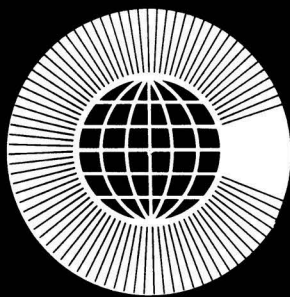


Commonwealth Youth Programme
Occasional Papers
Employment Series 2

Youth Employment Problems



Commonwealth Secretariat

Commonwealth Youth Programme
Occasional Papers
Employment Series 2

Youth Employment Problems

**A Discussion of Policy Issues with Special
Reference to the African Experience**

Commonwealth Secretariat

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	Page
	The Employment Problem	1
	Youth unemployment in selected African countries	3
2.	Some factors contributory to youth unemployment	
	Education	7
	Poverty and Inequity	8
	Population	8
	Technology	9
	Basic Skills	
3.	Summary Discussion	11
4.	Critical policy issues in youth unemployment	
	Youth control of production resources	13
	Access to jobs and training facilities for educated and non-educated youth	15
	Rural-urban migration	18
5.	Case studies of some existing strategies for employment and training of youth	21
6.	Concluding: planning issues	25

P R E F A C E

This paper is one of a series of occasional papers on youth employment being published by the Commonwealth Secretariat as part of the Commonwealth Youth Programme. It has been prepared by Professor Philip Mbithi, Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi, Kenya, and is based on a paper he presented at the recent CYP Seminar on National Youth Programmes and National Service in Africa.

The purpose of the paper is to review and assess policy issues which may influence youth employment particularly in Africa. The views expressed in the paper are not necessarily those of the Commonwealth Secretariat or Commonwealth Governments. It is hoped however that the paper will be of interest to those concerned with reducing unemployment and alleviating its ill-effects.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Employment Problem

Any discussion of youth unemployment in Africa must be based on a very clear understanding of the overall employment issue within any given African economy. For the purposes of this paper, productive employment is defined as any occupation or occupations by which an individual can secure a minimum and necessary level of living for himself and his dependents. This concept includes wage and salary employment, as well as self employment in agricultural, and other rural and urban sectors. Specifically, rural employment includes production activities whose returns are not necessarily cash incomes but may include production of food for home consumption and keeping of livestock for various forms of non-monetary exchange. However in discussing such employment, we focus more specifically on minimum returns to labour. An adult who spends his working time chasing one cow, two goats and a sheep of dubious investment value, and with no apparent marketable value to the owner, is obviously under-employed in terms of his ability to generate minimum livelihood for himself and his dependants.

The concern with the employment problem in Africa is based on the complete erosion of the belief that economic growth and welfare are positively related and that, therefore the maximization of growth is also the maximization of welfare. Whatever constituted the basis of this belief, the realities of growth in Africa indicate that even where we have had rapid growth rates (7-9% G.N.P. growth per annum), the objectives of enhancing higher levels of economic welfare, however measured- were not being realized. If welfare is measured in terms of increased incomes for the vast majority, increased levels of living, and increased amenities for all, then it has not been achieved. Issues closely related to rela-

tively decreased welfare are the issues of decreased access to opportunity, and hence increased unemployment. Thus, despite the high growth rates in the fields of investment and industrial output, the growth of employment in urban and rural areas has far lagged behind manpower growth and has become critical.

Employment literature recognizes four aspects of the employment problem:

i. Shortage of work opportunities, which is characteristic of urban unemployment where population growth and inflow from rural areas far outstrips the capacity of urban areas to generate new jobs. This specifically pinpoints those who are fit and available for work but are unable to find work although genuinely seeking it.

ii. The under-utilization and low productivity of the majority of the labour force especially peasants and pastoralists in the rural areas.

iii. The low levels of incomes of those working very hard and strenuously, especially the self-employed in urban and rural areas.

iv. The frustrated school leavers, whose training, expectations and attitudes makes them choosy and makes them ignore what they may consider as unattractive opportunities depending on the skills required and the wages and salaries offered.

The above categories pinpoint a key issue, namely that the concern with employment is with productive employment in the sense that: (a) the activity meaningfully contributes to the total production effort of the society and (b) that this meaningful contribution should be rewarded to such a level that it guards the receiver from relative poverty, un-acceptably low subsistence, frustration from being kept out of participation in development, and societal abuses of being jobless or dependent.

Youth
Employment

The problem of unemployment of youth* has become recognized as perhaps the most critical of all other forms of unemployment owing to the fact that this population includes school leavers, who are the most active job seekers, and the foundation of more efficient and trained manpower.

