

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION IN WEST AFRICA 1945-68
A COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN POLICIES

Dr. E.E. Ekuban
University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Summary

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The thesis shows British technical aid to be governed by colonial policy to guide territories to responsible self governments, to which the extension of social and educational facilities at all levels were considered a prerequisite. Hence, any effective aid programme had to be long term and continuous and capable of being adapted to changing needs and conditions.

American technical aid developed under its foreign policy to promote security and general welfare of the U.S. by assisting people of the world in their efforts towards economic and social development (foreign Assistance Act 1961). American Education assistance was ancillary to short term relief programmes.

Whereas British aid has been determined by a sense of trusteeship responsibility, American aid has been determined by security interests. Nevertheless, British and American policies of higher education have promoted diversity: British policy underlining autonomy, freedom, standards; American science and technology.

Report

Introduction

The study of British and American policies of technical assistance to education in West Africa, which is concerned with the provision and the development of human resources, has shown that educational assistance has been an instrument of social change in Ghana. However, the outcomes were not always those envisaged by the British and American authorities.

British and American authorities do not suggest that technical assistance is provided for its own sake as a purely disinterested activity. The policies of the donor countries have been determined by their national interests as well as the objective of development in the assisted countries.

Technical assistance is a two-way process which can benefit the donor as well as the recipient countries. As the national interests of the donor countries and the needs of development in West Africa have changed in emphasis, so have their policies changed.

Apart from the physical provision of aid in the form of men, money and equipment, there are always much intangible things as ideas, personal contact with people and familiarity with the way they do things, which can exert tremendous influence on the recipient country. In consequence, a country which continually receives technical assistance from Britain, for example, will almost imperceptibly be influenced by British ideas and British ways of doing things. This may not form an overt part of the assistance programme, but then the influence will stay with the recipient country at the expiry of the assistance programme. For ideas which form the basis of technical assistance programmes in education have an independent vitality.

British and American authorities agree that development is a long-term, rather than a short-term, process; that technical assistance should be a joint effort, a co-operation between donor and recipient countries; and that education is a basic precondition of social progress and economic development.

The recognition that leadership in all fields of development must come largely from the products of institutions of higher education has resulted in increasing attention being paid to educational assistance at the higher level.

In Ghana, while the structural characteristics of Universities established with British assistance have remained essentially British, changes have occurred in the content of the curriculum in the direction of applied science, technology and professional studies, the development of African Studies and in the greater provision of middle-level education. The outcome of this process of change, which is a combination of indigenous and foreign influences, may well be an African contribution to higher education.

Definition and scope of Technical Assistance

Technical assistance on a large-scale governmental basis is a post-war concept. However, the history of technical assistance is not short. In the past, technical assistance was a by-product of military conquest, colonisation, commerce and evangelisation. Much of the assistance provided was indirect and largely unplanned. It would appear that before the Second World War the term "technical assistance" had not gained currency, its meaning was vague and covered a wide variety of activities.

Official British definition of technical assistance is, "training in the United Kingdom and overseas; the provision of experts, administrators and other professional men and women; the provision of advisory, technical and consultant services and expert missions; and the supply of equipment for training, demonstration, pilot schemes or surveys. This definition, which may be summarised as the provision of training, experts (including advisory and specialist services) and equipment excludes all forms of capital assistance." 1

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United Kingdom, Technical Assistance from the United Kingdom for Overseas Development. Cmd. 1308. London: H.M.S.O. 1961.

British definition of technical assistance covers a wide range of activities; however, the three most important elements are training in the United Kingdom or overseas, the supply of teachers and experts and the provision of equipment (including text-books) for training and research.

Technical assistance is provided by Britain, on request, to overseas countries. It implies a co-operative effort by the United Kingdom and the recipient country in identifying particular opportunities for providing technical assistance; for example, in the selection of candidates for training and in determining appropriate types of training. As explained by the Department of Technical Co-operation, what the United Kingdom government was "aiming to do is to co-operate with other countries when asked in educating their men and women, developing their natural resources, raising their standards of living and building up their institutions and services."¹ Thus, technical assistance is amenable to selective control by the recipient country, and therefore more likely to be adapted to suit local conditions.

