

# CHAPTER 1

## Non-Formal Education and Development

*Non-formal education . . . is a part of the total educational system . . . But I believe that an even greater imperative is to integrate non-formal education with the development system. For me . . . there is an indelible link between non-formal education and development.*

Malcolm Adiseshiah: Opening Address

### **The Non-Formal Idea**

The idea of ‘non-formal education’—as distinct from its practice—is a very recent phenomenon. Before the 1970s a book, or even a conference, about NFE would not have been possible because the term had hardly been invented. At an important international conference on ‘Education, Employment and Rural Development’ held at Kericho in Kenya in 1966, there was no mention of ‘non-formal education’.<sup>1</sup> And yet, only two years later, Philip Coombs<sup>2</sup> was calling for much greater investment in ‘non-formal’ education and this was followed in 1973 and 1974 by two influential studies of the type of education needed to combat rural poverty;<sup>3</sup> these studies gave wide currency to the non-formal idea.

In these few years two things had happened. Firstly, there was growing dissatisfaction with the effects of formal school systems in relation to development goals; and secondly, fundamental changes were taking place in the definition of development itself. As the World Bank put it in 1974,<sup>4</sup> ‘Questions of employment, environment, social equity and, above all, participation in development by the less “privileged” now share with simple “growth” in the definition of objectives (and hence the model) of development toward which the effort of all parties is to be directed. These changes have their counterpart in the education sector.’

Indeed, as the same paper points out, it would be unfair to blame formal school systems for the failure of development strategies in the

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1960s. 'Education systems have been irrelevant to the needs of developing countries during the last two decades because education policies were often keeping company with overall development strategies which were themselves irrelevant to the societies and conditions of developing countries.' The non-formal idea is thus part of a widespread search for alternatives in education which is itself intimately bound up with changing conceptions of development.

The term 'non-formal' was given currency by development planners rather than educators. Existing terminology was seen as too narrow (e.g. 'adult education' is often confined to literacy or university extramural classes) while many of the more important programmes (e.g. farmer training schemes) were sometimes not seen as 'education' at all, even by practitioners themselves. What was needed was an all-embracing term for what at the 1966 Kericho conference were called 'educative services' to rural adult producers. As it gained currency, the term also came to include provision for the school-age drop-outs and left-outs of the formal system.

Of course, it is clear that we have had non-formal education for a long time although we have not had it so called. In many countries we still have a new label in search of a new structure, and professionals only beginning to find a new identity as non-formal educators. Nevertheless, the *practice* of non-formal education is as old as society itself, including, for example, the various initiation ceremonies which mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. In more recent times a whole range of educative services has grown up usually having roots in attempts to answer specific needs – better husbandry, better hygiene, or the attempt to increase awareness of current issues, are examples which spring to mind. All have now come to be regarded as 'non-formal education'.

As is shown by the various country papers prepared for the Delhi Conference, many of these specific programmes have been developed over a period of years as discrete activities, often promoted by separate ministries or voluntary agencies. But it is only recently that they have come to be seen as part of a unified developmental or educational process. In The Gambia, for example, there are records of non-formal education from the 1940s 'as a way of teaching rural people . . . to read texts related to agricultural production, health care and community and social issues'. Agricultural extension education, in particular, has a long and honourable tradition in many Commonwealth countries. However, in spite of partial successes in the past, it is only with recent changes in ideas about development itself that non-formal education *as a whole* has assumed greatly increased importance in educational planning throughout the Commonwealth. The non-formal idea has come of age.

### Formal Schools and Development Needs

Although it would be quite wrong to blame educational policies for the failure of past development strategies, it must be recognized that the non-formal idea is to some extent a reaction against formal school systems. The faith shared by most educators and politicians in the 1950s and 1960s about education as a major instrument of social or economic development has been considerably eroded. In his paper on 'Structural Change and Transformation', Kazim Bacchus points out that:

The budgets allocated for education in the developing countries have grown substantially over the past two decades. Their first, second and third level enrolments have increased by 211 per cent, 465 per cent, and 511 per cent, respectively between 1950 and 1970, and most of these governments now allocate between 20 per cent and 25 per cent of all their expenditure to education alone. Furthermore, despite its contribution in supplying qualified manpower for the small modern sector of these societies, formal education has not proved to be 'the key to modernization' and development as was once hoped. The earlier assumption of a direct relationship between the stock of highly educated manpower and the rate of economic growth, which underlies the Ashby Report on Higher Education in Nigeria and the writings of Harbison, has turned out to be more complicated than was originally envisaged. In fact, the evidence now seems to indicate that education has reached a point in many developing countries where it is making a negative contribution to their development. Already in many of these countries the products of the school system are finding it difficult to secure employment, giving rise to the growing phenomenon of the 'educated unemployed'. This problem has become so widespread that Turham observes:

Relative to the whole working population the *unemployed as a group in the developing countries tend to be better educated* especially where young and inexperienced unemployed are numerous. Thus there are often considerable differences in the rates of unemployment among labour force groups of different educational levels with *particularly low rates among the illiterate urban population*.<sup>5</sup>

Further, not only are those with no formal education less likely to be unemployed but, as the figures from India and other countries indicate, the average duration of unemployment among the illiterates is substantially lower than for those with some primary and secondary education. The 1964-66 Report of the Indian Educational Commission was partly concerned with this problem and with the 'unsuitability' (in terms of its relevance for the development goals of the nation) of the education which those attending higher education institutions were receiving when it wrote: 'the educated élite thus become largely parasitical in character and the real productive workers are the unlettered peasants and artisans'.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, the rate of unemployment does not necessarily decrease with an increase in the level of education. Since in many developing countries illiterates are more likely to be employed than those with some primary and

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secondary education, development planners are already rethinking the desirability of expanding formal education facilities yet further.

Another expectation of formal education which is being frustrated is its role in creating a more egalitarian society. The evidence available in the economically more developed countries seems to indicate that education is a poor instrument for achieving greater social equality. But it is true that in many Third World Commonwealth countries, especially during the period immediately following self government and independence, it was an important instrument for upward social mobility, especially among children of lower income families. This was so because a relatively large number of nationals had to be educated quickly to take over senior positions previously filled by expatriates. However, present indications are that these opportunities are being considerably reduced. This is partly due to the fact that the job market in the modern sector of these societies—in which the educated are normally employed—is not growing very quickly while the supply of educated individuals is increasing rapidly.

Bearing in mind the known relationship between the socio-economic background of parents and students' access to and academic performance in formal educational institutions, it is obvious that most of the new and better paying jobs will be filled by the children of those who were originally promoted into the higher-level positions which became vacant when the expatriates left. This does not mean that the children of the poor in these countries are excluded from such posts, but in a tight job-market situation it is the children of parents with high socio-economic standing who are most likely to fill these jobs—a reversal of what happened in the immediate post-independence period. As writers like Jagdish Bhagwati have noted, recent studies have indicated that rather than being a general force for equality, 'the education systems of most developing nations act to increase rather than decrease their income inequalities.'