The data generated for most African countries indicates clearly that 70-80% of the unemployed, especially the jobless, are between the ages of 15-24 years old. This data, as represented below, exposes the problem of youth unemployment in dimensions which development planners have ignored. They have tended to see youth as potential (future) labour force, an army of dependants.

Below is a country by country outline of the magnitude of youth unemployment in some African countries, using conventional definitions of manpower and unemployment.

a Mauritius

In June 1972 unemployment in the population aged 15 years and over stood at 16% of the total labour force of approximately 325,000. However, over 80% of overall national unemployment was among persons aged between 15-24 years of whom 90% were seeking jobs for the first time. Unemployment was highest in the 15-19 age group with 55% unemployed followed by the 20-24 age group with 26% unemployed. Among the male population aged 25 and over, the level of un-

* For the purposes of this paper, the United Nations definition of youth as the population between the ages of 14 years and 25 years will be used. In most African countries this group represents 25-30% of the total population. It is also interesting to note that those between 0-24 years represent up to 70% of the population.

employment was only 5% of the total labour force. Over the period 1962-72 the labour force increased by 28% whilst employment grew by just over 17% over the decade.

(Data from Ministry of Employment, Mauritius at African Workshop on Strategies for Increasing Productive Employment in Africa. Limuru, Kenya, 1973).

b Kenya

The ILO/UNDP mission on employment in Kenya analysis of the unemployment problem distinguishes three forms, two of which have direct bearing on youth unemployment. The first form is the open urban unemployment problem (joblessness). This problem is related to the imbalance between rural-to-urban population inflow pushing urban population growth up to 8.7% p.a. and the rate of urban wage creation (2.7%). The openly unemployed account for 11.4% of the urban labour force. Most of the urban unemployment is concentrated among the youth where for Nairobi 72% of the unemployed are between 16 and 24 years of age.

The second form of unemployment is the problem of school-leavers. Total Form IV (12 years study) leavers jumped from 6,000 in 1965 to 13,000 in 1968 and 19,000 in 1970. Of the 1968 form IV contingent 15% were unemployed in 1970. However form IV leavers have a higher chance of obtaining a job compared to the 180,000 primary school leavers (with 7 years schooling) in 1968/69, 80% of whom could not be absorbed in wage employment.

The least known form of unemployment - rural underemployment is perhaps the major headache of tomorrow. It is generally agreed internationally that a person who spends his full working time chasing two goats or a donkey of very low and

* Data from ILO/UNDP Employment Mission report on Employment, Incomes and Equality, ILO, Geneva, 1972.

dubious investment value is clearly unemployed. Rural unemployment characterized by extremely low and fluctuating incomes (under £20 p.a.) affects over 500,000 Kenyan youths.

(Note that 36% of Kenya's population of 12.9 million is between 0-9 years. 30% is between 10-24 and 66% between 0-24 years. 820,000 rural households are estimated to be below £60 p.a. income level. 330,000 households have an income below £20. This will include an estimated 594,000 youth between 10-24.)

c Sudan

With a population of 15.7 million, growing at the rate of 2.9% (1970), Sudan has 44% of its population under 15 years and only 37% of the population economically active. The 1964-68 household sample survey estimated that about 9.5%, 7.5% and 1.4% of the labour force was unemployed in the urban semi-urban and rural areas respectively (about 88,000 persons). The major unemployed group is that of the school leaver group who form the bulk of rural to urban migrants.

Within the rural areas, the unemployment problem takes the form of under-employment of the agricultural and nomadic labour force. The nomadic peoples, accounting for 15% of the population pose special problems as they move seasonally from one region to another in search of water and pasture or escaping diseases.

(Data from Ministry of Labour, Manpower Division at African Workshop on Strategies for Increasing Productive Employment in Africa, 1973.)

d Botswana

It is estimated that 50% of school age children attend primary schools. Of these only 15% manage to go to secondary schools and post primary training. The 50% who never go to school

mostly follow the occupations of their fathers tilling the soil and tending cattle or occasionally going to work in the mines of South Africa. It is estimated that by 1976, about 6,000 primary school leavers will be thrown into the labour market with no hope for most of them of ever finding any kind of wage employment. Out of a total labour force of 300,000 modern sector employment accounts for about 50,000 and the unemployed are the uneducated and young primary school leavers.

(Data supplied by Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 1973.)

e Nigeria

The national overall rate of open unemployment was estimated by the 1966-67 Manpower Secretarial Survey to be 1.7%. The low productivity sector accounts for about 80% of the labour force. About 95% of these are unskilled and predominantly engaged in farming activities. Of these about 20% of the agricultural work force and 18% of non-agricultural workers were regarded as being under-employed. Most of the unemployed were young. In fact 70% of the unemployed were in the age group of 15-23 years and 87% in the age group 15-29. In terms of educational attainment, the unemployed are about 70-80% of total national unemployment.