The United States Mutual Security Act, 1954, defined American technical assistance as, "...programs for the international inter-change of technical knowledge and skills designed to contribute primarily to the balanced and integrated development of the economic resources and productive capacities of economically underdeveloped areas. Such activities shall be limited to economic, engineering, medical, educational... training and similar projects that serve the purpose of promoting the development of economic resources, productive capacities, and trade of economically underdeveloped areas, and training in public administration."²

This definition implies that American programmes of assistance were to be designed to contribute "primarily" to the balanced and integrated economic development of recipient countries, and that they "shall be limited" to specific areas of activity. Besides, technical assistance is the "international interchange of knowledge and skills." It includes sharing of techniques and experience with people of the developing areas of the world. Such programmes of assistance are carried out at the request of 'friendly governments' to supplement their own efforts to increase their level of technical competence.

British and American definitions of technical assistance cover a wide range of activities which are performed at the request of the recipient countries to promote development in the recipient countries.

¹United Kingdom, Department of Technical Co-operation, Technical Co-operation: A Progress Report by the New Department. Cmnd. 1698. London: H.M.S.O., 1962, p.4

²U.S. Mutual Security Agency, The Mutual Security Program, Fiscal Year 1961. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961, p.46

The main forms of educational assistance provided by Britain and America include the following:

- a) advice, including the formulation of educational policy
- b) provision of training and research facilities
- c) supply of teachers, experts and other educational personnel
- d) provision of teaching aids, equipment and textbooks
- e) financial assistance for educational purposes.

As the provision of these forms of assistance has received varying emphasis at different periods, so has the manner in which assistance has been offered to recipient countries. In general, British and American technical assistance is provided through a) bilateral arrangements, based on agreements between the donor and recipient countries; b) regional programmes; c) multilateral assistance through international organisations and d) public bodies other than government department.

While the British definition has stressed assistance to education in general as well as training in specialised techniques, the American definition emphasised in particular the provision of scientific and technical knowledge. As stated in the U.S. Mutual Security Program (1961), "What science and modern technology can mean in achieving social and economic progress are only empty words if men trained to employ their methods are not available. Technical co-operation programs are of key importance in providing that training and know-how."

This differences in emphasis is reflected in the policies of the two countries.

British and American Policies, Pre-1945

British policy of technical assistance may be said to have formed an integral part of British Colonial policy, and American technical assistance an instrument of American foreign policy. In consequence, an attempt is made to examine briefly the relationship between British and American policies of technical assistance, and British colonial policy and American foreign policy.

British Colonial Policy

The central purpose of British colonial policy was "to guide the colonial territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth in conditions that ensure to the people concerned both a fair standard of living and freedom from oppression from any quarter."¹

To achieve this central purpose of British Colonial policy, the United Kingdom government held the view that those economic and social conditions considered essential for responsible self-government should also be created in the dependencies. For constitutional development by itself would be unreal unless reinforced by social and economic development.²

¹ Great Britain, The Colonial Empire, 1947- 48. Cmnd. 7433 London: H.M.S.O., 1948, p.1

² United Kingdom, Constitutional Development in the Commonwealth, Part II. London: H.M.S.O., 1955, p.2

In almost every aspect of the development process in the dependencies - political, economic and social - the extension of educational facilities at all levels was considered a pre-requisite.

Assuming that by education is meant not only "the training of the intelligence or the arts of life and the means of livelihood but also the raising of the general level of the life of the whole people, and the provision of really adequate facilities for their development, physical, economic, intellectual and spiritual "1. as H.S. Scott has suggested, then educational assistance to the colonies must be an essential part of the responsibility of Great Britain as a trustee of the welfare of the peoples in its dependent territories. As laid down in Article XXII of the Covenant of the League of Nations (1920), "the well-being and development of peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world would form a sacred trust of civilization". This explains Britain's long history of technical assistance which goes back to the colonial period.²

Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies

Prior to the Second World War, the British governments role in educational assistance to the dependencies of Tropical Africa was more in the formulation of broad educational policy, the giving of advice, and the supply of educational personnel to implement policy proposals, than in direct financial contributions to education. This form of assistance was given through Advisory Committees, Commissions and personal visits of educational experts to the colonies. Perhaps the most influential of these committees was the Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical Dependencies.

