put a burden on the Third National Development Plan because before the new projections can be achieved, these carry-over projects have to be completed. Since the economic problems, which forced budgetary restrictions, are not yet solved, it is not probable that these new projections will be achieved during the plan period. It is noteworthy that construction has not yet (early 1981) begun on any of the sixteen junior secondary schools scheduled for the Third National Development Plan.

Apart from expanding the enrolment figures and facilities, the government faces an enormous problem of resources, both human and financial. On the basis of the projections given in Tables 4 and 5, there will be an urgent need to increase the number of trained teachers. In the primary system for example, it has been projected that the number of additional teachers should rise from 1,510 in 1979 to 2,240 in 1983. These are figures far beyond the output of the existing teachers training colleges. Despite the expansion programme which has been planned in the Third National Development Plan, the output from the colleges will fall short of the required number. The implication of this is that if school expansion takes place as planned, there will be

a heavy dependence on expensive expatriates to teach in secondary schools. In the primary schools, this means a heavy dependence upon the services of untrained teachers to the detriment of the quality of education.

The cost of primary education has been increasing rapidly over the years. For example, recurrent expenditure alone had increased from K27.8 million in 1972 to K48.40 million in 1978.<sup>50</sup> It has been estimated that to enrol every child in school for nine years would require additional annual recurrent expenditure of K47.0 million and a capital expenditure of K581.87 million at 1977 prices, excluding the cost of building additional capacity for teachers' colleges.<sup>51</sup> It is very clear that the nation does not have such amount of money to spend on education. The realisation of this fact has delayed the implementation of the programme and even threaten its ever being implemented.

This calls for a re-examination of the whole policy of U.B.E. As Coombe argued ten years ago on the proposal for universal ten-year schooling, it is proper to examine the policy in its broader context of national development policy, whose implementation requires priorities in a way that promote the realisation of agreed objectives.<sup>53</sup> From the above argument therefore, we can conclude that the policy of U.B.E. cannot be achieved in Zambia in the foreseeable future.

#### Work Oriented Education

The practice of work-oriented education in schools has a long history not only in Zambia but also in Africa as a whole.

As a recommendation to mitigate the problem of unemployed school leavers, people have been making it since at least 1847.<sup>54</sup> In twentieth century colonial Africa, the theory of "Industrial" education for Africans was influenced by the Hampton-Tuskegee model of rural education for Black-Americans. This model aimed at giving Black-Americans an education which was tailored to meet their needs in the socio-economic conditions they lived in. The Hampton-Tuskegee model seemed to be ideal for blacks in America that educators felt it necessary to have a similar model to suit African conditions. The Phelps-Stokes report of 1922 represented the first significant effort to consider education within the context of African social and economic conditions. Among other things, the Phelps-Stokes Commission, recommended that education for the Africans should be adopted to the needs of the individual and community.<sup>55</sup> The Phelps-Stokes report had tremendous impact on educational policy in colonial Africa, because all policy statements which were issued after the publication of the report reflected a concern of tailoring Africa's educational facilities to the particular requirements of the society which they served.

One of such requirements which the colonial policy makers thought was that education for Africans should have emphasis on the training of skills that would have immediate economic value to the individual and community. Less emphasis was to be put on education leading to clerical and other professional occupations. This policy is clearly reflected in a memorandum on education policy in British Tropical Africa issued in 1925

by the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies, it says:

"It should be the aim of the educational system to instill into pupils the view that vocational (especially the industrial and manual) careers are no less honourable than the clerical and of governments to make them at least as attractive and thus to counter the tendency to look down on manual labour."<sup>56</sup>

Though in a different form, this theory of education has continued in independent Africa. Most African states, faced with severe school leaver problems, have turned to examine the school system and have come to blame the school curriculum as unsuited for the goals of an independent nation.<sup>57</sup> In Zambia this commonly held sentiment was strongly voiced during the First National Education Conference in 1969. Most delegates blamed the school curriculum in the following manner,

"The school curriculum was lacking in skills training and had no relevance to the real world, especially the needs of rural Zambia".<sup>58</sup>

The commonly held view in Africa has been that the school should be transformed into an active tool of development and that its graduates must be fully prepared to participate in and improve the life of their communities.<sup>59</sup>

Although the need to change the curriculum along these lines at the primary school level was expressed in Zambia as early as 1969, very little was done actually to introduce a change in schools. Much of the emphasis prior to 1970 was on the creation of a strong English language medium curriculum.<sup>60</sup>

The change of direction in curriculum reform occurred after 1971. With help from UNESCO, proposals to introduce a curriculum beneficial to the school leavers were put forward.<sup>61</sup> In July 1974, the Ministry of Education Curriculum Council adopted a statement of aims and objectives for primary schools both in the light of the school leavers problem, and as agents of development for their communities. The major theme is what President Kaunda had expressed in his address to the First National Educational Conference in 1969 that:

'We must make our primary schools better schools, providing efficiently for the needs of the majority who will leave school as well as the minority who will continue'.<sup>62</sup>

Apart from the traditional subjects aimed at teaching communication skills, the use of numbers and mathematical processes effectively, other subject areas were to be re-emphasized in the curriculum. Such areas as creative activities, environmental science, and practical subjects like carpentry for boys and domestic science for girls were to be introduced or reinforced. It was expected that by the end of their primary course, students would be able to use some of the practical skills productively, demonstrate interest in artistic expression and apply some of the skills to everyday life.<sup>63</sup>

The Ministry of Education, with the aid of the Government of Finland, embarked on a pilot study to assess the feasibility of the teaching of practical subjects in primary schools. The Finnish Government offered to give the necessary equipment needed for such subjects. However, it seems very little has been done to introduce practical subjects in schools. Apart from domestic science, which has spread to quite a number of schools, the other subjects have not spread at all. Nothing significant has been done to train suitable teachers to teach practical subjects.<sup>64</sup> This demonstrates the lack of commitment on the part of the Ministry of Education to see changes in schools. Because of this situation it is very unlikely that the promised aid from Finland will ever come. The problems in implementing the new curriculum did not lie in the novelty of some of the objectives, but as the 1971 UNESCO survey correctly points out,

'The most glaring problems in Zambian primary education cannot be attributed to limitations in the syllabus, but stem rather from the general weakness of teacher training, text books, teaching guides and ancilliary support for environmentally related instruction.'<sup>65</sup>

It seems that the Ministry of Education has to go a long way to eliminate these shortcomings. There is an urgent need for the Curriculum Development Centre and the teachers' training colleges to address themselves to these problems.