(Data from Ministry of Planning and also the Federal Public Service Commission, 1973.)

2. SOME FACTORS CONTRIBUTORY TO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The analysis of the key factors contributing to youth unemployment in African countries pinpoints a multitude of factors including:

Education

The problem of unemployment of school leavers has been blamed in part on the educational system, in terms of content of curriculum which alienates youth from their immediate environment and imparts no skills, even those of a peasant farmer or small shopkeeper. Education is also blamed in terms of teaching techniques which do not generate initiative and self reliance, instead it creates youth conditioned to follow instructions and hence effectively socializes them for service with exploitative industrialists.

On another level, employment specialists note a very high correlation both between advanced levels of education and increased access to employment on the one hand, and with levels of incomes and social status on the other. Consequently there exists irresistible social and political pressure to expand education. Parental aspirations push youth up the educational ladder. Any drop outs face constant psychological and material deprivation from parents as they are pushed beyond their competence as determined by the educational and job markets. Given the aspiration of young people, the rewards to education which is biased towards urban employment, and parental pressure on the young, the flood to the cities is understandable. If change is to occur, it must (a) attack the national reward systems which put a high premium on education as it exists (b) change, through political education and value and attitude reform, the aspirations of parents and youth and (c) overhaul systems of education through

teacher training college, curriculum reform centres and development of appropriate teaching materials.

Poverty and Inequity

In Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and Zambia, the inherited structure of inequality creating rural-urban differentials and differentials within agriculture and also rural regions have been seen to lead to (a) systematic regional and occupational barriers limiting access to opportunity, which have not been eliminated after independence, causing peculiar regionalized and occupationalized poverty (b) the growth of urban centres of "apparent affluence" forming the reference point for school leavers (c) some sectors which are based on indigenous skills being squeezed and retarded by giant multi-nationals, hence making self employment a poor alternative. Reduced opportunities for self employment put heavy pressure on the few formal wage and salaried job opportunities which accentuates open unemployment or joblessness.

Population

The factor of population growth must be seen within the context of the poverty of the majority of the rural populations. High aggregate levels of economic growth of up to 8% in both manufacturing and industrial sectors must be evaluated against structural arrangement for distribution of such incomes. Empirical evidence shows that the majority have no direct access to this prosperity. It also shows high rates of population growth in relation to limited farmable land and poor technological advance. It is therefore expected that the situation may get worse. This is the reason why many African nations have identified rural development, including increased productivity of land and labour and increased welfare and population programmes, as top priorities in their development plans.

Technology

The explanation for relatively low growth rates in employment compared with that of output is to be found in (a) the increased use of capital-intensive technology, (b) increase in labour productivity, and (c) high rate of growth of labour force.

Investment allowances, duty free importation of capital goods, accelerated depreciation and low interest rates have made the use of capital relatively cheaper than labour, which is mainly unskilled and costly to train. The policy problems raised are threefold:

- i. can planners devise more appropriate instruments for attracting foreign investments other than those which make capital cheaper relative to labour?
- ii. can technologists develop more labour intensive prototypes and techniques which meet the nature of resource endowments of African countries?
- iii. can African countries create work values and an appropriate scientific and technological base which do not merely copy from the west and which reinforce more labour absorptive strategies?

Basic Skills

As shown in the data for Botswana (page 4), and as will be seen later for Kenya (page 17) , a large proportion of school age youth never attend school or even if they do, over 80% never go beyond 7 years of education. By this stage they have mastered some basic literacy and numeracy but cannot relate any specific skill, craft or occupation to their education. They cannot even become poor clerks. They are forced to follow the occupations of their fathers tilling the soil, tending cattle, working in the mines.

Their aspirations, however, are away from the drudgery. As Duodu Cameron (1968) states:

"We respected nothing and nobody, and in turn no one respected us or cared two hoots about us. We had all "finished" school and yet we had no work.....If we had no work we thought, it was not because we were bad, but because there were no jobs. Tell us to go back and work on our parents farm.....to "go back to the land", as the politicians cliché ranand we would say: "Look here, Sir, if we wanted to be peasant farmers, we would not have wasted a full ten years at school learning to read and write.....If we are to be farmers at all, we don't simply want to weed a piece of land and plant yam or plantain or cocoyam or cassava or vegetables on it in the topsy-turvy way we've seen our fathers do for years, but which barely gives them enough food to live on, let alone bring them money. No, Sir. Ask us .. But do you know any better way of farming than your forefathers?" Our answer would still be a big NO.....Our teachers had no specialized training in agriculture. How could they teach us agriculture? They just gave us a piece of plot to plant things on. And the things grew, thanks to the good soil. Any ass can do that".

