

# PART I

The Report of the Seminar

## SEMINAR WORKING PAPER

### BACKGROUND

The 1969 Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers instructed the Secretary-General to examine the feasibility of a series of studies on the problems of youth. As a result, surveys were conducted in Africa and in the Caribbean, and these were followed by regional seminars held in Nairobi and Port of Spain, the reports of which were widely distributed. At their Meeting in January 1971 the Commonwealth Heads of Government noted with approval the Secretariat's activities in the youth field and agreed that such activities be expanded; they further decided that a meeting of Ministers concerned with Youth matters be convened as early as possible, "to review the whole complex of youth problems, with particular reference to the problems of unemployment". Two weeks after the 1971 Heads of Government Meeting, Commonwealth Ministers of Education at the Fifth Commonwealth Education Conference recommended that the proposed meeting of Ministers concerned with Youth matters should be preceded by a meeting of appropriate Commonwealth officials.

2. In August 1971 a regional seminar for Asia and the Pacific was organised, the report of which was published and distributed.
3. The meeting now proposed will complete the series and ensure that every Commonwealth country will have had the opportunity of discussing the problems of youth and development prior to the Meeting of Officials (to be held in London in June 1972) and the subsequent Meeting of Ministers (to be held in Zambia early in 1973).

## AGENDA ITEM 1: YOUTH IN SOCIETY

"Youth" problems, especially in the developing countries of the Commonwealth, rarely originate in factors intrinsic to young people. These problems, social, economic, educational and political, result from developments and changes which are taking place in countries with predominantly youthful populations. Problems of development and societal change have come to appear as problems predominantly concerning young people. In reviewing "the whole complex of youth problems", then, it is important to examine the relationship to young people of their societies.

2. Considerations should be given to a definition of "youth". "Youth" may be a matter more of status than of age; the point at which adulthood is achieved may be changing, or likely to change.

3. Societal attitudes towards youth should be examined, the status and ranking of young people, their mobility within their society, the restrictions placed upon them, differences between various groups of young people.

4. The changing patterns of society and resultant modifications in attitudes form an essential background to any discussion of policy for youth. Significant changes are taking place in population size, age distribution within populations, population distribution as between rural and urban areas.

5. Physical factors, too, affect young people comprehensively; the physical environment and nutrition mould attitudes as well as physique. The impact of "instant" communication can serve to raise aspirations and demonstrate unequivocally to the less privileged the extent of their deprivation.

6. The increasing uncertainty of older members of the community about their established mores transfers itself to their successors, contributing to the current problems of disillusion, disengagement and delinquency, manifested in destructive actions (such as drug-taking, violence to self and others) and mental illness.

7. Solutions may be sought in:

- (a) greater participation by young people in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes which will affect their future;

- (b) improved material conditions;
  - (c) improved systems of education and training;
  - (d) improved channels of communication, both vertically and horizontally within a society.
8. Means to achieve these solutions will probably start with:
- (a) the accumulation and analysis of data;
  - (b) the undertaking of selected research;
  - (c) the early demonstration of concern by the authorities on a scale commensurate with the problem.

## AGENDA ITEM II: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### The formal system

In most member countries the formal school system absorbs a major proportion of the public revenue while occasioning increasing doubts about its effectiveness. Policy-makers need guidance in clarifying the purpose envisaged for formal education and the functions which formal education can, in fact, perform; whether, for example, the school is conceived as an institution for the general education of children, as a prevocational training unit or as a "community centre."

2. Upon these decisions, which are essentially political in their nature, will rest consequential considerations of staffing patterns, buildings, equipment, curriculum and financing.

3. Planning and administration must then also take into account strategies for implementing policies.

4. The most appropriate means of undertaking vocational and technical education (see also Agenda Item III) call for consideration, including the practicability of promoting rural occupations.

5. The effect of external influences on formal education (through the imposition of international "standards", or by examining bodies) require assessment and policy decisions.

6. The quality, status and role of teachers should also be a matter of prime concern.

7. The role of the universities and other higher level institutions should also be considered. Their future pattern will vary according to the extent to which they seek to function as instruments of national development.