The most evident expression of the theme of work-oriented education with a clear aim of producing job-makers, was the announcement of the policy on production units in all schools by President Kaunda in July 1975.<sup>66</sup> From this date, every student was expected to engage in production work as part of his normal school work. The Presidential directive ushered in a new policy of education and production which was regarded as an essential part of the education reform exercise. Before this there was no clear policy concerning production work in schools. Many schools encouraged production on a voluntary basis through clubs like the Young Farmers Club (Y.F.C.) or demonstration plots which were mainly for educational purposes. The success of such projects often depended on the enthusiasm of the organisers and collapsed with the departure of such organisers.<sup>67</sup>

To facilitate the implementation of this policy, the Ministry of Education created a production Unit Section in 1976 under the Youth Division to guide and assess production units in schools.<sup>68</sup> At school level, production units are expected to be run by committees composed of both pupils and teachers. These committees should plan what to do and how they can raise funds for their projects.<sup>69</sup>

Amongst the many aims of production units is that they are expected to produce 'job-makers' and help reduce running costs of instructions by producing their own food.<sup>70</sup> Most schools therefore, have embarked on agricultural activities,

especially those in rural areas, while those in urban areas, where agriculture is less possible, have concentrated their efforts on non-agricultural activities. Apart from the above general objectives, production units also aim at the following specific objectives:

- (a) to help the pupils to develop a sense of commitment to communal cause and team spirit;
- (b) to help pupils acquire elementary skills of business management and production;
- (c) to help pupils contribute practically to the running costs of their own education institutions;
- (d) like games, manual work can help pupils in the development of healthy and strong bodies;
- (e) to help pupils develop self-confidence in the process of self-employment and after leaving school they should have little difficulty in starting their own farms and other kinds of production units;
- (f) the pupils should develop new values of life and new philosophy about the aims of education. They should conceive education not only as a preparation for being employed by the government but as a preparation for relevant life with its complexities.<sup>71</sup>

One of the problems of evaluating the performance of schemes like production units is that very little information about them exists and some of the goals and objectives which they aim at are not easy to evaluate. For example, goals like developing a sense of commitment to communal cause, developing new values etc., are, as Sinclair has observed, outcomes which cannot solely depend on what goes on in the school and for which no easily acceptable standard of their being achieved can be found.<sup>72</sup>

Production units, despite the heavy emphasis put on them, have not been fully accepted by pupils, teachers and parents. Zambian society in general seems to view education as preparation for life outside the farm. Therefore, any form of education which tends to prepare one for farm life is bound to be unpopular. This negative attitude towards farming has been reinforced by the wide gap between the peasantry and that class of urbanites composed of government officials, politicians, professionals and businessmen.<sup>73</sup> These are the people of affluence and influence which many parents would like their children to become one day. The following report is a glaring example of this negative attitude to farm work in Zambia,

\*A Chief and his subjects in Choma are fuming at the continuous poor results at a school where only three pupils have qualified for Form One since 1972.... For the past eight years the school has produced thousands of bags of maize, sunflower and cotton. The Chief accused the Headmaster and his staff for spending most of their time trying to be farmers instead of teaching.<sup>74</sup>

The effectiveness of production units as agents of vocational training should be seriously questioned. In most cases the teachers, who are charged with the responsibility of training pupils are laymen in the field where they are expected to impart knowledge and skills. The little knowledge or skills they have is not enough on which to base the training of someone who is expected to make a life-long living out of the skill.<sup>75</sup> Such teachers have not fully accepted the new role that they are expected to perform. Instead of encouraging the pupils, these teachers may end up having a negative effect on the pupils' attitude towards certain jobs or skills.

It is true that some schools have done very well in their production units and that some pupils have learnt useful skills and developed correct attitudes to pursue the skills.

However, such pupils face very serious problems of applying what they have learnt at school to real life once they have left school. There is very little evidence to show that such school leavers have been successful in self-employment. Dodd, commenting on work-oriented education in Tanzania's middle schools in the 1950s, makes observations which can easily apply to the Zambian situation. Most middle school graduates faced enormous problems to acquire land, clear it and to influence their parents to practise modern farming methods.

Most of the aims of production units may not have been achieved during the past five years because the primary school is an unrealistic place of or realise such goals. We should, however, not overlook, the important contribution production units have made to create a balanced system of education in Zambia. By introducing production work in schools children may now be able to appreciate the realities of production and the applicability of some of their book knowledge to real life situations. When we consider production work in schools as contributing to the solution of the school leavers problem, however, then the effect has been negligible. Solutions of significant impact cannot be sought in the school system.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### MASS "SOLUTIONS" OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

In this chapter, we shall examine some attempts by the government to reach the out-of-school youths. Particularly we shall examine those policies and programmes which are or have been under direct government supervision: the Zambia Youth Service, the Zambia National Service and the Rural Reconstruction Centres.

#### Zambia Youth Service (Z.Y.S.)

Organisations to cater for the youths, both in and out of school, have been in existence for a long time. Youth organisations like the Boys Brigade, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Red Cross, etc., were introduced early during the colonial period. These were mere extensions of similar organisations in existence in England. The most notable feature of some of these organisations is the emphasis they put on recreational activities of a sporting or cultural nature.<sup>1</sup> These activities aimed at providing the youths with harmless outlets for their energies. Since the unemployment problem was more prevalent and worrying in urban areas than rural areas, the presence of such youth organisations was basically an urban feature. These organisations were closely linked to schools and had little support among out-of-school youths. Because of their recreation nature, these organisations did very little to prepare the youths for either employment or self-employment.

The problem of unemployed youths was fast becoming an issue of concern to the Northern Rhodesia Government such that calls from concerned parties for a systematic investigation into the problem and how it could best be met were being made.<sup>2</sup>

In 1962 a Youth Development Council was formed to carry out such an investigation. The council collected evidence from all interested parties such as Government Ministries, mining companies, voluntary organisations and political parties. In May 1962 a report of their findings was presented to the Ministry of Local Government and Social Welfare. This was the first systematic attempt at identifying and defining the youth problem in Zambia.