In its Memorandum of 1925, which was prepared in "fuller recognition" of the Administering power's responsibility as a trustee of the African people, the Advisory Committee formulated the broad principles which should form the basis of a sound educational policy in British Tropical Africa.³

According to the memorandum, the first task of education was "to raise the standard alike of character and efficiency of the bulk of the people." The second was that "provision must also be made for the training of those who are required to fill posts in the administrative and technical services, as well as of those who as chiefs will occupy positions of exceptional trust and responsibility."

¹ H.S. Scott, "Educational Policy in the British Colonial Empire," in *The Year Book of Education*, 1937. London: Evans Brothers Ltd. 1937, p.412

² United Kingdom, *Britain's Contribution to Economic Development Overseas*. London: Central Office of Information, 1960, p.1

³ Colonial Office, *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa*. London: H.M.S.O., 1925, p.3

One of the basic policies formulated by the Advisory Committee on Education was that, "Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various people conserving all sound and healthy elements, adapting them where necessary to changed circumstances and progressive ideas."¹ It was hoped that education thus defined would "narrow the hiatus between the educated class and the rest of the community whether chiefs or peasantry."

Education assumed a significant role as a means of inculcating a sense of citizenship in the mass of the people and preparing the traditional leaders, the chief, for local responsibility.

Subsequent memoranda submitted by the Advisory Committee underlined the objectives which the British government had set itself to achieve as a necessary condition of self-government: the improvement of the well-being of the African people; and the development of political institutions and political power until the day when African people could become effectively-self-governing.

The education policies formulated by the Advisory Committee did not cease to influence educational systems in the West African countries after they had attained political independence. For, in the existing nation states of West Africa, British colonial policies of education have had a longer life than British rule.

During the post-war period, the Advisory Committee was generally consulted on the granting of assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Funds; and it arranged specialist advisory visits overseas. Sir Christopher Cox said of the Advisory Committee which was finally disbanded in 1961 when the Department of Technical Co-operation was established, "For thirty years, the voluntary work of some of the best professional minds in United Kingdom education has been dedicated to building up education in the colonial territories, mainly with the goal in mind of ultimate self-government."²

American Foreign Policy

The official policy under which the United States Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) has operated is that aid is an instrument of American foreign policy. Thus, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 was an Act, "To promote the foreign policy, security and general welfare of the U.S. by assisting peoples of the world in their efforts towards economic and social development and internal and external security and for other purposes."

This policy has its origins in the period prior to 1945.

¹ Education Policy in British Tropical Africa, 1925, pp.4-6.

² United Kingdom, Education in the United Kingdom Dependencies. London H.M.S.O. 1959, p.11.

American national interest in its foreign policy is to foster a world environment congenial not merely to the survival of the United States but also to the continuing development of America as a free society. 1

Accordingly, there was a strong belief in the United States in seeking security through isolation. American policy and action during the First World War were influenced by this policy until the attack on Pearl Harbour and the German declaration of war eliminated the freedom of choice.

Under the impact of the Second World War, the United States moved towards a policy of all aid short of war. It culminated in the passage of the Lend-Lease Act of March, 1941, the Act to Promote the Defence of the United States.2 The primary objective of American policy of technical assistance under the Lend-Lease Act was to assist nations which were threatened by "Axis totalitarian expansion" to resist aggression. It was a short-term relief programme which ended in 1945.

In September 1943, the United States of America participated in United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration aimed at repairing the destruction caused by the war in Europe and the formerly Japanese occupied territories of Asia. 3 Like the assistance provided under the Lend-Lease Act, it was a short-term relief programme which began in 1943 and ended in 1945. It did not bear close reference to any overall plan of development in the assisted countries. Any educational assistance provided was a by-product of these relief programmes.

It will be observed that British policy of technical assistance was determined primarily by Britain's responsibility as a trustee of peoples in its dependencies, and not solely for security reasons. In the period prior to 1945 educational assistance to tropical Africa was given prominence, and emphasis was placed on the formulation of policy to guide subsequent educational policies at all levels in the colonies. The achievement of political independence was the short-term objective of British policy, social and economic development was considered to be a long-term policy.

In comparison, the American foreign policy of promoting the security and well-being of the United States was the major factor which determined the provision of assistance to assisted countries. Educational assistance was considered ancillary to short-term relief programmes. Countries in West Africa were not included in official American assistance programmes at this period.