Another factor which has motivated this shift in emphasis away from formal education is the general dissatisfaction with the usefulness of its content in terms of the development needs of the Third World countries. For example, primary schools have been accused of concentrating on preparing their students for the secondary schools—which most of them will not be able to enter. On the other hand they place little emphasis on passing on the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for these students to function efficiently in a rural environment, in which the great majority of them are likely to spend their lives. The overall result, as one development expert observed, is that there is the real danger that schools in the developing countries 'may continue to educate for poverty'.

### **Non-Formal Education as an Alternative**

In the context of new development strategies, non-formal education is being viewed as more relevant to the needs of the population, especially for those in the rural areas working in the traditional sector, since it attempts to focus on teaching people to improve their basic level of subsistence and their standards of nutrition and general health. Because of this it is likely to make a more effective contri-

bution than formal education in alleviating the real problems of the poor, especially the rural poor, who often make up 70–80 per cent of the population. Further, since the non-formal education process usually requires the participation of its recipients in determining the nature and content of the educational programmes, these will always tend to focus on the needs and priorities of the communities. In this way they will contribute more effectively towards helping participants to meet their development needs.

Finally, non-formal education is seen as more immediately productive since the learners acquire knowledge and skills which can immediately be put into practice, thus reducing the long gestation period which exists between formal education and productive employment.

However, this is the planner's view and it has yet to be generally accepted. It will be of little use to anybody if non-formal alternatives do not prove acceptable to the intended participants. And if they do prove acceptable, then those who feel comfortable with the *status quo* may well be made uneasy. For as Malcolm Adiseshiah observed at the Delhi Conference:

Non-formal education... feeds back into our societies a rather grim and explosive power process by assisting the poor and down-trodden majority of the people to organize themselves so as to end the state of injustice in which they have been forced to live. We can call this 'dialogue and action', 'conscientization', or, as in India, 'redistributive justice'. No matter what term we use, non-formal education is people's power—the power to change society and make it move towards the paths of justice, tolerance, understanding and charity.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Case for Structural Change and Transformation**

It is argued very powerfully by Kazim Bacchus that '*unless there is massive structural transformation in the reward system... non-formal education will never be fully accepted by the general populace and will remain no more than a peripheral activity in the field of education...*'<sup>10</sup> He points out that people everywhere 'know when they are better off as against when they are worse off' and that 'whenever they perceive the opportunity they will act rationally to improve their life conditions'. On the basis of these two statements one can assume that if the masses perceive real benefits accruing from non-formal education programmes for themselves or their families (and not just benefits which the educators try to tell them about and in which they might not be very interested) they will act rationally and want to participate in such programmes. However, unless radical transformation occurs, the financial benefits that are likely to accrue to individuals with formal education will continue to be considerably higher than those with non-formal education. If the latter is to become

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acceptable as an alternative, then the reward (income) system of developing countries will need early and radical change. He continues:

To elucidate this argument one has to look more closely at the social and economic structure of most Commonwealth Third World countries. One of the major characteristics of these countries is a dualistic structure in their economic systems which is reflected in their reward systems. On the one hand there tends to be a relatively large and usually stagnant subsistence agricultural or traditional sector (the Green Revolution notwithstanding) and on the other, a relatively small modern sector which comprises their limited industrial and commercial activities, their civil service and their armed forces.

The most marked feature of this dualism is the great disparity of income between those earning their living in these two sectors. Because of this phenomenon, Arthur Lewis referred to these sectors as the 'high wage' and the 'low wage' sectors while H. Johnson commented on 'the marked disparity of incomes in the centre and the periphery' of most developing countries, a fact which is partly reflected in the great inequalities in their income distribution. For example, if we look at the ratio of median salaries of secondary school teachers to per capita income in some of these countries and compare these with the economically more developed countries, we will get some idea of the extent of this income gap. This ratio for Ghana (1961) was 14:1, for Pakistan (1962) 7·8:1 while for the United Kingdom in 1964 it was only 3:1.<sup>11</sup>

Further, while the seeds of this dualistic wage structure were sown during colonial days, the gap has not been reduced even with self-government and independence but has instead widened over the past years. In Nigeria, Lewis noted that urban wages were typically 200 per cent higher than average farm incomes. . . Also in Kenya the average earnings of African employees in the non-agricultural sector rose by nearly 11 per cent per annum while those of small farmers rose by only 5 per cent per annum. The result was that in 1966 wages in the urban sector in Kenya were approximately 250 per cent higher than family farm incomes.<sup>12</sup>

There are many reasons for this marked and increasing gap in incomes in these two sectors which cannot be discussed here. But two of the important ones are the increasingly adverse terms of trade which the Third World has experienced against the First World and the relatively heavy emphasis placed by most Third World governments on the development of the modern sector, often at the expense of the traditional or peasant sector. The overall result is that the incomes of the poor in these countries have declined both absolutely and in relation to those in the modern sector. After an examination of the evidence on this issue Todaro was forced to come to the following conclusions:

In spite of impressive rates of per capita GNP growth recorded in Third World regions during the 1960s, the agricultural sector not only showed negligible progress as a whole but it even showed a sharp decline when compared with the previous decade. . . the per capita food production picture for the Third World shows only a very negligible improvement in 1973 compared with the 1961–5 period and an actual deterioration since 1970.<sup>13</sup>

With those working in the traditional sector being mainly farmers, it can be

concluded that poverty among this group has been increasing over the past years. In view of this one can understand the ardent desire of those in the low-wage traditional sector either to escape from it—as is evidenced by the massive migration to the urban areas which is occurring in many developing countries—or to secure an opportunity through formal education for their children to do so.

If we attempt to make non-formal education a substitute for formal education—as many First World non-formal education adherents propose—and try to fob the masses off with it, we run the risk of further depressing the lot of the poor in these countries and their hopes of economic improvement through their children. Further, such a step will increase the already large income differences between themselves and the rich, who will in any case still be able to afford formal education for their children to ensure their continued access to high paying jobs. Such a step might have a negative effect on the productive efforts of the masses for whom an important motivating influence for working hard is their desire to give their children a chance to escape the subsistence and sometimes below-subsistence life which they have to endure.

Despite the desire by protagonists of non-formal education to see it expand more rapidly than formal education, there have been no serious proposals so far—Illich excluded—for formal education to be replaced entirely by non-formal education. We realize no doubt that there will always be jobs in the high wage modern sector which require individuals with a formal educational background. This means that even if non-formal education is expanded some students will have to be given formal education which, since it will lead to the high-income jobs, will no doubt be regarded as 'first class' education while non-formal education will be just the 'second best'. Judging from available evidence it is the children of the rural poor who in this context will be given non-formal education and those from the middle and higher income groups who will receive formal education—a situation which will be intolerable for the masses.