According to the report the central issue of the problem was that:

'Young people are growing up in a society which has no place for them, educated for jobs which do not exist, and then they are left to their own devices.'<sup>3</sup>

After a careful study of the report by the government, a working party was set up to make detailed plans on how the recommendations of the report should best be acted upon. The working party called for the formation of a voluntary youth service which would mobilise the youths for national development purposes.<sup>4</sup> The need to have youths mobilised for national development was not only upheld by the colonial authorities, but also by the political parties which were fighting for independence. Both the United National Independence Party

(U.N.I.P.) and the African National Congress (A.N.C.) had youth wings, which apart from being used for physical aspects of the struggle for independence, were also being geared for productive work after independence.<sup>5</sup> U.N.I.P. had a "Land Army" which aimed at channelling the energies of the youths, who actively helped fight for independence, into other equally constructive roles of economic development, particularly in agriculture.<sup>6</sup> The political commitment to involve youths in development is further expressed by Mulford when he comments on Kaunda's attitude towards the UNIP Youth Wing:

'The nationalist party, as father of the nation, was obliged to include young people in its ranks and to train them as future leaders of the new Zambia. Kaunda never considered repressing U.N.I.P.'s youth groups; instead, he sought to consolidate them, to provide them with a constructive role which, while absorbing restless energy, utilized their willingness to serve.'<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note that one of the first acts of the coalition government just before independence, was to pass the Zambia Youth Service Act (1964).<sup>8</sup>

This shows the sense of urgency with which the new government wanted to contain the youth problem. The Z.Y.S. was formed in 1964 and its aims were clearly stated in the words of H.D. Banda, the then Minister of Housing and Social Services, who said:

youths and the two girls camps had 200 recruits.<sup>15</sup> The number of recruits fell further as some youths deserted the camps to go back to their homes, or found employment.<sup>16</sup> This bad start of the Z.Y.S. can be explained as mainly due to the lack of foresight by the planners. The task of establishing new camps with trained manpower to run them and the time factor involved seem to have been overlooked. This coupled with the little funds allocated to the programme slowed the recruitment programme. For example, only £50,000 was allocated for immediate use in the Z.Y.S.<sup>17</sup> This amount was not enough for the targets set.

At the formation of the Z.Y.S. in 1964, the Zambian Government made a request to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation's World Food Programme for food aid for the Z.Y.S.<sup>18</sup> This aid was given. Between August 1965 and July 1968, about K287,000 worth of food commodities involving about 888 metric tons of food, was delivered to the Z.Y.S. such aid was a major contradiction to the spirit of self-reliance which they might be expected to aim at. There were other problems connected with this food aid as the UN/FAO project evaluation team was later to discover. There were major errors and discrepancies in the reporting by the Z.Y.S. on the commodities received from the World Food Programme. It was also discovered that there were irregularities in the storage and distribution of the food.<sup>20</sup> All these problems and the other failures of the Z.Y.S. that we shall examine later, jeopardized the continuation of the food aid and brought the Z.Y.S. organisation into disrepute.

The Z.Y.S. had as one of its objectives to train youths who after completion of their training would go back to the land as farmers in cooperatives. However, due to the lack of an effective system of coordination between the Z.Y.S. on the one hand, on the other, the authorities responsible for agricultural development, especially co-operative settlement, very few Z.Y.S. graduates formed viable cooperative settlements.<sup>21</sup> A good number of those youths trained in agriculture ended up in fields which were non-agricultural. This misplacement of graduates is clearly expressed by Angi and Coombe in their 1969 evaluation of training programmes and employment opportunities for primary school leavers in Zambia. They reported that;

'The Zambia Youth Service provides training in agriculture and subsequently encourages trainees to establish cooperatives. In five years, however, approximately eight rather insecure cooperatives have been established, each comprising ten to twenty youths. Recently, few trainees have had a chance to capitalize on their agricultural training: of the 157 agricultural trainees leaving the Service in December 1968, 136 were inducted into the police force.'<sup>22</sup>

This clearly represents misallocated investment and a major discouraging factor to aid donors.

Another problem which seriously affected the Z.Y.S. was the quality of the training that was being offered to the recruits. This was too low for both agricultural and industrial skills training. As the UN/FAO evaluation team noted:

'The training of the Youths is centred around the use of power equipment and tractors.... As witnessed at most settlement cooperatives, the young settlers were not sufficiently trained and experienced to operate and maintain the equipment envisaged in the farm plan. One of these problems related to the use of the motor-pump.'<sup>23</sup>

The feasibility of such a training programme is questionable under the existing conditions where not many rural farmers were using sophisticated equipment and where even those who had the equipment had problems of maintaining and servicing it. It was a big mistake that the Z.Y.S., at this time, did not think of training its recruits in the use of draught animals, which is the common mode of farming in many rural areas and is not as complicated as mechanized farming. The whole policy of cooperative farm settlement with a high degree of mechanisation limited the number of people who could be resettled because of financial or capital constraints and made it difficult for such cooperatives to become self-sufficient.

In the field of industrial skills training, the Z.Y.S. faced problems which emanated from its lack of specific goals. Instead of offering intensive courses in specific industrial skills, youths were given general training in bricklaying, carpentry, etc.<sup>24</sup> Intensive training was further limited by the lack of training materials and unplanned supply of instructors. Z.Y.S. depended, for its instructors, on those who had skills but had failed to secure jobs elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the instructor-trainee ratio was unclear. For example, in 1969 this was the situation:



\*Three instructors were teaching 96 trainees in bricklaying at Kabwe and six instructors were in charge of 105 at Kitwe, whereas six instructors were available for 38 trainees in carpentry at Kabwe and four for 64 trainees at Kitwe. For leather work, two instructors were teaching five trainees at Kabwe camp.<sup>26</sup>

In such an erratic situation it was not easy in some courses for instructors to pay the needed attention to each trainee and this proved detrimental to the quality of teaching offered. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Z.Y.S. produced graduates who were below the recognised trades standards. The following comment from a United Nations report makes this clear:

'Only a small proportion of the Zambia Youth Service trainees tested by the Ministry of Works obtained even the Grade Nine trade test certificates, which is the lowest grade for semi-skilled workers, and therefore these, as well as those who failed fell somewhere between the categories of intermediate and no formal training.'<sup>27</sup>

This unfortunate situation in the Z.Y.S. arose mainly because of the lack of co-ordination of activities between the Z.Y.S. and the Commission for Technical Education and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Rural Development. Such co-ordination could have manifested itself in the planning of courses and curricula for both vocational and agricultural skills training. This co-operation could also have influenced the type of trades testing for vocational skills and ensuring that the Z.Y.S. settlements were in line with other settlements being supervised by the Ministry of Rural Development.