Taken from Duodo Cameron, The Gab Boys, London, Deutsch 1968.

3. SUMMARY DISCUSSION

1. The data noted above as well as that from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Sierra Leone (unrecorded here) indicates that, unemployment is a high priority problem and that 70-80% of the unemployed are between 15-24 years old. When one takes into additional account the attendant social welfare problems of unemployment and the fact that youth are never an obvious concern of ministries of economic planning, it is clear that youth departments ought to develop competence in employment planning. One way of doing this within existing frameworks is to bias youth programmes so that their long term goals for youth are closely related to existing or potential economic opportunities for sustained self employment. As we will see later planning a two year paramilitary youth programme, with over-emphasis on youth performance within the two years and almost total indifference to what happens after leaving the programme, is seriously being questioned.

2. The data suggests that economic planners see the overall national unemployment problem as arising from the over-growing flood of school leavers and continued under-development of rural areas relative to urban areas. Youth programmes which address themselves to the employment issue will increasingly be expected to cater for the school leavers and choose curricula which fit them for employment within the rural areas. This implies that youth programmes will:

- Have to pre-empt the function of education in creating aspirations and work values.
- Carry out pre-programme market surveys to estimate the capacity of rural areas to absorb programme graduates and perhaps link youth programmes to ongoing rural development efforts.
- Push for overall educational reform in favour

of functional education at lower levels and the reform of national wage systems where formal education is rewarded disproportionately highly relative to technical skills at the craftsman's level.

-In addition, have to support proposals for a progressive development and wages policy in favour of rural areas relative to urban areas.

3. The analysis of the economic, social and psychological deprivation arising from a state of continued unemployment as indicated by Professor Gutkind in his essay "The Energy of Dispair" pinpoints critical welfare problems among the youth. Frustration, apathy, self hate, aggression, disillusionment, all leading to practical social problems are well documented in any statistics on increasing crime, suicide, perversion, idleness, drunkenness etc.

4. CRITICAL POLICY ISSUES IN YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Youth Control of Production Resources

In her essay on the economics of backwardness, Mary Douglas exposes the problem of "delayed bachelorhood" in the Kasai province of Congo. She argues that in this society a young man acquires rights to use land, possess livestock, utilize household tools for his own purposes only after he gets married. In this society where old men control property, young men never marry until about 30 years of age when parents are willing to pay bridewealth. She argues that this systematic deprivation of the means to earn a living deprives the society of perhaps the most active population group. Old men are poor in entrepreneurship, and often strive to retain the status quo and this leads to economic stagnation.

The issues raised above are very real in some African cultures where entry into the production economy is preceded by rites, initiation ceremonies, symbolic offerings or simply rites of passage. This will tend to be more the case for 50% or 40% of the youth who never receive any schooling at all. It therefore affects a very large proportion of the population group discussed in this paper.

Customary laws governing succession, acquisitions and control of farm household resources are at variance with western European concepts of "who owns what"? Legal research in East Africa indicates that customary control of land for example is vested in a community, village, clan, lineage, household and individual adults under varying rights. Control of land by illiterate youth is very limited. Yet at the same time illiterate youth are the least likely to benefit from migration into urban areas since

as indicated earlier, access to jobs in urban areas is open only to the educated. Such youth are buffeted by a vacuum of means to meet their rocketing aspirations which change as they grow and become increasingly exposed to mass media, advertising etc. The results are varied. In Kenya one reads in the press about the special mania of youth to beat up old men, increasing rural crime, assault on near kin by youth, restlessness and continuous idleness, drunkenness of youth etc. Mushanga (1974)* shows that offenders of criminal homicide in Uganda have their highest rate between the ages of 20 and 29 and that most people are most violent between 20 and 34 years of age. Structural arrangements which alienate such people will tend to increase their criminality.

Needs of
Illiterate
Youth

Youth programmes should aim at pinpointing the structure of this population segment and the special problems which arise because of policies or acts of commission or omission against this group. Some solutions would include the following:-

- Establishing avenues for early entry into the production economy through some legal specifications on partnership with parents on farm business or other rural non-farm business.
- Designing easy graduation from youth programmes into effective income earning activities. This will affect graduates of agricultural youth programmes such as the poultry keeping and agricultural programmes, and also of graduates of village Polytechnics, the Sudanese Vocational and Home Craft programmes, the Brigades of Botswana and most youth programmes for girls which are home centred.