D.S. Ballantine, Director of the Education Division of the World Bank, sees this issue of formal education for those seeking modern-sector employment and non-formal education for those destined for jobs in the traditional sector as a false one since the choice in most developing countries is 'not between the regular educational ladder (formal education) and the second best (non-formal education); the choice is often between the second best or nothing'.<sup>14</sup> In this way he attempts to justify formal education for one group and non-formal education for another. What he fails to observe is that such a decision will further frustrate what is often the only glimmer of hope among the masses for an improvement in their life style. This is why they have been demanding—at most times quietly demanding—a better chance for their children to qualify for the high paying jobs in the modern sector which will necessitate their receiving formal education. And for this very reason, non-formal education in the present context of the developing countries is not likely to be accepted by any group as an alternative to formal education. Furthermore, expansion of the former is not going to diminish the demand for the latter.

Writing in the 1920s, the economist, Alfred Marshall, commented on the influence on people's job aspirations of the existence of a few occupations

with high incomes—as is the case in the modern sector of developing economies. He noted that the attractiveness of these jobs increases out of proportion to their aggregate values, and for many job aspirants the prospect of success becomes greater than the deterrent of failure. The end result is that a large number of individuals want to enter those occupations.

Non-formal education will therefore not succeed if its objective—stated or unstated—is to lower the occupational aspirations of the masses to a ‘more realistic’ level and make them satisfied with, or resigned to, allowing their children to earn their living in the low-wage traditional sector. Its only chance of acceptance is if it is offered concurrently with formal education which becomes increasingly open to their children.

It will seem from these arguments that the only feasible line of action is for the developing countries to continue meeting the increasing popular demand for formal education while attempting, through non-formal education, to help those beyond school age (or at present outside the ambit of schools) to acquire relevant life skills which might help to improve their conditions of living and their efficiency in whatever they might be doing. But the problem with this solution, as the non-formal education supporters have rightly argued, is that these countries cannot afford to expand much further their educational services to meet the growing demand of their population.

The answer, or an important part of it, is therefore for these countries to take steps that will effectively and with fairness reduce the demand for costly formal education to the point where the output from the formal educational system is more in line with the needs of the job market. Many suggestions on how this can be done have been put forward including the development of non-formal education as a substitute for the more expensive formal education. Other suggestions are to increase the private cost of education by charging more realistic school fees and to set up a quota system especially for secondary and higher education. While these measures will be of some value, they fail to get at the root of the problem and will essentially favour children of the higher socio-economic groups at the expense of those from the poorer families.

A more appropriate solution would be for these countries to take active steps to reduce radically the existing wide gaps in income between those working in the modern and those in the traditional or peasant agricultural sectors. This can be done from both sides of the gap—by concentrating development in the traditional sector, which to a large extent has been relatively neglected, and by reducing the rate at which incomes have been increasing in the modern sector in relation to, and often at the expense of, the traditional sector. Obviously there are many strategies which might be used to reduce these income differentials, and many of these will not be readily accepted by the high income groups in the society. However, we are not here discussing such implementation strategies. The crucial point is that the demand for formal education is being distorted by the size of the income differences in the modern as against the traditional sector. It is often argued that these wage differentials are necessary to ensure that there is an adequate supply of educated manpower especially for the higher-level jobs in the society. But the degree of these differentials is, as one World Bank economist points out, probably beyond the point where it can must be regarded as an incentive. He notes ‘... it is important to point out that the classical rationale

of the incentive of wage differentials no longer applies when a mechanic earns ten times as much as an agricultural labourer or a doctor a hundred times as much'.<sup>15</sup>

If the reward structure of the society is radically changed to enable those in the traditional sector to earn a reasonable income compared with those with formal education working in the modern sector, it is likely that this will reduce, though not eliminate, the demand for that type of formal education which is irrelevant to the development of life skills needed in the society. And in this context the demand for the more useful education is likely to increase. So without this prior or concurrent restructuring of the reward system of these societies, non-formal education will only be marginally accepted by the masses and the demand for formal education will not decrease. It is this effort to reduce income differences in what is known as the 'modern' as against the 'traditional' sectors that has largely been responsible for the success of non-formal education in those Third World countries which are undergoing more radical social and economic changes.

Political leaders who for the reasons mentioned above, want to push non-formal education in developing societies without first, or concurrently, considering the need for a more equitable distribution of their wealth, will be disappointed with its lack of acceptance by the masses. It will never become an appropriate instrument for their development. And educators, if they are to be true to their own consciences, will find themselves in a moral dilemma, or at least facing a credibility gap, if they try to convince the masses of the benefits of non-formal education while at the same time seeking formal educational facilities for themselves and their own children.

### **Linking with National Development Goals**

Whatever national policy decisions are made about the foregoing arguments, non-formal educators will still have to ensure that their own programmes remain or can become relevant to particular national goals. It can be both tempting and dangerous to assume that a change of emphasis from 'formal' to 'non-formal' will somehow solve most of the problems, or to suggest that where non-formal programmes have themselves failed, then what is needed is either more resources or more effective follow-up.

### *Literacy Programmes and Development*

In the case of literacy, for example, it is still part of conventional wisdom that more illiterates will learn to read and write if more follow-up reading materials are provided. But, as Manzoor Ahmed points out, the available evidence suggests otherwise.<sup>16</sup> He lists four 'invalid assumptions' about literacy programmes:

- (a) that the educationally deprived and economically disadvantaged are already anxious to acquire literacy;
- (b) that with plenty of follow-up reading materials neo-literates can make significant use of their new skills in their own life situations;

(c) that functional literacy skills can be learned on a part-time basis over a few months;

(d) that linking literacy learning with the teaching of other practical skills and knowledge creates sufficient motivation for literacy learning, that such links can always be established, and that such a 'functional' programme can be designed and implemented with the available human resources in the developing countries.

Manzoor Ahmed continues:

A case in point that supports our contention regarding false assumption is a well-conceived and well-managed literacy effort in Bangladesh of a voluntary organization called the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). The BRAC Functional Education Project, in my judgement, devoted more meticulous attention and resources to identifying the learners' needs and interests, preparing lessons and teaching aids, developing an appropriate instructional methodology, and training the instructors, than most of the Experimental World Literacy Projects sponsored by UNESCO. The BRAC efforts paid off in certain respects. For one thing, compared to the five per cent of those enrolled in previous conventional literacy efforts of BRAC, 40 to 50 per cent considered it worth while to devote time and energy to completing the functional education course. Moreover, the attention and effort given to preparing the materials, developing the methodology, and training the instructors, as well as the participatory learning process employed in the programme, must have made a qualitative difference in the learning outcome that could not be indicated merely by the completion rate.

The unanswered question, however, was: What was the achievement of the participants in terms of (a) literacy and numeracy skills, (b) new knowledge and information useful in improving rural living conditions, (c) critical awareness of the situation in which the participants found themselves, and (d) use of the newly acquired knowledge and awareness to change the situation?