Except for the Form V leavers, recruitment into the Z.N.S. is open to anyone of the right age who wishes to join on voluntary basis. The Z.N.S. has the thousands of school leavers as the enrolment target.<sup>39</sup> However, for various reasons, the Z.N.S. has found it difficult to recruit out-of-school youths.<sup>40</sup> It seems the Z.N.S. faces a serious resources problem, both human and financial, in expanding its services to involve both Form V leavers and voluntary recruits. There are at present two National Service camps in each province, one for military training and one for production, which are now predominantly occupied by Form V school leavers and which accommodate very few out-of-school youths.

The recruitment of Form V school leavers, good as its intention may have been, have very serious shortcomings which makes it a waste of time and resources. It is clear that Form V leavers are expected to contribute to defence needs and production and are not being trained for self-employment. The contribution of the National Service to the economic development of the country is very doubtful. A lot of funds have been invested to increase productivity in the Z.N.S. camps, but it seems this has not been achieved. Nearly all National Service camps are not even self-sufficient in the basic foodstuffs for trainees and there is always a cry for more funds to buy food for trainees.<sup>41</sup> Instead of money flowing into government revenues from sales of agricultural

products and other produce, money is flowing out of government revenues to buy foodstuffs for the National Service.

It is very doubtful if the Z.N.S. teaches skills of high quality to its recruits. There have been many complaints, mainly from the trainees themselves, about the quality of training which is offered to them.

The following letter to the Times of Zambia is a good testimony to this and is typical of many more:

'I am a Form Five leaver who is currently undergoing the 20 months compulsory service. Instead of being taught farming skills and other skills, we only do useless work and these instructors do not even care'.<sup>42</sup>

We can assume that this situation also applies to non-secondary school leavers who undergo National Service. It is not possible for recruits trained in such a manner to acquire skills which can benefit them either in employment or self-employment. It is no wonder that many of these trainees end up being absorbed in the ranks of the service as soldiers or instructors, while others drift back on the street to join the ever-increasing numbers of the unemployed. The failure of the Z.N.S. to attract such unemployed youths was apparently one of the major reasons behind the creation of the Rural Reconstruction Centres, the government's third attempt to specifically cater for such young people through a uniformed service and on a mass scale.

Rural Reconstruction Centres (R.R.C.)

The Rural Reconstruction Programme was launched by the Government after a study at Cabinet level in 1975. The programme was designed to train able-bodied, unemployed Zambians in skills related to rural development. The scheme was initiated as a direct response to the growing numbers of unemployed youths especially in urban areas.<sup>43</sup> The R.R.C. programme is administered by the Ministry of Defence under the Zambia National Service Act of 1971. The centres were established under the command of non-commissioned officers, who were given a crash course for the purpose, under whom each has one or two agricultural specialists who are instructors. The R.R.C. training programme was intended to last for three years. One R.R.C. has been established in every district. The plan was to create one more R.R.C. in each district every year with 300 settlers per centre.<sup>44</sup> The results have not been encouraging, since only one centre per district has so far been established and none of these centres has more than 200 recruits.<sup>45</sup> Each centre was expected to have about 10,000 hectares of land which would be divided into individual and communal plots. However, as Dumont has observed:

'Because of political intrigue, pure apathy and ignorance, it was difficult to find land, the settlers were moved several times before permanent sites often unsuitable were found.'<sup>46</sup>

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\*The Appendix A, presents a description of the programme as it was officially envisaged shortly after its inauguration.

The centre members were to be provided with inputs like fertilizers, tractors, seeds, oxen, etc.<sup>47</sup>

The government set the following as the specific objectives to be achieved by the R.R.C. programme:

- (a) to help diversify the Zambian mono-economy from copper to agriculture;
- (b) to achieve self-sufficiency in food stuffs and raw materials for local consumption and for export;
- (c) to facilitate the establishment of agro-based industries;
- (d) to banish unemployment by making full use of the abundant but idle manpower and natural resources;
- (e) to generally improve the living conditions of the rural population; and
- (f) to eventually achieve a balanced economy for the entire country.<sup>48</sup>

The R.R.C. programme was seen, at least from the official view, as the ultimate solution to the youth unemployment problem. At the time of its establishment, the President and most high ranking party and government officials took leave from their offices to work on bush clearing and stumping on the R.R.C. sites as a promotion effort to enrol recruits, and to mobilise political and public support for the new venture. K17.5 million was set aside in 1975 just to initiate the programme.<sup>49</sup>

*The R.R.C. programme has now been in existence for five years. Despite this period of time, our information about the centres is very scanty because very little has been revealed about them. The general impression one gets is that these centres have not been doing as well as was anticipated. The R.R.C. programme has been stagnant ever since it was introduced. The one centre per district per year target is far from being met. As already indicated, only one centre per district with less than 200 settlers each has been achieved. At the inception of the programme, many youths reacted with enthusiasm and joined the programme, but once they reached the centres a good proportion of them deserted and recruitment of new members has generally been slow.<sup>50</sup> A very small proportion of the unemployed youths have been affected by the R.R.C. programme.*

*As a means to food self-sufficiency and diversification of the economy, the R.R.C. programme has proved to be a total failure. For example, in 1977 the centres produced 21,000 bags of maize on 1,200 hectares of land by 7,000 settlers at a total cost of K125,900.05.<sup>51</sup> The programme imported about 1.5 million citrus and other fruit seedlings, the vast majority of which are now dead or dying. The orchards, as Dumont and Mottin observed, 'are full of weeds which are burnt in the season thus also burning pawpaw plantations.'<sup>52</sup> The programme has also been bedevilled by indiscipline and lack of commitment to work by centre leaders. This has dampened the morale of the settlers.<sup>53</sup>*

Instead of becoming production oriented, the R.R.C. programme has become consumption oriented. A vast sum of money has been invested but very little has been realised. For example, in the Copperbelt Province alone, K608,840.77 was invested into the R.R.C. programme in 1977 and during the same year the programme realised an income of K61,566.38.<sup>54</sup> This loss making is not unique to the Copperbelt Province alone but a common pattern in Rural Reconstruction Centres.