* Tibamanya mwene Mushanga: Criminal Homicide in Uganda, EALB, 1974, p. 49-51.

Access to Jobs and Training Facilities

Given limited job opportunities, the process of selection into a job is increasingly determined by education. ILO statistics indicate that the chance of obtaining a job between those who have reached the primary terminal standard seven and those who have moved to secondary school, a difference of 1 year, is about 1:1.6.

Given that it is the educated who obtain jobs, it is these same educated who control to a great extent the informal entry into jobs through urban kinship and neighbourhood networks.

Careful study of table 1 shows that in the majority of cases work was obtained through friends or relatives. The labour exchange served only 7% and the higher percentage is due to only one centre. (see next page)

The above suggests a near monopoly of access to jobs by those who already have jobs and by educated youth as indeed is confirmed by vocational training statistics for university graduates, form IV leavers, primary school leavers and the uneducated in most African countries. Table 2 gives the case for Kenya.

From Table 2,* and other data not included, it can be concluded that:

- The existing youth organisations in Kenya and other African countries are concentrating their services to a small sector of young people - the school going and school leaver population.
- Most of the programmes are not sufficiently geared or relevant to the current needs of African youths. Some are inherited from another era and another culture (western).
- The national education system does not suffi-

* see page 17

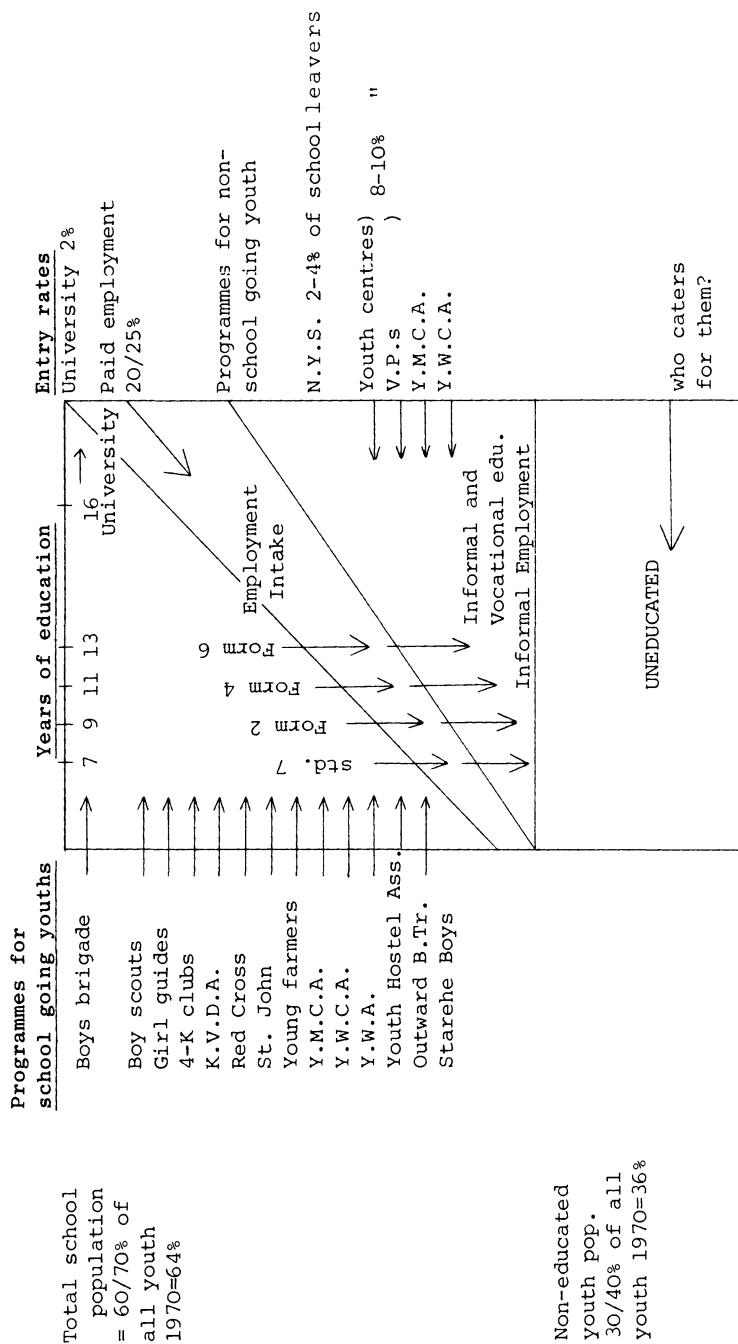
TABLE 1
Methods used by males for
obtaining their first job