1 U.S. Congress, Senate Special Committee to study the Foreign Aid Program. 84th Congress, 2nd Session, 1957 (Washington U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), p.16

2 U.S. Congress, A Decade of American Foreign Policy, 1941-49. Senate. 81st Congress, 1st Session, 1949. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), pp.3-5.

3 U.S. Agency for International Development, The Aid Story, 1966. (Washington, D.C.), p.3

Policies in Dependent West Africa, 1945 to 1960
British Policy of Higher Education in dependent West Africa

The evolution of a policy for institutions of higher education in the African dependencies was the subject of a number of investigations and reports by committees appointed by the Advisory Committee on Education for the Colonies between 1933 and 1945.

While the proposals for creating colonial universities made by the various committees were applicable to specific areas of the British dependencies, the Asquith Commission Report, published in 1945, embodied a general policy intended to be applicable to the Colonies as a whole.

In the view of the Asquith Commission Universities have an important part to play in the stage preparatory to self-government, indeed "they may be said to be indispensable."¹

The Commission's immediate objective in the dependent territories was "to produce men and women who have the standards of public service and capacity for leadership which the progress of self-government demands, and to assist in satisfying the need for persons with the professional qualification required for the economic and social development of the Colonies."²

Against the European tradition of University aims and social functions must be understood the recommendations made by the Asquith Commission. The fact that European Universities included within their ranks people whose training fitted them for different roles in the leadership group of European society, created a demand for them by individuals and by Church and State. In line with this tradition, the Asquith Commission's proposals were determined by the political evolution which was taking place in the dependent territories, the accompanying economic and social development and the need for capable leaders and persons with professional qualifications.

Three main principles which received considerable attention in the Asquith Commission's report were University autonomy, high academic standards and adaptation to local needs and conditions.

In order to secure for the colonial graduate a qualification whose significance was clear, the Commission proposed that the University colleges could "establish personal relationship" with the academic staff of the University of London who would be responsible for examining and approving courses of study.

The Commission proposed the creation of an Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the dependencies, on which representatives of all the British Universities would serve, to keep in touch with the development of the new University Colleges by regular visits of its members. Besides, it recommended that an appropriate part of the funds available

¹ Colonial Office, Report of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies, 1945. Cmd. 6647 London: H.M.S.O., 1945, p.10.
(The Asquith Commission Report, 1945).

² Ibid., p.104

under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts should be allocated specifically for the establishment of institutions of higher education in the colonies.

In accordance with the policy proposals contained in the Asquith Commission Report, 1945, University Colleges were established in Achimota, Ghana, and in Ibadan, Nigeria, which entered into special relationship with the University of London. Fourah Bay College, Freetown in Sierra Leone retained its links with University of Durham.

The provision of centres of higher technical education and vocational education in the dependencies was given prominence in the report of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas, 1947-49. As a result of the Council's recommendation, and of surveys carried out in the territories in 1948 and 1949, Colleges of arts, science and technology, offering course of 'professional or near professional standard (not normally University degree), was established in Nigeria and Ghana. The existing Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone was expanded to include technical and vocational courses.

American Policy in dependent West Africa

Since the countries in West Africa were dependent territories of European powers, American assistance to these countries after the Second World War was given through the metropolitan countries. Bilateral agreements were signed with these countries, but there was no comprehensive policy of American educational assistance to West Africa comparable to that of Britain.

Thus, under the Economic Co-operation Act of 1948, the American Congress authorised the restoration of Western European economy weakened by the Second World War to be undertaken, hence the European Recovery Programme. Every effort was made to keep the main emphasis on economic recovery and reconstruction as the objectives of the programme.

Although the programme aimed at European economic recovery, there were instances when the developmental needs of the dependent African countries were embodied in measures taken to aid the metropolitan countries themselves. ¹ The United States government did not consider it in keeping with the character of American foreign relations to advance a programme of educational assistance for any African territory politically dependent upon a European Administering power without the invitation or the express approval of the government concerned. In line with this policy, American assistance to dependent West Africa was tied to the European Recovery programme. The assumption was that the development of the European countries was related to the development of the overseas territories as sources of raw materials in which Western European countries were deficient and markets for manufactured goods.

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U. S. Senate, Technical Assistance. Final Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 1957. Report No. 139, p.640

In regard to educational assistance, the underlying policy of American assistance was that effective contribution to education in the dependent territories could be made along lines in which the Colonial powers were weakest; for example, in agricultural methods and techniques or in vocational education.