The other contributing factor to the failure of the R.R.C. programme to meet its aims, has something to do with the attitude of the settlers themselves. It is clear that these settlers have the opinion that the R.R.C.s are there to train them in skills that would lead to non-agricultural occupations. This is revealed in a report by a survey team from the Adult Education Board. The report reveals that most of the settlers, apart from more academic education, would like to be trained as mechanics, health assistants, drivers, electricians, plumbers, typists, tailors, etc.<sup>55</sup> These are occupations which may not be directly related to the back to the land policy which the R.R.C. programme hopes to achieve.

Despite these shortcomings, it appears that the R.R.C. programme will get more funds in the newly launched Food Production Campaign.<sup>56</sup> The President has announced that the centres will be turned into cooperatives and are expected to play a major role in this master plan to make Zambia self-

sufficient in food production in the next ten years. With its present set up it seems that such an investment will just be wasting time and money.

The R.R.C. Programme, like its predecessors the Z.Y.S. and the Z.N.S., has turned out to be a big public drain into which a lot of money has been invested for very insignificant return.



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## CHAPTER FIVE

### COMMUNITY BASED SKILLS TRAINING SCHEMES

One of the few alternatives that primary school leavers have after failing to enter Form I or get a job, is to enrol in some kind of skills training programme. Most of these programmes are community run, either in the form of a Church organisation, local authority or by voluntary agencies. In this chapter we shall examine such community training programmes and assess what has been government's policy towards them.

Out-of-school youth training programmes have been in existence in Zambia since the colonial times. These programmes have attempted to help solve youth unemployment problems by offering some training which would be useful to the youths. As we have already noted above, before independence and a few years after independence, these training programmes emphasized giving the youths some recreational facilities and leadership training. Organisations like the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Young Women's Christian Association and the Boys Brigades, all offered this type of training. However, from the early 1970s it was being realised by voluntary agencies that the most important aspect of the youth unemployment problem was the lack of skills needed for employment.<sup>1</sup> Therefore most youth training centres, apart from the existing recreational and leadership training programmes, also introduced vocational training programmes.



Though such youth training centres had been in existence for some time, it was not until the 1970s that the government recognised them, as a matter of policy, as useful training alternatives for youths and worthy of financial aid.<sup>2</sup>

During the Second National Development Plan 1972-1976, following recommendations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Youth, the government initiated a policy of giving grants-in-aid to the out-of-school youth training centres that needed help.<sup>3</sup> These grants were administered by the Ministry of Education, first through the Planning Unit and later through its newly-established Youth Division. For a training project to get aid it was required to be registered with the Ministry of Education and meet the following conditions:

- (a) the project should be simple, flexible, low cost, community based and managed and project-oriented;
- (b) as far as possible, the project should aim at self-employment;
- (c) the project should reflect local economic needs; and,
- (d) the project should give extension services to its graduates.

It is bearing the above criteria in mind that our analysis of the existing youth training centres will be made. To highlight the success and problems of these centres, we shall limit our

analysis to three training schemes as case-studies representing the general picture of the community based training schemes.

#### Maramba Skills Training Centre

This is an old centre situated in Livingstone in the Southern Province. The project was initiated and sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia. The centre is open to female school leavers who have completed Grade VII or Form III. The centre offers a one year course in dress-making and general homecraft.<sup>5</sup> Though the centre is run by the Roman Catholic Church, the centre is open to school leavers from other churches. However, the control and management of the centre is exclusively in the hands of Church-elders of the local parish. The centre enrolls about forty trainees per year.<sup>6</sup>

The trainees pay a minimal fee of fifteen Kwacha per month. This fee helps cover part of the running expenses of the centre. However, much of the money needed to run the centre and for capital expenditure, comes from the Roman Catholic Church development fund. The government has done very little to help the Maramba training centre financially, despite its stated policy of giving aid to such schemes. The Maramba training centre has made several applications for aid from the Ministry of Youth and Sport, but because of the tardy manner in which applications are handled, the centre has received aid only on very isolated cases and even on such occasions, the aid

only has been inadequate.<sup>7</sup> This bureaueratic inefficiency has adversely affected the expansion programme not only at Maramba, but also in other skills training centres. As a result of this, very few school leavers have a chance to train in these centres.

Though the Maramba Skills Training Centre trains girls in skills which can be used in both self-employment and wage-employment, the emphasis and scope of training at Maramba has been to train school leavers for wage-employment. The centre has made arrangements with some local clothing factories in Livingstone to employ their trainees once they have graduated. Trainees are trained on similar machinery as those they would use in the factories. This arrangement has, so far, been working very satisfactorily. For example, in 1979 alone, twenty five girls out of the thirty who graduated in dress-making were employed by a local clothing factory.<sup>8</sup> Because of the nature of training offered at Maramba, it is not easy for them to establish themselves in self-employment. They lack the necessary capital and business management skills needed in self-employment.

Young Women Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) Shop Assistants' Course

The shop assistants' course at the Y.W.C.A. centre in Lusaka, was introduced in 1972. The Y.W.C.A. is an international and a religiously inspired movement. Its activities and objectives therefore, are not restricted to any one country



or community. Local members of the Y.W.C.A. have formed a management committee to supervise and guide their activities in Zambia. The members of this management Committee are not necessarily members of the local community in which the centre is located. As Hoppers et al., have pointed out, efforts to include some local members of the community like councillors on these committees have been fruitless.<sup>9</sup> The concept of community control i.e. control by people who have a fair degree of face-to-face contact is not there. Community control in this case is taken in its broad sense i.e. control by the Lusaka Community. In this situation it is very difficult for the centre to reflect the real needs of the people.

Financially, the Y.W.C.A., like most international movements, is not low-cost and is heavily dependant on sources which are not part of the local community. The Y.W.C.A. has well established channels of receiving aid from overseas organisations and business houses. This heavy dependance on foreign aid can limit the freedom of the centre, this in turn may have adverse effects on the activities of the centre. The aid donors may withhold or withdraw their aid at any time. Even if aid is guaranteed, it has been found out that this is in most cases inadequate to meet most of the expenses the centres incur.<sup>10</sup>

In an effort to generate funds locally, the Y.W.C.A., apart from running the Shop Assistants' course, also runs a production Unit. It is hoped that the centre would help

generate enough money for their recurrent expenditure and reduce their dependence on external aid.<sup>11</sup> The government through the Ministry of Youth and Sport has not been very helpful to the centre.