Method Used	Urban Centre							TOTAL
	Nairobi	Mombasa	Kisumu	Nakuru	Eldoret	Thika	Nanyuki	Nyeri
Friend or Relative	35.3%	33.5%	50.4%	38.8%	34.6%	30.9%	48.0%	42.2%
Newspaper	6.4	5.9	10.8	1.5	1.9	6.2	6.0	3.6
Labour Exchange	4.8	4.3	8.5	3.0	1.9	33.3	8.0	2.4
Radio	0.3	-	-	1.5	-	-	-	-
Heard of job and applied	15.2	21.6	10.8	4.5	3.9	9.9	-	7.2
Other method	18.2	19.7	9.3	16.4	17.3	13.5	34.0	32.5
Started his own business	5.1	3.2	-	-	-	-	2.0	4.9
Still unemployed	14.1	11.8	9.3	32.8	40.4	6.2	2.0	7.2
No response	0.6	-	0.9	1.5	-	-	-	-
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Henry Rempel, Labour Migration into Urban Centres and Urban Unemployment in Kenya 1970 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

TABLE 2

Educational Selection Process - (Kenyan Case Study)



ciently prepare the young people for the life they are to live bearing in mind that only 20-25% will enter paid employment or the modern sector of society.

There is, therefore, a need for a national educational curriculum aimed at equipping school leavers with the necessary tools for use at the different stages of breaking from the formal educational pipeline to coping with the problems of establishing a career.

This calls for urgent coordination of: formal educational curriculum, technical training, skill creation, voluntary organisations' youth assistance programmes and implementing government youth services.

-There is systematic and deliberate neglect of the 40% who never go to school or drop out early in a decade where, internationally, there is a growing concern with the lower 40% of our population. This needs serious review.

Rural to Urban Migration

The critical problem of urban unemployment is related to the increase in urban population at a higher rate than the rate of job creation. This, as we saw earlier, is related to rural to urban migration, 80% of which is attributed to educated youth. Among the hypotheses explaining selective rural to urban migration of youth are those developed by Tanzania, relating this drift to the irrelevant formal educational curriculum which creates youth aspirations which cannot be met by rural communities. The growth of a white collar mentality of rural youth, accompanied by the growth of urban centres with higher incomes, and amenities is seen to cause a dynamic flow of school leavers towards the "bright lights". Prof. Walter Elkan, (1970) and Calorine Hutton (1969) see this explanation as reinforced by another one which relates migration to the presence of kinsmen in towns or other social net-

works. Income differences between urban and rural areas where urban incomes of households may be two times those of rural households of similar status even after correcting for urban cost of living is another widely accepted explanation. The growth of population pressure in rural areas leading to landlessness and hence total uprooting of families from rural areas is again an explanation which might gain momentum.

Given that school leavers are therefore choosy about jobs, where they are located, whether they are manual, their social prestige, and given parental expectations and hence pressure that youth leave rural areas and obtain urban jobs, it is not surprising that school leavers are willing to spend 6-9 months looking for an urban job. They appear to have high tolerance for insults from office clerks, the relatives they live with, they often go hungry, semi-naked, they are willing to attend any impromptu political meeting, are first on the scene of an accident.....It is obvious that this state of affairs is growing in geometric proportions all over Africa.

**Programmes
of Youth
Departments**

Predictably enough this too has been a major pre-occupation of youth departments. Most of their programmes have aimed at arresting this drift. But are the programmes designed effective in achieving this goal? First, the programmes cater for a very limited population. The Kenyan National Youth Service for example caters for only 2-4% of the Kenya's school leavers every year. The village polytechnic programme and the youth centres programme cater for 8-10%, an extremely significant input. Given that only 20% of the entrants into the labour market obtain wage employment, we still have over 65% of the school leavers unaccounted for.

The limitation of youth programmes in terms of scope is further confounded by their short term nature and poor anticipation of their long term employment potential. On one hand training

hundreds of masons without careful market studies runs the risks of over-supply and on the other hand most training activities have no relevance to the requirements of either the rural economy or even the urban economy, especially given the limited purchasing power of rural areas and the dominance of international standards in the urban market.

The requirements of trade test certificates and the view by youth trainees that such training is a useful prelude to a more substantial urban job makes a review of the role of youth training programmes in arresting rural-to-urban migration urgent.

5. CASE STUDIES OF SOME EXISTING STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OF YOUTH

Income and Wages Strategies

Most African countries including Tanzania, Mauritius, Botswana and Kenya are agreed that to control the cost of labour would reduce the search by the most active economic sectors for capital intensive techniques. They would move towards more labour intensive techniques, lead to fair distribution of national income and hold down costs and prices of goods.