A definitive answer to these questions was not available from existing evaluative information. However, investigators from the International Council for Educational Development, on the basis of extensive discussions with workers in the field and at headquarters and visits with the rural participants of the programme, reached the following conclusions:

(a) Most of those who finish the course do not achieve a level of skill sufficient to write an informative letter to a friend or a relative or to read a newspaper column. They also do not achieve a level of self-sufficiency in literacy skills that would permit them to improve their skill level on their own if reading materials for neo-literates were available. A small proportion, no more than a quarter (estimated generously) of those who complete the course, achieves a level sufficient to continue to improve their skills if they have relevant reading materials for neo-literates and the opportunity to use frequently their skills in their daily lives. In the absence of both, most of these people are likely to relapse into illiteracy. For a rural resident in a Bangladesh village, it would take extraordinary individual motivation and determination to continue to make use of his newly acquired literacy skills and to improve them.

(b) To the extent that the lessons cover information and knowledge useful to the improvement of rural living conditions and an understanding of the dynamics of the rural socio-economic situation, and to the extent that the skills of the instructors and their supervisors are sufficiently put to use (these skills vary among the groups), there is a greater knowledge and understanding among the participants about various rural problems and their own situation than in a comparable group of non-participant rural residents.

(c) There is, however, no clear evidence that the knowledge and awareness gained from the functional education programme have been put to effective use. The level of participation in the various BRAC development activities, either as beneficiaries or as contributors, of the functional education group members is not significantly different from that of non-members. Nor does the standard of living of the group members as a group appear to be different from that of the non-members. It is evident that the BRAC programme organizers, at least initially, have not viewed the participation in functional education as a pre-condition or an essential element of participation in other development activities. Nor has the functional educational programme led to such initiatives and self-help efforts among the participants as to cause them to be marked apart as the focus of special development efforts either by BRAC or other agencies.<sup>17</sup>

The BRAC experience is not unique by any means. A close reading of the evaluation report of the Experimental World Literacy Projects<sup>18</sup> will confirm the basic conclusions of the BRAC efforts: that in a non-literate environment and a primitive rural economy with most people engaged in subsistence activities, literacy is not a practical necessity; and it is extremely difficult to maintain motivation and interest in literacy efforts, even when these efforts form a part of a broader functional education programme. In fact, an emphasis on the mechanics of literacy skills may become a distraction and impede the attainment of such other important goals as creating a critical awareness of the learners' own situation, the dissemination of useful knowledge, and organizing for collective self-help actions.

We are, of course, talking about literacy programmes in the context of the usual social, economic, and political configurations found in most of the Third World countries and not of literacy and adult education efforts as integral components of a revolutionary transformation of economic relationships, social structure and distribution of political power. Even in a revolutionary situation, sustained and patient educational, motivational and propaganda work on a broad front for many many years is required to mobilize the masses in favour of a new order. The successful year-long Cuban literacy campaign that is frequently cited as a model is a singular and unique story even in the revolutionary context.

David Harman, an adult education expert not particularly sympathetic to the Marxist world-view said:

Everywhere else but Cuba, literacy campaigns of every kind have almost always failed. Even in Mexico, where an independent and ambitious national literacy campaign was undertaken during the 1940s and 1950s, fifteen years of effort ended up with more illiterates than when the prog-

ramme was begun. The final statistics indicate that half the adult population was illiterate.

During those campaigns financed by UNESCO, the evidence of failure was predictable in every case. Eighty per cent of those who came dropped out before the programme was complete. Of those who stuck it out, 50 per cent would lose what they had learned within a single year. At best, if we are kind and optimistic, we can say that ten per cent of those involved might have held on to something they had learned.

For all of these reasons, Cuba, which had turned its back upon the safe and mechanistic methods of UNESCO, must be given credit for a triumph which is totally unique.<sup>19</sup>

Again, the goal was to support the revolution and not just teaching the mechanics of literacy. I cannot resist quoting the principal architect of the Cuban campaign, Dr. Paul Ferrer: 'The statistics of the end results are very good. Yet this was not at any time our chief concern. This fact was a by-product of a deeper goal. The great heart of the literacy struggle was the revolution; its chief result, a farmer-worker-student coalition. Above all else, as you have seen, the students in the cities learned the greatest lesson of their lives: reading that "book of life" not from a printed text but from the campesinos whom they were assigned to teach. There is, perhaps, a kind of poetry in this. If so, it is a poetry, that is not mine. The poetry is already there in the history of the campaign'.<sup>20</sup>

The new National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in India underlines the importance of moving beyond a narrow definition of literacy if there is to be a reasonable chance of success.

The aim of the proposed five-year campaign is to create an educational movement for making 100 million people between the ages of 14–35 years literate in five years. The outline of the programme indicates the necessary steps such as developing resources including appropriate content material, establishing the administrative and management structure, preparing the personnel with different competencies, allocating adequate funds, and creating a monitoring and evaluation system. A significant paragraph in the outline is as follows:

It is important that the adult education movement should be closely linked with the planning strategy, which emphasizes elimination of destitution through intensive area planning and by giving employment orientation to development. For this purpose close co-operation should be created with the dominant development activity of the area whether it goes under the rubric of Integrated Rural Development or Integrated Tribal Development or Employment Oriented Area Planning or whatever. The adult education programmes should strive to establish mutually supportive linkage with the development activity.<sup>21</sup>

It is interesting that the paragraph as well as the title of the document cited refer to adult education and not literacy. And it is adult education in the broad sense that has a much greater relevance for basic needs-oriented development than literacy as such. The critical educational issue is how diverse adult

educational activities can be launched and made essential elements of development efforts and not how to mount literacy campaigns.

The Indian programme suggests the following range of activities: (a) literacy with assured follow-up; (b) conventional functional literacy; (c) functional literacy supportive of a dominant development programme; (d) literacy with learning-cum-action; and (e) literacy for conscientization and formation of organizations of the poor. It is the last two of these categories which are likely to have the greatest impact on the vast majority of the rural masses.

### *Literacy and Economic Activity*

Kenneth King approaches the question of relevance from a rather different perspective. He notes the 'significant overlap between those people deemed illiterate and those who work in what has been loosely termed the informal or unorganized sector of the economy.'<sup>22</sup> Those who are illiterate are largely outside the regular wage labour force:

They are concentrated in the categories of household and family labour, particularly women, and amongst the classes of subsistence farmers and subsistence petty producers both in towns and in rural areas. That is to say that illiterates are largely self-employed farm and home workers, or, if they work for others, they do not work in the formal sector but for employers who are themselves not registered in formal labour statistics. Frequently, their work is seasonal, part-time, casual or insecure. Those who are illiterate are not the self-employed in general, for there are long traditions in some countries of independent small trade and business based on literacy; they are what may be termed the subsistence or marginal self-employed. . . .

When functional rather than traditional literacy has been recommended as a strategy, very little attention has been given to the kind and conditions of work that the illiterates are engaged in. The concern has been more with the introduction of new information related to a single type of occupation, such as coffee growing, fishing, or growing tobacco. Putting it over simply, functional literacy has often meant merely improving the knowledge base for a particular rural activity, without examining in the specific work situation the degrees of freedom available to act on that information. . . .