As a consequence, American educational assistance to Nigeria was made available in 1955 through the United Kingdom. 1 Nigeria was then a dependent territory of Britain. Technical assistance programmes in this country were focused on "agriculture, trade and industrial education;" 2 areas in which the Colonial power was weakest.

In his inaugural address in January 1949, President Truman listed four points as the basis of American foreign policy. The first three dealt with the United States support of the United Nations, world economic recovery and collective defence of freedom-loving nations against aggression.³ The fourth point was a "bold new program for making the benefits of our [United States] scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas....."⁴

The President believed that the United States and other free nations of the world had a common concern for the material progress of these people, both as a humanitarian end in itself, and because it was believed that such progress would further the advance of human freedom, democratic ways of life, expansion of mutually beneficial commerce and the development of international understanding and goodwill. 5

As part of this primary objective the programme sought to "raise the educational level and to improve the health of people participating in it."⁶

Accordingly, one of the earliest forms of American educational assistance to West Africa, the Educational Exchange Programme initiated in 1948, was a programme to promote the better understanding of the United States among the peoples of the world and to strengthen co-operative international relations."⁷

¹ U.S. Senate, Briefing on Africa, 1960. 86th Congress, 2nd Session, 1960. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960. p.12

² Ibid.

³ U.S. Department of State, Point Four. Co-operative Program for Aid in the Development of Economically Underdeveloped Areas. Washington, D.C., 1950, p.1

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p.2

⁶ Ibid., p.1

⁷ U.S. Senate, Technical Assistance. Final Report of the Committee on Foreign Relation, 1957, op.cit., p.74.

The Act for International Development was enacted in 1950 to give legislative sanction to Truman's 'Point IV' programme. In the same year the Korean War began. This was of great significance in American policy of technical assistance since virtually all American aid from then came under the category of 'defence' and 'mutual security.'

The Mutual Security Programmes

In 1951 the U.S. Congress passed the Mutual Security Act which initiated a series of annual defence orientated measures aimed at promoting "the security and foreign policy of the United States."¹ This objective would be achieved by increasing the economic strength and well-being of America's friends abroad, including assistance to developing countries both as an activity necessary and good in itself and in large measure as part of a series of defensive engagements which needed to be fought to prevent the spread of Communism.

As stated by the Mutual Security Agency, 1957,

"when all considerations are carefully appraised, it becomes apparent that the strength and prosperity of the United States is directly and strongly influenced by their economic relations with free nations and by inter-dependence for security."²

In Africa, the basic policy objectives of the United States under the Mutual Security Programmes were "to promote political stability, to develop peaceful relationships among the various nations of the region, to seek co-operation of the region with the rest of the free world in political, economic and security affairs and to assist in the development of economic, political and defense strength."³

According to the Mutual Security Agency, the developing nations, including the West African countries, are of great strategic importance to the United States. Their population in 1960, of which Africa contained 220 million, accounted for almost half of the total world population, and could determine the world population balance. Africa south of the Sahara was a vital source of raw and strategic materials to the Western World and a major supplier of uranium. North Africa was considered "an essential buttress" to Western defence positions. As buyers of the products of the United States and the industrialised nations, the developing countries could make an increasing contribution to free world prosperity as their own

¹U.S. Mutual Security Agency, The Mutual Security Program, Fiscal year 1958. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959, p.17.

² U.S. Mutual Security Program. Fiscal year, 1957, p.8

³ U.S. Mutual Security Programme, Fiscal Year, 1956, p.4.

prosperity increased and their buying power grew.¹ For, "the more developed the country ... the better customer it is..."²

The United States believed that its national interests would be best protected in a world in which free institutions predominated, and in which popular aspirations for material improvement and social progress could be met by free and democratic governments without recourse to totalitarian methods.³ This explains the statement made by the Mutual Security Agency that the developing countries were important for their own sakes and because "the fate of their citizens is of great concern to us [The United States]"⁴

By helping in the development of the recipient countries, the United States was not only increasing the total strength of the free world and therefore improving the prospects for enduring peace, but also accelerating progress at a rate which would sustain their confidence in their free institutions and providing the groundwork for the expanding trade on the basis of 'mutual benefit.'⁵ It is in this context that must be understood President Eisenhower's statement that technical co-operation is one of the most valuable elements of the United States entire mutual security programme.