In Botswana, they argue that in their case where the economy is faced with an acute demand for skilled manpower of all kinds, to let the market determine incomes (wages) is suicidal. Incomes would rapidly go up with a resultant increase in wage costs and employers would tend to use more capital intensive ways. The government has set up a National Employment, Manpower and Incomes Council composed of government officials, and trade union representatives.

In Kenya, the instrument for implementing a similar policy is the Kenya Industrial Court which controls wage awards by keeping a careful eye on wage costs.

Effects on youth employment

However the effects on youth employment of a wage control or wage increase are difficult to predict. Evidence indicates that employment is sensitive to changes in labour costs in occupations and industries where wages are already relatively low. The most well known examples are unskilled labourers in agriculture, building and construction and domestic services. These occupations are not the ones to which youth most aspire. Therefore unless there is a general levelling out of wage differentials between low paid employees, such a strategy is not likely to affect youth unemployment significantly.

Labour Intensive Rural Works

Most countries in Africa often resort to labour intensive reconstruction works to alleviate the problem of school leaver unemployment. They introduce rural works of all kinds - roads, town clearing, water development, food storage facilities, bush clearing. The idea is to adapt construction to local conditions where engineers could use increasing numbers of local unskilled school leavers or unemployed youth. But such programmes become expensive because unskilled labour becomes cumbersome, slow, and it undermines efficiency. The failure to devise appropriate technology for labour intensive rural works is perhaps the most fundamental factor in the lack of success of such programmes.

Frantz Fanon is very clear that unless construction technology is adapted in terms of ideas, scale, activities to local conditions and capabilities of the target unemployed group, "nothing is possible". He writes:

"If the building of a bridge does not enrich the awareness of those who work on it, then that bridge ought not to be built and the citizens can go on swimming across the river or going by boat. The bridge should not be "parachuted down" from above, it should not be imposed.....Certainly, there may well be need of engineers and architects; but the local party leaders should be always presentso that the new techniques can make their way into the cerebral desert of the citizen, so that the bridge in whole or in part can be taken up and conceived, and the responsibility for it assumed by the citizen. In this way, and in this way only, everything is possible." (see Fanon: "The Wretched of the Earth" Penguin Books, 1967).

Vocational Training

Many planners believe that given the conserva-

Kenya: a
case study

tiveness of formal educational systems, the adaptation of education systems to meet current socio-economic conditions in developing countries will have to be through out-of-school programmes. In Kenya this approach encompasses functional literacy programmes, youth centres, village polytechnics and other informal club programmes such as young farmers clubs, 4-K clubs, permanent work camps such as the Kenya Voluntary Development Association and to an extent the National Youth Service Programme.

By 1971 Kenya had 180 youth centres catering for approximately 16,300 youth. At present there are about 75 village polytechnics training 5,000 youth in masonry, carpentry, tailoring, tinsmith, elementary book-keeping, sign writing, poultry keeping and various forms of agricultural courses. It is estimated that by the end of 1978, over 25,000 youths will have been trained through the village training programme. By the end of 1978 it is projected there will be 250 village polytechnic centres costing the government £2,228,000 per year. The National Youth Service, which recruits 2,000 youth annually, trains some for trade tests in turning, masonry, mechanics, carpentry, tailoring, agriculture, and driving.

Kenya is constantly reviewing these programmes because it is recognised that:

- Most of the graduates treat the programmes as the path towards a trade certificate, and see their rural base and their orientation to self employment as a temporary prelude to a more substantial urban job in the private sector, the government etc.
- Graduates of the schemes face problems in obtaining markets or job contracts. There are new programmes such as the Rural Industrial Development Programmes which sponsor self-employed craftsmen. These increase the market problem so that a careful meshing of the programmes is required.

-Most graduates lack capital they need for productive work after graduating, and do not have tools, sheds, or even raw materials. This indicates a need for follow-up programme to ease graduates into viable programmes.

Similar experiences have been met with by the Botswana Brigade Movement. The Botswana Brigades started as an effort to train craftsmen (builders and carpenters) that were needed in the construction of the famous Swaneng Hill School, a school which was built mostly by its students. Further, brigades trained primary school leavers who could not continue studies or find any kind of employment. Brigades are not just another secondary school or another vocational training institution. Their emphasis is on cost-covering, they combine production with training. The farmers, builders, handicrafts and industrial brigades have since been recognized to have potential for creating employment. Indeed brigades have transformed the villages and areas in which they are based. Between them the brigades employ between 4,000 and 5,000 people.