What is argued for here is the inseparability of the work environment and the literacy environment. Unless these two are kept in very close contact, it will remain tempting to think that such questions as motivation for literacy can somehow be dealt with by literacy planners. If we examine the literacy problem in the context of the many millions of subsistence self-employed and household workers, then one of the first points that needs emphasis is the very marginal difference that literacy may make to these categories of workers. It may very well be true that for the remaining clusters of illiterate workers in the formal sector there is a calculable benefit from becoming literate, and this potential literacy for employed workers is neatly captured in Kassam's voices of new literates:

Literacy has opened our eyes and it has done such a lot of good that I now believe that if anyone refuses to become literate he should be dismissed from his job.<sup>23</sup>

No such ready calculation can be made by the subsistence self-employed. There is no hierarchically organized job structure that might correspond to, and reward, the various stages of literacy success. Raggicking, sharecropping or doing outwork in the home on a piece-rate are, for example, minimally affected by the acquisition of literacy, as are many other types of work in the unorganized sector of the economy.

Nor does making literacy the vehicle for useful crop or fertilizer information or improved business practice make very much difference if the recipient of the new knowledge cannot act upon it. And almost by definition the bulk of the illiterates in the rural areas are not those poised to adopt new pest control practices or new crop strains. They have neither the standing nor the savings to get a loan or take the necessary risk.

Although literacy campaigns continue to be termed 'work-related' or 'functional' there has been surprisingly little concern with the existing skills and knowledge of those who are the targets of the exercise. The emphasis is more on what they lack than on what they have. The purpose of stressing existing skill and knowledge is not to diminish the importance of literacy but to point to the milieu in which these present skills are exercised.

One of the benefits of the attention that has been given to the informal sector (by labour economists and political scientists) in recent years, is that a great deal more is known about the nature of the skills and technology employed within that sector. In particular, the various systems whereby such skills are acquired have begun to be charted. These differ a great deal from country to country, depending on the importance of clan, caste, and community monopoly of certain trades, etc. but enough is now known about the process to make it very misleading to put up a literacy poster showing side by side a spider spinning a web and a West African weaver, with the caption 'He's no better than the spider if he can't read'. The process of acquiring expertise may well have stretched over several years in some skills, and several months in others, but the achievement of mastery has its due procedures, and these are valued in many trades to a point where an access fee for learning can be charged. With several of these trades, the learning acquired is inseparable from numeracy, but is not dependent on literacy. In many more cases, the skill requires a complex interaction of hand and eye movement, and, whether it is roadside shoe-repair or car-repair, it demands an improvising technology in the use of materials and tools.

In a way, literacy for these tens of thousands of petty producers faces the same obstacles that urban planners and development economists have run into when they conceptualize these same people as 'the informal sector'. It is recognized that these petty artisans meet the need for very low cost goods and services, and that their present level of skills is well-adjusted to consumer demand. And yet there is the feeling that 'surely something needs to be done about them'. As a consequence, planners have begun to devise ways for integrating the skills of the informal sector into the official trade certification system. Or they have tried to see what it is that is 'missing' in the informal method of producing goods, and have identified theory as the missing

element. Typically, as in the ILO's report on *Lagos: urban development and employment*, the stress is on bridging the gap between the formal and informal sector through skill improvement and trade testing:

The training itself could be assisted by Government and the qualifications acquired could be registrable with the Government through testing and certification of skills acquired. Once certified the apprentices should be regarded as employable by the formal sector and even by the Government.<sup>24</sup>

If examined carefully, this argument contains a serious contradiction. It is precisely the lack of jobs in the formal sector that has forced hundreds of thousands into improvisation on the roadside, and into forms of subsistence self-employment. To suggest, then, that what these people should be offered is access to the certification system of the formal sector from which they have been excluded seems strange reasoning. The certification of trade in the large firms and government ministries is intimately connected to the salary changes of an organized promotion system. No such automatic reward for certification exists throughout the informal sector. Putting it too starkly, the problem of India's roadside cobbler is not that his skills are not currently convertible into government trade tests in 'shoemaking, grades one, two and three'. Similarly, with the argument for injecting some theory into the skill of the roadside mechanics in Accra, it must be recognized that theory operates in the formal sector less as a precondition of skilled work and more as a pass that allows movement from lower to higher skill, and from higher skill to technician status. Skill improvement courses, enriched by theory, may be of some marginal value to the self-employed, and a few of them may as a result be able to slip over into the formal sector, but this whole approach insufficiently acknowledges the fact that it is not skill that is in short supply amongst the subsistence self-employed, it is credit and security of standing as individuals and as a community.

From this perspective then, the offer of literacy faces the same difficulty as the offer of a more theoretical base for artisans' existing skill. To the roadside mechanic, the theory surrounding the internal combustion engine can add very little to his ear for the right engine sound and his knack for adjusting it. Similarly, the literacy that would allow him to grasp this theory suffers from an equal lack of relatedness to his daily tasks. This fact is perhaps insufficiently recognized when there is a call for a more literate base for the occupations practised in the village. For example, a pamphlet on motivation for literacy comments: 'There are so many crafts in the villages, but hardly anybody reads or writes anything about those crafts or occupations. If people are asked the measurements of the instruments they use, they should be able to tell'.<sup>25</sup>

In all probability, the village artisan could say a great deal about his tools and instruments, many of which will have been made to his own specifications, but being skilled and numerate still does not add up to a need for literacy. If this is the case for the skilled artisan, it is even more the case for those categories of work which are unskilled or semi-skilled. The hired agricultural labourer, or the small independent tiller has a series of less complex tasks, requiring just a very few basic tools and a good deal of labour. In his

work there can be little margin for error, and the limits upon his initiative are only too well known to him. Again, literacy may not seem a high priority. Finally, with the large numbers of poorest women who have to combine agricultural work with the continuous demands of the home, it is again difficult to identify an immediate role for literacy.

The problem in brief for many sections of the illiterate workers in the informal sector is that they have already been excluded from the educational system and from the formal employment system. This double exclusion has set them apart from the world of the permanent worker with its grades and certificates which in many promotion systems reinforce literacy and theoretical knowledge. The process of subsisting in self-employment offers, by contrast, very little opportunity to develop or maintain literacy skills. Even if the adults concerned did have a year or so's exposure to primary education, their present job does not function in any way like a literacy retention mechanism. Quite the reverse. It may even set up a conflict for their children between helping with the family livelihood and attending school.

Those who do have access to the formal employment system are in no better position than the self-employed if their literacy skills do not contribute to their present needs in life. For both groups, literacy divorced from current life styles will either be lost or never acquired. It is absolutely vital that the acquisition of literacy is firmly tied to the solution of real contemporary problems.