### Out of school education

8. The broad area of out of school education (see also Agenda Items III and IV) has so far attracted least attention and hence least finance, yet it may be that the most effective means of improving education facilities lies in this direction.

9. Programmes directed to  
adults,  
minority groups,  
those who have completed educational courses,  
the unschooled,  
school drop-outs

through non-formal educational structures may help to meet the demand for education and further education at realistic costs. Redeployment of resources within the overall field of education may be necessary.

### AGENDA ITEM III: EMPLOYMENT

The problem of unemployed school leavers was noted on the international level as long ago as the Addis Ababa Conference in 1961, since when the scale of the difficulty has multiplied many times. Solutions, however, have proved singularly evasive.

2. Most developing countries are hindered by the existence of a dual economy for government and private employment; most are restricted in their flexibility by heavy reliance on a limited range of exports; all are subject to the forces of international trading patterns. Meanwhile the output from the educational systems grows as the result of increased facilities for an increasing population. Decreasing the rate of population growth has been accepted as a priority aim by many governments, but the effects of such programmes will be apparent only in the medium and long term.

3. Solutions depend on increasing the rate of economic growth and the rate of employment generation in both the modern and traditional sectors.

4. Economic growth may be helped by such factors as

- increased investments,
- diversification of production,
- a greater number of more accessible markets,
- training directly related to employment opportunities.

5. Increased absorption of labour might be assisted by such means as

- the development of appropriate technology and efficient labour-intensive techniques,
- the sub-division of production to the maximum number of small-scale and individual enterprises,
- the encouragement of expansion in the service occupations,
- the employment of more people for shorter hours, (i.e. planned underemployment).

6. Some attention might well be given to
- the provision of vocational guidance,
  - the means by which job-vacancies are made known,
  - procedures by which selections for employment are made.

7. For many countries the provision of employment in the rural areas presents a serious problem. The extent to which rural development is a realistic objective could usefully be discussed. The lack of appeal of rural occupations resulting from such factors as poor financial returns, low status and inadequate facilities, might be assessed. Attention might be given to the role of youth services, youth clubs (such as Young Farmers' Clubs) and settlement schemes in generating satisfying employment. Consideration might also be given to factors limiting the opportunities for young people in rural areas, such as land tenure systems, pressure on land, inadequate communications, poor storage and marketing facilities, and traditional attitudes towards young people.

### Training

10. In the formal educational system institutions which provide some form of vocational training include

- primary and secondary schools,
- universities,
- training colleges,
- commercial and technical schools,
- craft schools,
- trade centres,
- technical institutes,
- polytechnics,
- rural training centres.

11. Provision outside the formal educational system includes

- apprenticeships in the traditional and modern sectors of the economy,

industrial training schemes,  
in-service training,  
the armed services,  
settlement schemes,  
some youth services, clubs and associations,  
courses and the mass media,  
learning on the job.

12. Little co-ordination of this wide range of facilities yet exists in most countries, so that consideration of means to achieve maximum efficiency within the varied provision might be given high priority.

13. Improved systems of manpower planning would provide a valuable source of reference for educational planners, who would then be able to assess the precise role which each type of facility can play most efficiently.

14. Throughout the educational structure, effective means of selection, testing measurement and prognosis for participants are essential to the optimum use of limited resources.

15. Reliable methods of programme evaluation could provide evidence on which revisions and further progress might be used. The development of appropriate means of assessment and of units for their development, validation and administration might be considered a priority undertaking in most areas.

## AGENDA ITEM IV: YOUTH IN THE SERVICE OF COMMUNITIES

Young people need to feel that they are playing a purposeful role in a sympathetic and satisfying environment. Where there exist poor physical facilities and inadequate opportunities, the provision of opportunities for community service, as well as for recreation and leisure, may help to maintain young people's confidence in their society and restrain reactions leading to unrest.

2. In planning youth programmes, the needs and possibilities of particular groups of young people should be carefully assessed. Provision should be considered to meet the needs of clearly defined groups,

urban and rural,  
at various levels of education,  
employed and unemployed,  
with and without stable families,  
with and without problems of physical and mental health.