The Shop-assistants' course at the Y.W.C.A. is open to girls who have completed Grade VII or Form III and are not less than sixteen years old. There are no restrictions on the residential areas these trainees should come from, but they are expected to come from areas where they can easily reach the centre. The course is of one year duration and a fee of twenty Kwacha per month is charged.<sup>12</sup>

The course is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Culture who have provided a programme director paid by them. The course leads to a certificate which is endorsed by the Ministry and which is acceptable to prospective employers. The trainees are exposed to both theoretical and practical knowledge. During recess, trainees are attached to several department stores in town to gain some practical experience. This practical training also serves to introduce the trainees to prospective employers.

Although statistical evidence on the employment of the graduates from this course is not readily available, it can safely be argued that most graduates find it relatively easy to get employment with department stores where they do their practical training.

### Mtowe Skills Training Scheme

The Mtowe school leavers training scheme is a unique one and one of the most successful community based training programmes in Zambia. It is unique because it is/a rural area and it was initiated by local people with very minimal external help. The centre is situated at Lumvira Village in Chipata district in the Eastern Province.

The Mtowe school leavers project was initiated in 1970 by Mr. Nkhoma, a former teacher at the local primary school, in reaction to the plight of the primary school leavers from his school. The project aimed at training these school leavers in useful skills for self-employment. At this centre, boys are taught improved farming methods, carpentry, metal work and furniture making while girls are taught sewing and Domestic Science.<sup>13</sup> The youths at this centre, learn by doing, with the aim of improving their lives in their own villages. Industrial skills aim at producing and repairing ordinary villages equipment. After graduation, the youths settle in their villages as farmers and have extension services from the project. For example in 1980, the centre had a Credit Union with 290 members and a capital of K8,500 from which members could get loans for agricultural implements and other requisites.<sup>14</sup> This is one of the few training projects which has gone beyond training by offering services to graduates after training. The Mtowe case is a big success story. Unfortunately, the Mtowe scheme has not been replicated anywhere else. One major

reason for the success of the Mtowe scheme is that it was conceived by the local people and all its projects aim at solving the problems facing the people in their daily lives.

The main problems which graduates face in order to establish themselves in self-employment is the lack of the initial capital needed to establish themselves in business. This is a problem which is not unique to the Mtowe centre alone, very few training centres have the necessary funds to give loans to their graduates and these graduates cannot secure credit facilities from the banks or any other financial institutions.

Secondly, trainees lack business skills. Apart from production skills, trainees need simple accounting, marketing skills and an understanding of general business management.<sup>15</sup> These skills are very crucial in the field of self-employment. There are few training centres which are capable of offering them.

The Mtowe Scheme is unique in that it has succeeded in establishing young men and women in self-employment because one of the major problem which hampers self-employment is the age of the graduates. Many are still too young to be in business on their own. Despite having the necessary skills, the youths need to be mature enough to be on their own. The general expectation of most youths seems to be securing wage-employment after training with self-employment as a distant possibility for the future. It is therefore not easy to expect these youths to be in self-employment soon after

Though on a small scale, and compounded with numerous problems, the community based school leavers training projects seem to be contributing more realistically than the <sup>other</sup> schemes to solving the unemployment problem of the primary school leavers.

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CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before we recommend what should be done to tackle the primary school leavers problem, we can draw some conclusions from this study. Zambia like any other third world country, is faced with a genuine problem of unemployment among primary school leavers. This is a problem causing a lot of concern to parents, pupils and policy makers. Parents see the future of their children becoming uncertain as they leave the school system. The government is worried about the ever increasing number of school leavers whose energies are not fully harnessed. This situation has its roots in the inherited socio-economic conditions which have led to the mismatch between the jobs available and the people contesting for them.<sup>1</sup> The unemployment problem of school leavers is a problem which cannot be attributed to the educational system *but a problem which has to be viewed in the general context of national development.*<sup>2</sup>

Several approaches to try to solve the problem have been examined. No single approach or solution has yet proved convincing, or even hopeful. As S.G. Weeks rightly points out:

'What we are after is a multiplicity of efforts, which together might have a cumulative effect on the process of change.'<sup>3</sup>

Policies which aim at expanding the secondary school system or offering alternative avenues to academic education, like correspondence education, supervised study groups or extending the period of basic education, do not solve the problem. It is true that in terms of satisfying the social demand for education, these policies are desirable. They may also be necessary for political reasons. The government must be seen fulfilling its promises to the people or lose its popular base. However, if we seek solutions to unemployment, "Every effort should be made to identify those activities which help increase employment chances for school leavers"<sup>4</sup>.

Changing the school curriculum in order to incorporate a "skill-to-live-by", has not been so helpful in solving the problem. As Foster has argued:

'no society has yet been able to guarantee jobs for school-leavers, and there is no way that job-corps, vocational or agricultural curricula in the schools or other panaceas are going to prevent under-employment from being an almost chronic feature of African societies for years to come.'<sup>5</sup>

There is an assumption that curriculum changes will automatically lead to the achievement of the final goal of self-employment. This assumption is wrong because it overlooks the problems, which are beyond the school's control, involved in the process of becoming self-employed. In Zambia attempts to diversify the primary school curriculum have so far been meagre. This has been so mainly because of the lack of will to abandon the inherited curriculum.<sup>6</sup>



The introduction of mass youth movements, like the Zambia Youth Service, the Zambia National Service and Rural Reconstruction Centres, as wholesome solutions to youth unemployment has proved unsuccessful. The training offered is of low standard and not very useful to its recipients.<sup>7</sup> It has been found elsewhere in Africa and Zambia that such movements are too costly and poorly managed.<sup>8</sup> These organisations have had a negligible impact on the problem if only because a small fraction of the total number of school leavers are enrolled. In their present state, the organisations are just 'delaying tactics' to the solution of the problem. It is, however, possible to improve them if they were made less costly and if they were less ambitious in their aims and achieved an efficient administration.<sup>9</sup>

It has been pointed out that the final resort of unemployed school leavers is the informal sector of the economy.<sup>10</sup>