### *Problem Solving Programmes*

To revert to the paper of Manzoor Ahmed, the problem is not that of producing neo-literates on a massive scale through literacy projects and following up these projects with continuing educational opportunities—because this is generally an unrealistic, if not irrelevant, proposition for the illiterate masses in the Third World. . . . The much larger and critical problem is that of organizing diverse adult education activities and permitting continuous participation in such activities that can directly contribute to solving crucial life problems and meeting the basic needs of people. The most elementary need, of course, is a minimum level of income for individuals and family units. This is the main instrument and the primary assurance of meeting their basic needs. If this notion of continuing education for adults—literate, newly literate, or illiterate—is regarded as valid, we can go on to think about the operational implications of this notion. Manzoor Ahmed suggests the following propositions, particularly with regard to the connection between adult education and improving the economic situation of the poor rural families:

- (a) Adult education programmes have to be viewed and conceived more broadly than as only literacy teaching or even just delivering knowledge, information, and skills. It has to be recognized that the most effective and relevant learning takes place through the process of

solving real problems rather than in the classroom or an imitation of it. Diagnosing the potentialities and constraints for an economic project, formulating concrete goals and plans, creating appropriate institutional structures for implementing the project, managing the project, and ensuring meaningful participation of the concerned people in all of these activities are more significant learning problems than teaching literacy skills or even equipping workers with a production skill. All of these learning needs are best met through the participation of the learners in concrete action projects to solve problems of health, water supply, nutrition, and raising the income level. Discrete educational efforts divorced from such action projects are generally inconsequential in their impact on the lives of the rural masses.

(b) National and sub-national adult education bodies, in assisting local efforts, have to develop new criteria of project formulation and new performance standards and guidelines in line with the broader roles of the adult education activities and personnel in relation to income generation projects. The central bodies also have to develop their own capabilities of analysing the economic situation in rural areas and urban slums, diagnosing economic opportunities, maintaining dialogue with economic development agencies, and assessing and preparing income generation projects. Only by developing these capabilities, can the central bodies provide support to local efforts and carry out experimental and demonstration projects of their own.

(c) The adult education workers at all levels have to play a larger role than at present as the agents for social change and economic development. If education is viewed as a vital flow of nourishment through all development activities rather than as a separate service activity, the educational workers must have an understanding of the total efforts and the place of education in these efforts. For income generation and other development projects with educational components, the educational worker should be the orchestrator of the projects. In most situations, he has to play a key leadership and facilitative role for designing and initiating a new brand of integrated community development efforts that address the basic needs of poor rural families. It is not possible for him to be an expert in many fields, but he should be able to draw upon and utilize the help of people and agencies with specialized competence in different areas.

(d) Specific educational activities will not be the entry point, the centre-piece nor the determinant of performance standards in economic projects. The rationale for the special educational elements (as opposed to the continuous and unplanned process of learning of the participants through association with a project) is their contribution to the achievement of the economic objectives of a project. The project, therefore, will have to be evaluated in terms of income generation, creation of employment, distribution of income, enhancing the potential for future economic progress, and such other criteria rather than by the amount of knowledge and skills acquired by participants irrespective of the use and benefit of this knowledge and these skills.

(e) Since the economic initiatives have to be taken in specific localities

on the basis of local economic prospects and institutional structures, a centralized programme approach would be highly inappropriate for the adult education components of such initiatives. Diagnosis of opportunities, design of projects, and management have to be at the local level with a high level of local autonomy and local control over the resources. Participation by the beneficiary population in the management of the projects also requires local autonomy. This, however, does not mean that technical assistance and financial resources from outside should not be available to local projects. Assistance is especially needed in developing local competence for planning, managing, and evaluating projects.

(f) Economic projects and the educational elements in them aimed at helping the disadvantaged groups of society need to be focused on specific groups with homogeneous socio-economic backgrounds, interests, and aspirations. Such groups may be landless farmworkers, mothers from poor families, destitute women without a male breadwinner in the family, out-of-school adolescents from poor families, groups of traditional artisans who have lost their traditional market and so on. This is in contrast to a common approach for a geographical unit such as a village or a district and a sectoral approach in the form of an agricultural project or a cottage industry project. The geographical or sectoral approach ignores the differences in the circumstances, needs and interests of different socio-economic groups in the same locality and tries to fit them all into one mould. Very often, these efforts end up serving the interests of the relatively wealthy and influential people at the cost of the poor and the deprived. Projects designed for homogeneous interest groups may cut across conventional sectors because the concern is about the particular situation of the target population rather than adherence to sectoral jurisdictions. When the project approach and goals are derived from the particular situation of a disadvantaged group, it is less likely to be dominated or controlled by other interest groups.

(g) Economic projects usually require capital funds. Small-scale projects for disadvantaged groups need to be labour-intensive; therefore, the capital needs are small for each project and in many activities the participants have to gradually build up their own capital assets. None the less, few projects can begin without at least some seed money. The adult education agency involved in income generation activities, therefore, must either link-up with other development agencies which can supply the capital funds or have a revolving credit fund of its own or must otherwise have access to funds to meet the small capital needs of the economic projects.

### **Motivation at Three Levels: Political, Operational and Participants**

It will be evident from the previous sections that the interaction of non-formal education with development is certainly complex and may well be controversial. We are here concerned with large and basic issues of immediate concern to the 'deprived' or the 'powerless' or the 'disadvantaged'; quite simply, the agenda is about reducing poverty

and increasing social equity. We are thus and inevitably close to questions of power and the production/distribution of resources; the very lifeblood of politics. As Malcolm Adiseshiah put it in his Closing Address:

We have grappled with the issue of the politicality of our mandate as development educators. What is political in our mandate? I have noticed a number of tendencies. To begin with, I have detected a trend that when we do not like something we say it is 'political'. We recall that we are educators and therefore should not be concerned with this unclean thing, the political issue. On the other hand we have also come to the uncomfortable realization that education is not politically neutral. It is an active supporter and a faithful reflector of the *status quo* in society. If the *status quo* is predominantly unequal and unjust, and it is increasingly so, education will be increasingly unequal and unjust and there will be no place for non-formal education to improve the conditions of the poor. If, however, the society is moving in an egalitarian direction, then non-formal education can and will flourish. And so it has been borne in upon us that we had better examine fearlessly the political implications of our proposals, programmes and positions. There is a need for common political consensus where we have multiple political parties, and a concordance between the party and the people where we have the uni-party system. What emerges is the need for a political will for non-formal education to enable it to get on the development map of the country and play its proper role.

Or, as agreed by the Conference itself: 'Education should create an awareness that change is possible, set out the alternatives, and help communities to identify what types of changes they desire, the pace of change, and the means of attaining change. This is not always well understood by key individuals and groups in national life. Political leaders and the top echelons of policy makers may need to be informed of the potential contribution that non-formal education can make to improving the social and economic life of the nation.'<sup>26</sup>

Motivation at the political level is an essential pre-requisite for the fullest use of non-formal education in development—and this applies throughout the whole spectrum of political systems which exist. The *kind* of political will necessary will vary from country to country and system to system, but some clear purposeful will to change or alter the fundamental life conditions of the poor will everywhere be necessary.

At the operational level of translating policy into action, to be effective the structure of governmental machinery needs to respond to new dimensions of demand: (a) of being an effective link between the client population in understanding and communicating their deprivations and difficulties to the leaders, and at the same time mobilizing the people for change through responsible motivation; (b) of reviewing structural, economic and other features of the system which would necessarily be affected. In short the attack on the 'we-they' nexus. For senior officials, teachers and other functionaries,

much of the motivation must be canalized through short conferences and other training schemes; this is dealt with in Chapter 3.