3. Community service includes voluntary service (including service to other groups of young people unable to help themselves) by both employed and unemployed young people. It also includes activities promoted by schools and other educational institutions. In addition to specific projects by organised groups, service can be rendered by individual or group participation in community activities.

4. Provision for recreation and leisure includes non-formal educational opportunities of a non-vocational character as well as sporting facilities and organised youth groups and societies. Such provision might be considered against the background of deprivation and disadvantage, especially in urban areas, and should include remedial and corrective training.

5. The recruitment, training and status of youth workers merits close attention, as does the development of a cadre of expert trainers to conduct courses for higher level youth workers and group and club leaders. The possibility of interdisciplinary training of youth workers and similar professionals in third-level institutions might be explored, as might the desirability of creating dual-function teacher/social workers who could promote closer liaison between institutions and communities.

8. Despite the general bias of new investment towards urban areas, the problem of urban unemployment continues to occasion concern to member countries for social, economic and political reasons. The development of apprenticeships, small-scale self-employment, service occupations, "urban settlement schemes" and voluntary co-operative activities should be considered, together with the desirability of governmental prices and wages policies weighted to encourage maximum labour absorption commensurate with efficiency.

9. Means might be considered for the improvement of manpower planning techniques and the development of appropriate means of evaluating the progress of programmes designed to generate employment opportunities.

10. The methods by which external assistance might best be used to advantage might be discussed.

## AGENDA ITEM V: PROGRAMMES FOR ACTION

Youth problems have been subject to frequent definition and explanation; the overriding need now is to use this material as the basis for policy determination.

2. The scale of the problem and the limited resources available indicate the desirability of governments considering how best to accept general responsibility for all forms of formal and out of school education, in co-ordination with the other agencies involved.

3. Administrative machinery should be designed to cater to the needs of revised systems of policy formulation and implementation. Consideration should be given, for example, to the formation of inter-Ministerial links for the promotion of a common policy regarding youth problems; Ministries likely to be involved directly would include those responsible for Agriculture; Commerce; Trade and Industries; Culture; Youth and Sports; Economic Planning; Education; Health; Information; Labour; Local Government; and Social Welfare.

4. Attention could usefully be paid to past experience, with an attempt to assess reasons for success and failure, especially in terms of maintaining the enthusiasm and confidence of those involved in programmes.

5. Priorities should be considered, including those with results only in the long term (such as family planning programmes) and those with short-term returns (such as youth services).

6. Priorities, too, should be established as to which groups of the population should be catered for, in what way and at what level. The relative merits need to be considered of, for example,

    youth and adults,  
    schooled and unschooled,  
    rural and urban,  
    healthy and handicapped.

7. Similarly, priorities should be worked out as between

    general education,  
    vocational education,  
    literacy,  
    initial training and retraining,  
    formal and non-formal provision.

8. Provision for remedial work and special attention to particular groups should be considered.
9. If only limited provision is currently possible, policy should be devised for the upward mobility of individuals through later developments in programmes.
10. Planning and evaluation of all programmes should be discussed. Such aspects as the degree of dependence on extra-national co-operation and the effects of aid on national education and employment programmes could usefully be considered, as could the identification of new sources of finance and incentives to self-help.
11. The need is frequently reaffirmed for much increased information exchange throughout the Commonwealth. This may be achieved through meetings, visits, exchanges, secondments and attachments, and occasional and regular publications.
12. Secondly, there is the need for assistance in the planning and evaluation of projects and programmes, in training and financing (including the preparation of applications for external help).
13. Thirdly, means might be discussed for increased mutual support among Commonwealth members in such fields as export market promotion and the presentation of matters of common interest in international circles.
14. Appropriate forms of co-operation in meeting the diversity of needs might be considered, including the role of the Commonwealth Secretariat as a direct participant and as a point of reference for countries developing bilateral and multilateral programmes.

COMMONWEALTH SEMINAR ON YOUTH AND  
DEVELOPMENT IN MALTA

SUMMARY OF MAIN IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

(items suggesting action are marked with an asterisk\*)

YOUTH AND SOCIETY

1. Youth problems are rarely intrinsic to youth and must be viewed in the overall context of social change and development, including change in the concept of "youth".