Moves are now underway to coordinate and strengthen the brigade movement. Initially it was thought that brigade graduates would create self employment in the rural areas by forming co-operatives and small construction units. This has proved difficult because of the shortage of capital and the lack of managerial skills. Most brigade graduates have gone to the urban areas to take up employment with construction companies, an undesirable development because it does not solve the problem of rural unemployment.

6. CONCLUDING: PLANNING ISSUES

The following conclusions can be drawn from the preceding analysis of youth unemployment:

- Because youth form 80% of the rural to urban migrants and the majority of the urban unemployed, a critical strategy of youth programmes will continue to be attempts to alleviate and perhaps eliminate rural to urban drift of school leavers. This implies that youth planners will need to study and hold dialogue with educators, youth and rural development planners to identify the extent to which their programmes can be made complementary to one another, mutually reinforcing and goal specific.
- There is strong bias towards increasing access to jobs by the educated youth. Continued sponsoring of projects which recruit school leavers is further encouraged by many practical problems such as the difficulties involved in training illiterates, the preferences of employer, the speed of learning among educated young, the need for discipline and political expediency of removing the more articulate educated youth from the streets. However, this solves only half of our problem and responds to only half of the mandate of youth ministries.

The problem of illiterate youth can be seen as arising from rural and urban poverty, underdevelopment of rural regions and certain groups in society. This problem should be thrown into the development arena in the same way as the problem of women, as a problem of a very significant population group whose solution must be the goal of more than one Ministry.

In the meantime however, a very careful assessment of the rationale and goals of youth programmes to specifically include illiterate youth, must be undertaken.

Legal studies to change and/or enact legislation to introduce early entry by youth into the control of production resources such as land, oxen, livestock, water, tools, family labour and capital should be undertaken as a matter of urgency. Such a change would make certain programmes such as young farmers clubs, farm enterprise specific projects and even courses such as accounting and book-keeping much more meaningful in the long run.

Additional References

1. Calorine Hutton, "Factors Relating to Rural Labour Migration", Ph.D. thesis, Univeristy of East Africa, 1969.
2. Elkan W. (1970), "Urban Unemployment in East Africa" International Affairs, 46 (July 1970).
3. Gutkind, P.C.W., "The Energy of Despair: Social Organisation of the Unemployed in two African Cities, Lagos and Nairobi". Civilization No. 17 (1967).
4. Rempel - various reports at Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya.
5. Mbithi, P.M. and Olewe, J. Report to United Nations on Youth Service Programmes in Kenya, IDS, Nairobi, 1972.
6. Edgren Gus. Wages and Employment Creation workshop on Strategies for Increasing Productive Employment in African Countries. Limuru, Kenya, December 1973.
7. Tibamanya mwene Mushanga, "Criminal Homicide in Uganda", EALB, 1974.
8. Mbithi, Philip M. "Rural Sociology and Development in Kenya", EALB, 1974.
9. Douglas Mary, "The Economics of Backwardness" in Dalton, Markets in Africa.

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Other Publications from the Youth Division

ABOUT THE YOUTH PROGRAMME

Commonwealth Youth News - quarterly newsletter

Commonwealth Youth Programme - descriptive brochure

Memorandum of Understanding and Financial Regulations - Member Governments' official agreement on the Commonwealth Youth Programme

Commonwealth Youth Service Awards Handbook

Commonwealth Regional Centres for Studies in Youth Work: Prospectuses

Information folder with leaflets on the Commonwealth Youth Programme

YOUTH AND DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Youth and Development in Africa (1971) - out of print

Youth and Development in the Caribbean (1971) - out of print

Youth and Development in Asia and the Pacific (1971) - £1.00

Youth and Development in Malta (1972) - £1.25

Youth and Development in Cyprus (1972) - £1.25

YOUTH PROGRAMME PUBLICATIONS

Approaches to Employment Problems in Africa and Asia (1973) - £1.25

Training and Social Development Programmes, with special reference to Youth Work - £1.00

Employment and Youth: an occasional paper (1975) - £0.50

Pluralism and Development in Island Communities: CYP Seminar Report (1975) - £1.00

Youth for Development: an African Perspective - CYP

Workshop Report (1975) - £1.50

Orders and enquires to:

Commonwealth Secretariat,
Marlborough House,
Pall Mall,
London SW1Y 5HX.

Printed for the Commonwealth Secretariat by
Hobbs the Printers Ltd., Southampton SO9 2UZ



© Copyright 1975

Published by the
COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

ISBN 0 85092 101 5
ISSN 0306-753X

To be purchased from
Commonwealth Secretariat Publications
Marlborough House
London SW1Y 5HX