There is much potential for training for both wage and self-employment in this sector.<sup>11</sup> For a long time now, voluntary organisations, local authorities and private individuals have been involved in the training of school leavers in various skills. A good number of graduates from such training programmes have established themselves in wage and self-employment. However, these training centres do face enormous problems in their work. It is our opinion that the government, through appropriate channels, can do much to alleviate their problems, thereby helping the centres to run efficiently and affect more school leavers. Below is an outline of the major problems areas that the centres face and some recommendations on how the

government, especially the Ministry of Youth and Sports, can help. These recommendations are aimed at supplementing the guidelines that the Ministry has already set for itself regarding help to private initiatives in training unemployed school leavers.<sup>12</sup>

There are certain factors that policy makers on the school leavers problem need to know if their efforts are to bear fruit. It must be fully comprehended that the out-of-school youth problem is enormous and complex and that the resources which can be devoted to it are limited. The existing resources therefore, need to be used with maximum efficiency. The Ministry of Youth and Sports should settle for small scale training projects which are not as ambitious as the Z.Y.S., Z.N.S. and R.R.C. It should also be realised that co-operation between those involved in the problem is essential. In this situation it is recommended that the Ministry should coordinate all the efforts of those concerned with the problem.<sup>13</sup>

Most training centres face severe problems in securing capital needed to expand their training programmes. This problem is common even to training centres that have well established contacts with overseas donor organisations.<sup>14</sup> It is recommended that the Ministry of Youth and Sports put aside a substantial sum of money to be made available for capital projects in these centres. The government should avoid giving grants because this may destroy the incentive for efficiency and profitable operation. The Ministry should also

solicit for funds from private development organisations and friendly governments and international agencies. Such assistance is a precondition of expansion in this field.

The second problem facing the training centres, and which needs immediate attention, is the problem of securing raw materials and markets for their produce. It is recommended that these training centres be given loans when buying the necessary raw materials and other inputs. When marketing their produce, most centres face stiff competition from big companies. This is made worse when the government awards contracts to supply commodities like furniture, school uniforms, etc., to big companies. Some of these commodities can be supplied by small scale training centres. It is recommended that a careful study of how this can be done should be made. Contracts should be given to small scale training centres which have the capacity to produce commodities in the needed quantities and expected quality. It is gratifying to note that something in this direction has been initiated between the Makeni Ecumenical Centre and Bata Shoe Company. The company has awarded the tailoring production unit at Makeni a contract to make uniforms for factory workers.<sup>15</sup>

The third serious problem facing some training centres is curriculum design. Some training centres have no clearly structured curriculum and the quality of instruction is poor. This in the end means producing graduates who are not suitably qualified. The Ministry of Youth and Sports can help the

centres in planning high quality programmes, if only through facilitating the contribution of other government departments. The curriculum department in the Ministry of Education and Culture and its Department of Technical Education and Vocational Training should be approached to help on curriculum designing. These departments should also be asked to advise on examinations by the centres.

Fourthly, some centres are called "community based" in name only when in actual fact they are run by people alien to the community in which they operate. Every effort to encourage local participation should be made. The local community, through the Party organisation or any other appropriate local organ like a church committee, should be fully involved in the identification of training needs and the day to day running of the centres.

Fifthly, most centres are experiencing problems of staffing. Some centres have failed to attract instructors because they have little money to pay them. This has led to a heavy dependence on volunteers, who could leave at any time. It is recommended that the Ministry of Youth and Sports help these centres, either by paying salary grants on behalf of their instructors or seconding its own instructors to the training centres. Efforts should also be made to recruit local volunteers or voluntary workers, even part-time, who may help in these centres.

The sixth problem concerns self-employment for graduates. This has proved a difficult option for many graduates not least because of the lack of extension services for those who have completed training. Most training centres do not have the capacity to offer such services. It is strongly recommended that the Ministry of Youth and Sports should help graduates who want to attempt self-employment in the form of grants or loans. In conjunction with appropriate government bodies, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Youth and Sports could help the graduates bring up to date their production methods by providing them with extension officers who would visit their places and advise them on how best they could carry on their work. Seminars in business management arranged by the Ministry could help the graduates run their businesses efficiently.

Finally, it is apparent that the above suggestions cannot be implemented without a properly organised and efficient administrative machinery at both headquarters and regional levels of the Ministry. For a long time youth policy in Zambia has not been clear and has been a responsibility of many government bodies. The Ministries of Local Government and Social Welfare, Housing and Social Services, Home Affairs, Defence and the Ministry of Education and Culture, have at one time or the other been in charge of youth affairs.<sup>16</sup> In this atmosphere, youth projects have operated almost in isolation with poor co-ordination between them and consequently, their impact on the youth unemployment

problem has not been as effective and many unemployed youths have not been affected. With time however, the government seems to be realizing the importance of having youth policy under one body which can coordinate all youth activities in the nation. The creation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the addition to this Ministry of the portfolio of National Service (March 1981) is a step in this direction. It is hoped that youth policy established at this political level will involve many more youths in personal and community development, in the context of national development strategies. As Landor has correctly pointed out, 'failing to attend to the needs of the youths is not only wasting a valuable asset, but turning the situation into a serious problem with far reaching negative effects on national life as frustrated and embittered youths grow to adulthood'.<sup>17</sup>

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APPENDIX A

THE RURAL RECONSTRUCTION CENTRES

This is an extract from a report of the International Labour Office, Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA) who undertook an Advisory Mission in Zambia from 1st September to 12th October, 1975. The Mission examined the employment problems within the framework of overall economic and social policies in Zambia.

I.L.O. - Narrowing the Gaps: Planning for Basic Needs and Productive Employment in Zambia (Addis Ababa: JASPA, 1977), pp. 339-341.

RURAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

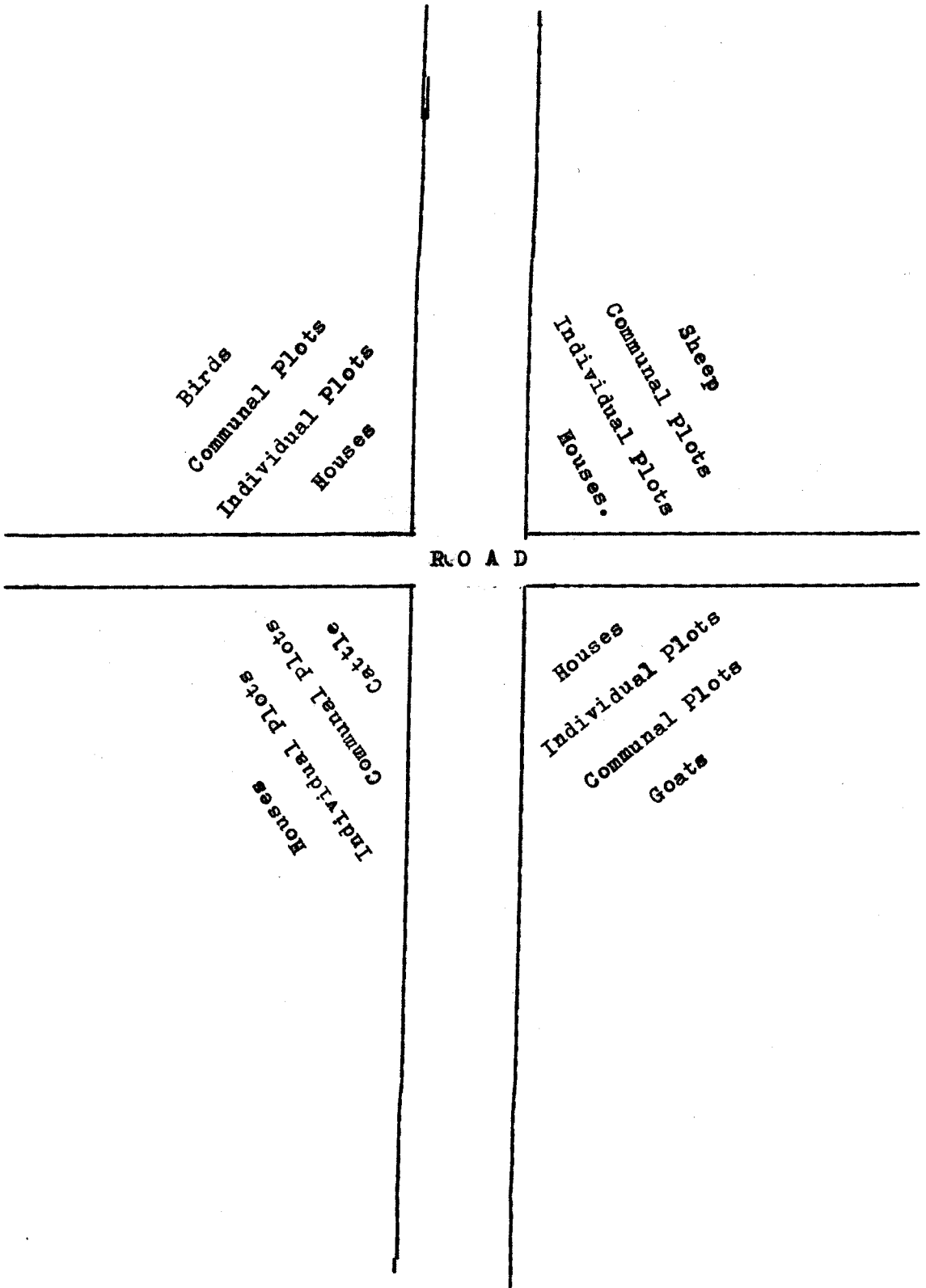
1. The most recent institutional structure for rural development, and one which may have the most far-reaching implications in terms of manpower and resource mobilisation for the rural sector, is the Rural Reconstruction Programme launched by the Government in February 1975. The Programme was initiated in response to the growing rural-urban migration and the growing urban unemployment, particularly among the youth. The main elements of the programme consists of recruiting and training school leavers "in all skills of rural development, including agriculture, animal husbandry, handicraft and poultry," and helping the trainees settle in rural occupations within a cooperative organisational framework.

2. The implementation and supervision of the Programme have been entrusted to the Zambia National Service (Z.N.S.) and it is hoped that it will be completed within 8 years, but may continue even thereafter. The cost is estimated at K17.5 million a year and the plan would involve a total of 42,400 people a year.

3. Training in the Programme will be conducted by the National Service under military conditions and everyone in a centre will have to work according to a specified schedule of work and time. The training period was originally planned to last for three years but it has been reduced to only one year. After the end of the training period, trainees will be settled in co-operatives and will continue to be supervised by the Z.N.S. until they have proven to be self-reliant.

4. The major unit of activity is the Rural Reconstruction Resettlement and Training Centre where, as implied by the name, both training and resettlement will take place. It is planned to have 5 centres in each of the 50 districts in the country. Each centre is expected to have 800 persons between the ages of 16 and 50 and one of the first centres in a district will be an industrial centre producing goods (like clothes, etc.) and supplying and repairing implements for the other four centres engaged in agricultural and animal husbandry activities. The mission was informed that by October, 1975, 50 centres were already in operation - one in each district.

5. The initial intake into a centre will be about 800 boys and girls who will be provided with 10,000 hectares of land. However, once the basic facilities are established and the original farmers have adjusted to their task, other persons interested in joining may do so by applying for membership of the cooperatives. Farmers are expected to form or become members of cooperatives and will engage in both private as well as communal production.
6. The tentative lay-out of a typical Rural Reconstruction Centre can be shown diagrammatically as follows:



7. The farmers in a typical centre are divided into four groups and competition is encouraged among the four groups, particularly in regard to production. Each group will have plots designated for housing, production of crops on an individual basis as well as a communal basis and for raising of livestock. The central part of the centre will be used for public services. Individual farming will take place on the plots adjoining the housing quarters while communal farming, either of crops or livestock, will take place on communal plots. Farmers will be supplied with various inputs like seeds, fertilisers, oxen, tractors, etc., through their cooperative organisations.

8. Besides the fact that our knowledge of it is fragmentary, it is also too early to make any evaluation of the Rural Reconstruction at this stage. It is, however, a programme which has to be evaluated carefully in view of the large number of people that will be involved as well as the extensive resources demanded of the programme. If indeed five Centres were to be established in each district, there will then be a total of 250 in the country as a whole involving 216,000 farmers or 1,080,000 to 1,295,000 people, which is equal to one third of the rural population of Zambia in 1974. This extensive Programme will call for a considerable supply of trained manpower in the form of extension agents, technicians of one form or another, co-operative agents and myriads of other services. This will, therefore, necessitate careful planning in the provision of training as well as co-ordination in

the allocation of trained manpower so that other activities in the rural sector will not be adversely affected. Furthermore, the necessary linkage between the programme and other on-going or planned activities in the rural sector must be established so as to obtain the maximum impact on rural incomes and production.

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