Attitudes

2. Earlier physical maturity coupled frequently with later economic independence blur the concept of youth and subject young people to the confusion of having double standards applied to them.

3. A substratum of goodwill is evident in most sections of the community despite the fact that young people often have a tarnished image among their elders. The truth of the image is less important than the fact that it is believed to be true. The problem lies in revising the attitudes of older people. The "youth problem" in this context is rather an "adult problem". The generation gap operates in both directions.

Insecurity

4. Underlying all the discussions was the sense of insecurity among young people, resulting from apprehension about the future and a feeling of impotence in the face of prevailing circumstances. The possibility of unemployment, the strain of protracted dependence, loneliness, accentuate the feeling among young people that they are being exploited while they are powerless to effect any significant changes.

Deviant Youth

5. Unemployment and the lack of appeal of traditional youth programmes contribute to boredom and potential anti-social attitudes.

\*6. Particular attention should be given to the prevention of delinquency, using whenever possible approaches through peer groups (recruiting young people as informal voluntary probation officers, for example), and offering to potential delinquents the opportunity to give service to their community.

\*7. The problem of the "unhappy loner" is causing increasing concern. It is probably best met by the recruitment of "detached" youth workers.

\*8. A co-ordinating committee on delinquency should be established.

#### Exploitation

\*9. Young people see themselves exploited at work and in their leisure time. All young people should be taught how to analyse information and make a rational choice.

#### Women and girls

10. New opportunities which arise for women outside the home may lead to social problems.

#### Spiritual values

11. The issue of 'conscience' versus 'rules' is a matter of much concern for young people. The formulation of new codes calls for the constructive co-operation of all age-groups.

#### The needs of youth - confidence and participation

\*12. The two basic needs are for confidence and the opportunity to participate. A lowering of the age of franchise may help towards both.

\*13. Opportunities should be provided for direct participation by young people in the process of decision making. The functions of the Malaysian National Youth Consultative Council may serve as a useful pattern. Where participation is ensured it should be more than mere tokenism.

\*14. Outlets for the expression of youth's opinions and ideas could be found through new and existing magazines and periodicals.

\*15. Research studies and projects, theses, dissertations and reports undertaken by young people in higher education could be more directly linked to practical contemporary issues. This implies a new relationship between higher educational institutions and the development process.

### Determining priorities

16. The four groups of young people considered to merit special priority comprise:-

- (a) those with higher educational qualifications;
- (b) those living in rural areas;
- (c) the handicapped;
- (d) the eldest child of a family.

\*17. Action to help those with higher qualifications might include the establishment by young people themselves of a clearing-house where those in search of employment could be made aware of existing opportunities.

\*18. Rural areas should benefit from "positive discrimination" when programmes are being planned.

\*19. All teachers during initial or in-service training should learn how to recognise mild handicap in children. Improved methods of diagnosis and testing should be devised and compensatory measures introduced.

\*20. Young volunteers might develop a system whereby elder children could be relieved of some of their more time-consuming duties.

### Clearing the lines of communication

21. Concern was expressed at the gaps in communication, vertical, horizontal and chronological, which must be overcome if the most efficient use is to be made of available resources.

### General observations

22. Change is a characteristic of all societies, only the pace has increased. Young people, as part of their society, seek to participate actively in its development.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Formal education

- \*23. A redefinition of the aims and objectives of formal education, taking into account the views of parents and young people, would make possible a restructuring of the system to meet the needs of individuals and the nation.
24. Changes in formal educational processes can be achieved only over time and depend primarily on adequate funding and official support.
- \*25. New programmes of primary education should provide a common basic course for all children.
26. At the secondary level, areas of particular concern are the pupil-teacher relationship, the constraints of public examinations and the lack of provision for helping young people to make the change from school to employment.
- \*27. Specialisation should be delayed as long as possible and opportunities for changing specialisations provided.
- \*28. The content, form and standards of examinations should be reconsidered in their relationship to a new secondary curriculum.
- \*29. Some element of vocational bias might be usefully incorporated into the curriculum but cannot be assumed to play a major part in revising attitudes towards manual occupations.
- ### Out of school education and training
- \*30. There is need for greater co-ordination of all forms of out of school education and training. As a first step a comprehensive survey should be made of all existing provision (see 35 below).
- \*31. Formal education and out of school education should be linked to form one comprehensive national education service providing for all age-groups. This will require a redeployment of funds and a reorientation of public opinion.
32. A fully comprehensive national education service would make possible the most efficient use of educational plant and personnel.