Grass-roots motivation is more complex and more difficult and there are many variations in approach. In his paper Kenneth King<sup>27</sup> notes a contrast in two recent views of what should be done:

The first of these frankly abandons the view that literacy is a necessary accompaniment or precondition of development, and proposes the improvement of income opportunities in the village or town as the first priority. The second directs the illiterates' attention to the structure of the world in which they live, and seeks to use literacy as a vehicle for heightened political awareness. The two are in a sense at opposite ends of a spectrum, and in between there are many other blends and varieties. . .

The first stresses development-knowledge-before-literacy, and seeks to identify particular ways in which income or work opportunities can be increased for particular groups, such as rural women. The process for identifying these new needs has been commonly termed participatory—which frequently means that those sponsoring or aiding the development of new income opportunities are anxious that these really are a reflection of what the village or small group itself wants. This then means that there is a somewhat intensive series of group meetings with the external facilitators to elucidate what these villagers' needs really are, as opposed to what an outsider might feel they should be. A whole methodology has been developed around this approach, as can be seen from the following excerpt:

In carrying out the initial needs assessment in each village, a team composed of facilitator and village co-ordinator finds a common meeting place and engages the villagers in a variety of informal, information-gathering activities (including having them tell stories about pictures, reacting to taped, open-ended dramas, answering projective questions).

In analysing the data generated during the needs assessment, the project staff looks for common themes in learners' interests. Based on these themes, they develop initial learning experiences and materials which will give the learners the opportunity to determine which topics are of greatest interest and, given the local resources available, which are feasible to pursue.<sup>28</sup>

As can be seen, this type of approach is extremely time-intensive because of its emphasis on non-directive behaviour from the outsiders; it is also almost by definition community or village-specific. The method may be generalizable, but the needs are localized. Hence each group has to start afresh. This very small scale community-development perspective is clearly quite removed from the traditional literacy curriculum, with its series of basic primers used across the entire country. Instead, this approach implies a fresh primer of learning needs for each community. A mass campaign is, therefore, almost unthinkable.

What is really happening in this development-before-literacy approach is that at the micro-level there is an attempt to alter the work environment slightly, to make room for a number of new initiatives. Putting this another way, a few resources from the formal sector are concentrated and made

available to particular groups of the subsistence self-employed. Even though the theory of this kind of project development stresses that it is non-directive, the single most important thing about it is that these facilitators with formal-sector skills and influence put themselves at the service of small informal groups as resource people. This intensive interest, focused on the group from outside, acts as a catalyst and summons up sources of self-help which are feasible within the existing work environment. The result is limited improvement of certain community facilities or certain individual incomes, and the hope is, in the words of one research experiment in this approach, 'that as these kinds of activities develop and expand, the illiterate participants may begin to feel a need to acquire or improve their literacy skills in order to improve their ability to operate the enterprise'.<sup>29</sup>

It can be seen that this economic-improvement-before-literacy approach is very far removed from the traditional literacy class, run by a tired primary school teacher or a community volunteer. It should perhaps be said, however, that if this quality of outside involvement were directly applied to the traditional task of literacy, it might be equally effective. Many literacy classes fail because the village or urban target groups can spot immediately that the provision is viewed as poor people's education imparted in a shabby way. It is too often an activity carried on the very periphery of the formal sector, with classes that may be cancelled, texts that may not arrive, and with teachers who are not paid. It could be argued that any literacy initiative that managed to apply consistently the resources from outside to the village scene would have considerable effect. By contrast any national call for literacy that does not make its mark by the redistribution of formal sector resources to the village is unlikely to have an impact upon the realistically low expectations of the subsistence self-employed. The issue is the quality and consistency of outside interest rather than its being directive or non-directive. For many categories of workers excluded from the formal sector mainstream, it has to be clear that the intervention in the village or urban slum is serious, not just a national clarion call faintly heard.

The other approach to literacy—the heightening of awareness as an accompaniment to new learning—is not frightened to start with literacy itself. Initially, however, this approach also seeks to be participatory, and to ensure that the first words and themes are drawn out of the villagers themselves. Not at random, but in a way that helps to lay bare the structure of the peasant or outworker's world. The assumption that lies behind this politicized approach to literacy is that being in the informal, self-employed sector is not a chance event, and is not unconnected to the larger political economy of the country. Reading successfully three traditional literacy primers will therefore not alter the peripheral nature of this subsistence sector, nor a neo-literate's place within that structure. Literacy work, therefore, should concentrate on the elements and outcomes of that infrastructure that supports rural or urban poverty. The analysis of this methodology by Freire, and the many subsequent attempts to put it into practice, are sufficiently well known not to be repeated here. What may be said, however, is that this mode, like the first one, relies on sensitive resource people, of a much higher education than would be traditional in a village literacy drive. Also like the first, it is almost by definition community or village-specific, with each group having to start

afresh to discover the themes that determine its powerlessness.

Both of these approaches to motivation for literacy pay attention to the work environment. The first suggests ways in which further income may be made within the existing economic structure; the second underlines the forces operating to set limits on such village or slum initiatives. Both take as a starting point the needs of the village, and both use external catalysts to focus on what these needs might be. As yet, the evidence is not available on the results of these kinds of approaches to literacy. Indeed, it is very difficult to be clear how their success might be evaluated, since their goals are wider than the mere acquisition of literacy.

By raising a question mark about the meaning of acquisition, these differing concerns with literacy have been extremely valuable. They both point to the milieu in which literacy is acquired, and by implication refer to the context in which it may be retained. This leads us to a related aspect of motivation—the infrastructure available to support and retain literacy by whatever methods it may be won. Again, research on the problems of developing small-scale industry in the rural areas seems to offer relevant insights. Skill, for example, can be offered virtually anywhere, but it cannot take root and be localized in small productive enterprises unless there is an adequate infrastructure. In many villages of the Third World there is no postal service, no banking facility, no access to newsprint, no all-weather road, no outpost of the government's extension services. The villages' demand for skilled work is affected by this inadequate infrastructure, as are the opportunities for the reinforcement of literacy once acquired.

## **Two Case Studies in Motivation**

The case studies which follow present two different ways of motivating potential participants in non-formal education. In the Tanzanian example, motivation is seen as an essential component in national planning: as part of the widely expressed political will to development and national transformation. In the Botswana case study, a particular technique (popular theatre) is used to raise the consciousness of a people whose previous development has been somewhat apart from the mainstream of national life.

### **1. Literacy and Post-Literacy Programmes: the Tanzania Experience (E. P. R. Mbakile)**

During the last decade Tanzania has put great emphasis on non-formal education as one of the major strategies for national development. This strategy, it is hoped, will eventually contribute substantially towards the attainment of the goals of socialism and self reliance.