Prior to 1960 there was no comprehensive American policy of educational assistance to West Africa comparable to the educational policies formulated by the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies between the First and the Second World Wars.

The fact is that schools in the United States are essentially folk-created, As Asael C. Lamber has stated, "Education, like the State itself, has grown out of the native urges, hopes and values of the people themselves."⁶ The American Constitution itself does not mention education. In consequence, the fundamental structure of education in the United States of America is not the result of any master plan or national policy devised and projected by Federal officials. In the words of Robert M. Macy, the "federal government has been cautious about getting into the educational field at home... if you try to promote a large educational programme abroad and so indentify it, you run into some important tactical problems on the Hill."⁷

¹U.S. Mutual Security Program. Fiscal year, 1958, p.49.

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Ibid

³U.S. Mutual Security Program. Fiscal Year, 1957, p.30.

⁴U.S. Mutual Security Program. Fiscal year, 1958, p.49.

⁵U.S. Mutual Security Program. Fiscal Year, 1956, p.21.

⁶Asael C. Lamber, "Education in the United States", in Collier's Encyclopaedia, Vo. 8, 1967, p.600.

⁷Robert M. Macy, "The Need for Guidelines" in William Elliot (Ed.) Education and Training in the Developing Countries. The Roles of U.S. Foreign Aid. New York. Frederick A. Praegar, 1966, p.202

Without the benefit of a long history of colonial administration in West Africa which Britain had, and influenced by its own tradition of local or state control of education, American policy of educational assistance to West Africa at this period aimed at 'filling the gaps' which existed in the basic technical skills needed to plan and implement sound economic programmes. 1 This assistance was supplied in the belief that the U.S. could make its most effective contribution to dependent areas along lines in which the metropole often is weakest.2

Policies in Independent West African Countries, 1961-68

The constitutional and political changes in the structure of the British Empire, occasioned by the achievement of independence by Ghana (1957), Nigeria (1960), Sierra Leone (1961) and the Gambia (1965) were reflected in British policy of educational assistance to these independent countries as well.

Britain

After the Second World War British educational assistance was given to West Africa in recognition of the fact that the dependent territories were destined for self-government, that political independence should be built on a sound economic and social foundation, and that constitutional advance, culminating in responsible self-government, was a necessary consequence of advances in general education.

With the attainment of political independence by the West African countries, the primary objective of British educational assistance to these countries in the 1960's became social and economic development. 'Development' was given a broader definition than reducing poverty and unemployment. It includes training professional men and teachers in all walks of life, craftsmen and technicians; fulfilling aspirations towards steady and continued social and economic progress; the transformation of traditional societies into modern ones, and the raising of standards of living.3 The underlying principle was that any effective aid programme must be long-term and continuous, and that, "Education is an indispensable condition of development."4 A variety of educational assistance programme was devised to achieve these objectives; for example, University secondment, inter-departmental links, University Home-base scheme, etc. Perhaps, an important feature of educational assistance to independent West Africa has been the Commonwealth Education Co-operation in which Britain has played a leading role.

1 U.S. Mutual Security Program. Fiscal year, 1959, p.42.

2 U.S. Congress, Briefing on Africa, 1960, opcit, p.11

3 Ministry of Overseas Development, Overseas Development. The Work of the New Ministry. Cmnd 2736. London: H.M.S.O., 1965, p.6

4 United Kingdom Technical Assistance from the United Kingdom for Overseas Development. London: H.M.S.O., 1961, p.19

The significance of education for the Commonwealth is stated thus, ¹ "the end of all our Commonwealth endeavour is the good life - material and spiritual - and the happiness of the... individuals..." The good life and happiness, it was explained, "could be attained only through education in the deeper and wider sense." Consequently, it has been an objective of Commonwealth countries that "their people should be able to share as widely as possible in the advantage of education of all kinds and at all levels..."²

The Commonwealth Education Co-operation schemes, which include the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and the Commonwealth Teacher Training Bursary Scheme, reflect the main features of British policy. They are intended to be long-term programmes capable of being adapted to suit changing needs and conditions in the participating countries, and helping the developing Commonwealth countries "to become masters of their own educational progress." Moreover there was a shift in emphasis from the belief that educational assistance is provided by the donor country for the sole benefit of the recipient country to the idea that educational assistance is a programme in educational co-operation among the participating countries. This new emphasis in British policy was reflected also in American policy.