## Youth programmes and youth workers

\*33. Youth services should respond to expressed needs, using these as a basis for the creation of policy and plans. Specific needs appear to be for improved youth centres, the provision of residential facilities and the granting of effective powers to student councils.

\*34. More effective planning of programmes for young people and more adequate guidance for the transition from full time education to employment are urgently needed.

35. The role of voluntary bodies, their techniques and approaches should be reappraised in the light of current needs and attitudes. (See \*30 above).

\*36. The development of effective youth programmes depends in large measure on the training of high quality youth workers, probably in association with the University or Polytechnic.

37. If young people's sense of impotence and resultant apathy is to be overcome youth leaders must not be too remote. Sympathy and the ability to exert unobtrusive influence are essential qualities of youth leaders, an increasing number of whom should be sought from among young people "graduating" from youth programmes.

## EMPLOYMENT

38. A major concern for all young people is the prospect of unemployment.

### Guidance and counselling

\*39. Particular attention should be given to improved facilities for counselling and guidance through such measures as :

- (a) the creation of a standing committee on vocational guidance and a consultative group comprising educators and employers;
- (b) close co-operation between the Guidance Unit of the Ministry of Education and the Youth Employment Service of the Ministry of Labour, and between both Ministers and employers;
- (c) the appointment of a guidance research officer within the Ministry of Education;

- (d) the appointment of full time guidance personnel to all area schools;
- (e) the provision of guidance and counselling for all children from an early age;
- (f) the provision of guidance facilities for those leaving third level education;
- (g) the ensuring of equality of opportunity when candidates present themselves for employment;
- (h) the provision of career guidance facilities for girls.

40. While recognising the importance of counselling and guidance services it should not be assumed that these operations have the status of a precise science.

\*41. Follow-up services should ensure that opportunities are available for young people to change their courses and careers.

#### Some employment problems and possibilities

42. Rapid industrialisation has not proved capable of generating employment on the scale needed by most developing countries. Recently, too, in Western countries a new phenomenon has emerged: the concurrent rise of productivity and unemployment. This raises the question as to how far the generation of employment can be considered a matter of economics and how far it is a social responsibility.

43. The rewards from employment do not always reflect the educational effort involved in achieving the post.

\*44. Agriculture represents to most young people low returns, low status, hard work and insecurity. This image might be improved in part by guaranteed prices for produce and the expansion of experimental farms. The development of agro-services and co-operatives would both provide employment opportunities and increase the financial returns for the farmer.

\*45. Although the majority of jobs directly related to tourism tend to be at the lower levels, opportunities should also be taken to stimulate local crafts, expand market gardening and improve

physical amenities for the benefit of both tourists and residents.

### Planning for employment generation

\*46. Overall planning for improved employment opportunities would involve close links between agencies involved in education, employment, training, planning, policy and finance.

#### (a) in the short term

\*47. The accelerated development of the infrastructure of local industries is another measure likely to produce returns in the short term.

\*48. A raising of the school leaving age would give in the short term a reduction in the number of school leavers coming on to the labour market and in the long term a higher quality of educational output.

\*49. National Youth Services, similar to the Emergency Labour Corps, exist in a number of developing Commonwealth countries, and can have some immediate effect on reducing unemployment. Care must be taken to make provision for employment for young people when they complete their service and to keep costs sufficiently low to be able to cope with large numbers.

\*50. Studies of similar service organisations in other Commonwealth countries would help to ensure that the maximum benefit is gained from this type of organisation.

#### (b) in the longer term

\*51. The problem of seasonal employment and consequent under-employment might be met by the promotion of small scale self-employment activities and co-operatives.

