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

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### 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 present .....so 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-

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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.