America

While American policy in independent West Africa continued to be influenced by its national interests in the security and well-being of the American people, the achievement of political independence by a number of African countries in the 1960's was a major factor which determined the concentration of American foreign assistance on the promotion of political democracy and economic growth in the newly independent countries. Thus, the primary objective of American foreign assistance in the developing West African countries in the 1960's was to promote the development of the recipient country within a broad social and political context compatible with 'free world' ideals.

In most developing countries some progress in economic welfare is essential to the maintenance of political independence and the growth of free societies. On the basis of this argument, the Committee on Foreign Relations stated, "Technical assistance is in the national interest of the U.S. when and only when it not only promotes economic development but also encourages the growth of free institutions within the framework of a free society." ³

¹Commonwealth Relations Office, Report of the Commonwealth Education Conference, 1959. Cmnd. 841, London: H.M.S.O. 1959, p.4

²Ibid., p.3.

³U.S. Senate Technical Assistance. Final Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 1957, op.cit., pp.21-22.

Mennen Williams was speaking for a number of African and American politicians when he stated, "There can be neither political stability nor economic progress unless there are people trained to manage, trained to produce, and trained to teach these skills to others... Education and training is not only a first priority in itself, it lies at the effort that must be made in every field."¹

It was felt that all the forces of change operating on the continent of Africa underlined the need for educational assistance, guidance and advice. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 created the Agency for International Development which combined the economic and technical assistance operations of official bodies concerned with aid, and its main provisions formed the basis of the Special Programme for Tropical Africa, 1961.

Special Programme for Tropical Africa, 1961

The purpose of the special programme was "to promote education and training, and to encourage regional co-operation for the development of Africa's resources through multi-country consultation, planning research and reconnaissance surveys."²

The underlying principle of the special programme was that, "Development of human resources, through education and training, is a fundamental pre-requisite to economic growth and political stability for the African nations that have recently won or are about to win independence."³

Considerable emphasis was placed on the strengthening of existing institutions of higher learning, which in turn could then serve as more effective centres of planning and leadership for education. Attention was also given to teacher training, to basic improvements in primary and secondary education, vocation training, agricultural and public health training, and training in public administration.

¹ U.S. Congress. The International Development and Security Act, June 7, 1961, pp.295-296.

² U.S. Mental Security Program, Fiscal Year, 1961, p.77.

³ Ibid., p.35

Basic to American educational assistance to Africa has been, like the British, the policy of adaptation which states, "The training and assistance that technical co-operation provides is tailored to the needs of the recipient country; in one the need may be for increased food production, in another expert guidance in tanning hides and skins may upgrade an important export item, in a third help may be sought to develop and staff an agricultural extension service."¹

While the British policy of adaptation was concerned with general cultural adaptation to mentality, traditions and aptitudes, and the modifications of the curriculum to include agricultural and technical education; the American policy of adaptation was confined to specific "crucial needs and urgent demands" and "educational bottlenecks"; for example, "food production", "guidance in tanning hides" and training of staff for agricultural extension.

In contrast, the British educational assistance to West Africa, particularly in the formulation of educational policy, was intended to form the basis of subsequent educational development. It was therefore basic and comprehensive, while American assistance was directed to "filling the gaps" in the educational systems of West African countries.

In pursuit of the American policy, for example, two comprehensive secondary schools were established in Aiyetoro and Port Harcourt in Nigeria. The schools incorporated, what Senator Ellender considered to be "the best principles and practices of American and European comprehensive schools;"² namely, 'grammar school curriculum' as well as vocational and technical education adapted to meet Nigeria's needs.

Similarly, at Nsukka in Eastern Nigeria, Michigan State University under contract with the Agency for International Development assisted in the establishment in 1960 of the first land-grant college in West Africa. The founder of the University of Nigeria, Dr. N. Azikiwe, had indicated the philosophy on which the type of institution of higher education he had in mind should be founded. He explained that the proposed University's activities were to be related "to the social and economic needs and the day-to-day life of the people of Nigeria... This calls for a realistic approach to the problems of higher learning in our system of education."³

Thus, unlike the dual system in England where university and technological studies have by tradition been provided in separate institutions, the University of Nigeria, in Nsukka, influenced by the American land-grant philosophy, provided within the same university and under American educational personnel courses in the faculties of science, technology and research, arts, social studies and medicine. American educational assistance, like the British assistance programme, has been the best means of conveying U.S. ideas, techniques and know-how.