\*52. Longer term measures would also include the lowering of the retiring age, a shorter working week, the planned use of emigration possibilities, the establishment of a manpower survey (with continuing reappraisals), improvements in the collection and interpretation of labour statistics, a reconstruction of the labour force and the provision of more and better training facilities for young people through trade schools, industrial training centres, classes for apprentices and "learners" and the wider availability of basic training courses.

## Training for employment

\*53. A comprehensive review should be undertaken of the means by which young people are trained for employment and older employees retrained.

\*54. Concern was expressed at the small number of apprentices, especially in Government Departments. It was thought that more apprentices might be recruited, particularly for training in agriculture and fisheries.

\*55. Reconsideration of the length and form of apprenticeship should be made in order to ensure that young people receive full pay for a full working schedule. Close supervision is needed to prevent exploitation of both apprentices and "learners". Sufficient staff should be available to the Ministry of Labour to ensure enforcement of existing legislation.

\*56. Action should be taken to dissuade employers from dispensing with the services of apprentices upon completion of their articles.

\*57. A national training programme, linked to an ongoing manpower survey and funded by a levy on all employers, seems to offer the most effective means of overcoming obstacles to the expansion of training opportunities.

\*58. Studies should be undertaken to determine in what circumstances training is best based on the industry which the trainee will enter, and in what circumstances training should be based on the specific skill to be learned.

\*59. The role of institutions which provide training for employment should be reexamined, to determine the relative contributions of basic training, sandwich and release courses, and in-service courses. Comparative studies of practice in other countries could be helpful.

## YOUTH IN THE SERVICE OF THE COMMUNITY

60. Opportunities for direct service to the community, backed by provision for leisure, recreation and self-improvement can often compensate in some measure for social, financial or educational deprivation.

61. In planning for the needs of youth, the needs and possibilities of particular groups of young people should be carefully assessed and appropriate opportunities created for meaningful participation in social development. The opportunity for practical service can reduce the widespread feeling among young people of impotence in the face of an established system.

62. Young people will participate more readily if they are permitted to identify the problem which they wish to tackle and set up their own programme. Full success is less important than the delegation of full responsibility. Such an approach, too, is likely to draw in more of those who do not at present participate in youth programmes.

### The role of the school and college

\*63. Young people in secondary and tertiary education are a privileged group. They have much to give; the introduction into the curriculum of community service can help to indicate possible avenues of service available to them.

### Some avenues of service

64. In many countries young people have shown themselves capable of rendering services inadequately catered for by existing agencies, such as caring for the old, the chronically sick, the handicapped, the deprived.

\*65. More opportunities should be provided for young people to discuss deviance and anti-social behaviour and to devise programmes of prevention and rehabilitation.

\*66. Provision for leisure, recreation, sport and culture can be integrated into an overall programme of national development.

67. Programmes for self-development can also benefit the community as a whole.

### Control of youth programmes

68. Young people should appreciate that initiative with regard to programmes cannot always be assumed to lie with the Government.

\*69. The overall responsibility for youth programmes (including programmes designed to serve the community) must

rest with Government, possibly working through an inter-Ministerial group responsible for policy matters. Policy decisions, should as far as possible be based on consultation and research. Functional control should be vested in a fully representative youth body.

\*70. Co-ordination and co-operation could be achieved through a National Youth Co-ordinating Council which would bring together official bodies, non-official agencies and young people involved in youth programmes. A National Youth Consultative Council could represent the interests of young people to the highest levels of government.

\*71. Financing by means of "matching" grants should be considered.

### Follow-up of programmes

\*72. Youth programmes should be followed up both by the provision of further opportunities for those completing a project in order to sustain enthusiasm and commitment and also by the continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of all activities. A handbook now being prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat will outline evaluation techniques suitable for youth programmes.

\*73. The fact that the two student groups present at the seminar arranged to continue to meet regularly confirms the desire of young people to work responsibly towards national development. These activities should be encouraged, and should lead to the involvement of larger numbers of young people who were not themselves present at the seminar.

### Information

The seminar recognised the value of exchanging information with other Commonwealth countries on matters affecting youth and noted the facilities available through the Commonwealth Secretariat.