¹ Ibid., p.16

² Allan J. Ellender, A Report on U.S. Foreign Operations in Africa. U.S. Senate. 88th Congress. Document No. 8. 1963, p.48.

³ An address delivered before the inaugural convocation of the University of Nigeria, October 13, 1960, reproduced in the University of Nigeria, Calendar, 1964 - 65

During the mid-1960's there was a renewed emphasis on American educational assistance to Africa, intended to build "directly the most vital ingredient of growth; skilled people and functioning human institutions." 1

In this endeavour, the development of institutions of higher education in Africa received prior attention on the premise that development depends on leadership in government, industry and educational institutions, and that training for leadership is the "business of the Universities." 2

African Higher Education Programme

The new programme was proposed by Congress in 1967 "to enable more African students to receive higher education on the African continent instead of overseas... to help promising African university faculties in development-related fields to become fully qualified regional centres of education."3 Emphasis was placed on training African students in applied science and technology, and the development of 'centres of learning' and regional co-operation in educational assistance in Africa 'for pooling of knowledge and experience.'

Examples of centres of learning in West Africa are: Njala University College in Sierra Leone to provide work-study activities, experimental agricultural and basic research functionally related to the needs of West African countries to enable them to increase their food production. Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria was assisted by the Agency for International Development to meet the requirements for trained Africans in veterinary medicine in English-speaking West African countries.

Conclusion:

British and American policies of technical assistance to education were concerned with statements of general principles which, though allowed scope for local application, do not lend themselves easily to rigorous assessment in terms of achievement.

The concept of educational adaptation in British policy was given a broad definition to include the modification of the curriculum to suit cultural as well as economic needs. In contrast, American policies stressed adaptation of education to specific crucial needs of the assisted country in health, agriculture and education to promote economic development.

Belief in the close link between education and economic development is given primacy in American policy, and this is reflected in American interpretation of the concept of educational adaptation. The African Higher Education Programme aimed at producing African personnel with qualifications in applied science, technology and agriculture required for economic development in the assisted countries.

1 U.S. Senate, Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1965. 88th Congress. 2nd Session. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964, p.7

2 William Y. Elliot, op.cit., p.219.

3 U.S. Congress. Foreign Assistance Act of 1968, 90th Congress, 2nd Session, p.280.

While the British authorities did not belittle the contribution which education could make to the economic development of the West African countries, they believed that education should be multi-purpose. It should perform other non-economic functions, like raising the character and efficiency of the bulk of African people, as well as narrow the gap between 'chiefs and peasantry.' It is in this sense that the British definition of educational adaptation is broader than the American definition.

It is evident from their policies that British and American authorities do not suggest that technical assistance to education is a charitable, purely disinterested activity. It is adapted both to the needs and conditions of the developing country, as well as the donor's own national interests. These national interests, which have received varying emphasis at different periods, have been political and strategic, economic, social and humanitarian.

American policy, unlike the British, has been determined by its security interests rather than its trusteeship responsibilities to the recipient country; the strategic importance of the assisted countries rather than its historical links with them; and American educational assistance was regarded as ancillary to its political-military programmes.

In the immediate post-war period, America showed greater interest in strengthening its military positions and alliances to prevent another global war than in adapting the slower methods of education to build defences of peace. Such educational assistance that was provided was regarded chiefly as a 'cold war' weapon.

British and American policies of higher education in Ghana have introduced diversity in educational institutions in West Africa. At the higher educational level in Ghana, British policy underlined university autonomy and academic freedom and high academic standards. American policy has laid emphasis on the applied sciences, technology and agriculture, and on the widening of the existing curriculum to take account of national and individual needs. This diversity has fostered a climate of flexibility in the entry requirements and responsiveness to innovation, such as the increasing provision made for the training of middle-level personnel in Ghana Universities.

Since the 1960's, there has been a growing realisation that technical assistance to education is a long-term programme intended to promote economic and social development, rather than short-term assistance to dependent countries to attain political independence. As I.M.D. Little has observed, the old optimism of "development in a decade" is giving way to "development in half a century."