Development programmes and actions in Tanzania are determined by political ideology and actions. And non-formal education as a development strategy is no exception to this rule. Thus the initiation of literacy programmes, their implementation as well as their survival, have all been possible because of a strong and committed political will. Without this backing we may not have managed to mobilize millions of persons, to get them to stay in the literacy classes, and the programmes may not have survived. The emphases at the political level are on socialism and self reliance.

In addition, the Arusha Declaration in 1967 emphasized labour intensive development projects and de-centralization of government plans and policies in order to increase the involvement of the total population in the development process and to mobilize the country's resources towards the elimination of poverty, ignorance and disease. In accordance with this, President J. K. Nyerere stresses the importance of adult education for the individual and for the country, declaring that Tanzanians should shake themselves out of the resignation to the kind of life they have lived for centuries. Further he has pointed to the necessity for integrating learning and work.

As a result of these directives there has been a wide range of activity in adult education throughout the country whose impetus has come from party resolutions and government actions. Among these activities are growth of the administrative structure for adult education, the establishment of local adult education committees and local literacy centres, the provision of logistic and communication support for programmes, and the deployment of voluntary teachers, school teachers, and civil servants to participate in programmes. In short, there has been far-reaching action to mobilize people to participate in adult education programmes.

#### *Aims and Objectives*

The immediate, the middle-range and the long-term aims and objectives of the National Literacy Programmes are:

- (a) The immediate aim is the eradication of illiteracy. It is projected that the illiteracy rate will have been brought down to within the range of 10 to 15 per cent by 1981.
- (b) Middle-range aims and objectives are for the participants to apply the acquired new knowledge and skills to solve their basic economic, social and cultural problems and for a more efficient participation in their individual development and that of the community and the nation.
- (c) Long-range aims and objectives are intended for the provision of life-long education.

Apart from its concern with the acquisition of literacy skills, the programme provides for the acquisition of vocational and other skills and knowledge that will enable the participants to solve their day-to-day problems. Thus, the basic functional literacy primers deal with issues related to agricultural production, fishing, animal husbandry, political education and home economics. Supporting the basic functional literacy primers are the para-literacy or the supporting programmes such as the Rural Radio Education Programme, the Rural Libraries Services, the Rural Construction Programme, the Home Economics Programme, the Special Agricultural Work-Oriented Projects, the Special Home Economics Programme, and the Mobile Film Units. Participants who have graduated in literacy are regrouped into post-literacy groups, each group deciding on a particular area of study. The subject matter has been graded progressively, to enable the learners to proceed with ease.

The ten specialized areas of study include agriculture, family care and health, geography, history, Swahili language, English language, rural construction, political economy, political education, and mathematics. These subjects are not compulsory to any given group, instead each post-literacy

group chooses its subjects on the basis of individual or group interest or community need. Post-literate groups are not confined to the literacy graduates, as they have attracted some literates whose interest is to obtain advanced knowledge and/or skills. The post-literacy programme is supported, too, by para-literacy or supporting programmes. In addition to these, some of the literacy graduates participate in the following two programmes:

- (a) The Correspondence Education Programme, according to individual needs.
- (b) The Folk Development Colleges which offer short serial residential courses to participants selected by their own communities. The selection depends on individual community needs.

#### *Motivation, Mobilization and Involvement*

Some of the major questions which often crop up concerning the involvement of the learners relate to three principles: motivation, mobilization and involvement.

- (a) How has Tanzania managed to mobilize the 5.8 million persons and motivate them to enrol into literacy classes and the supporting programmes?
- (b) How has it managed to motivate the learners to stay in these classes and to continue on to the post-literacy programme?
- (c) What has been the experience regarding the involvement of the learners in the literacy activities or what type of incentives were there, if any, for the learners?

Although motivation is basically a psychological term, we tend to look at motivation and mobilization as two sides of the same coin since the problems of motivation are translated into actions of mobilization which consequently lead to further motivations and eventually to involvement. The process is cyclical, repeating itself with no specific and definite demarcated stages in the cycle. However, the process has a tendency to revolve around the concept of involvement, in this case the active association and/or participation by the learners in the educational development process and actions. This is where the link is built. We will, therefore, use these terms interchangeably.

In most cases and under normal circumstances the illiterate adults, particularly those in the rural areas, do not care very much whether they learn to read or not. In the normal situation of a rural population with a majority of illiterates, the decision to learn to read and write has usually been an isolated and individual decision. The majority will not enrol of their own accord, and even if they do enrol will not come to the literacy classes because they do not feel they need the literacy skills. They feel no deprivation. This means that when we meet with situations of non-enrolment, drop-outs, drop-ins, irregular attendance, coming late to the classes, etc. the mobilization and motivational efforts have not been able to provide answers to the very vital question: 'literacy for what?'

What concerns most of us, literate or not, is the availability with ease of the basic necessities of life. We should therefore not expect active involvement of the learners where, for example, they have to travel miles and miles looking for water. This would imply that the non-formal education programmes intended for development should go hand in hand with programmes which

assure the availability of basic human needs which are generally regarded as more important.

The question of 'literacy for what' becomes more complex when it is compounded by factors related to legacies of attitudes in relation to western styles of education. The potential learners often enquire whether they will be employed after graduating in literacy. However, they quickly abandon this idea when they come to realize that not all the primary school leavers can be employed or be absorbed into secondary schools. The illiterate parent will therefore demand: 'First solve the problems of primary school leavers before worrying about us', or else they will advise: 'After all we are too old to learn, so why waste your time?' The re-orientation of the formal system of education towards the realities of the unavailability of places in the higher institutions of learning and opportunities for salaried employment would seem to be quite in order.

In Tanzania, where emphasis is put on rural transformation, the literacy programmes go hand in hand with other similar development programmes. This would mean a competition in the allocation of time by the individuals participating in all the development programmes. The literacy component of development projects is better relegated to second or third place. There is a tendency by the leadership and administrators to react with more vigour to newly introduced development programmes at the expense of the older ongoing programmes, one of which could be the literacy programme. The old programmes may even be forgotten. In both cases, remobilization of the leadership and the participants is always called for.

The results of training in functional literacy are not immediate, and, if they appear, are likely to be diffuse. In cases where a multitude of change agents and factors are simultaneously at work it becomes more difficult to attribute the results to or identify them with functional literacy training. The processes of mobilization, motivation and involvement may turn out to be hard tasks simply because concrete examples of positive results cannot be identified in such programmes.

It is nowadays commonly advocated that programme clientele should be actively involved in programme planning, etc. However, our experience shows that where political decisions and priorities are of overriding importance, the implementation of these by the government does not have to wait for participatory planning. The party resolution on the eradication of illiteracy required the application of approaches, techniques, and methods—all of which could be developed with less participatory planning than is desirable.

Initially, the functional literacy concept in Tanzania aimed at speeding up development through a literacy programme linked to an economic activity. In fact, the First Five-Year Development Plan (1964–1969) had put emphasis on economic development through high production of cash crops, hence the inclusion of the Functional Literacy Project in this Plan. The general objectives of this Project had been worked out to tie up with the general objectives of the Plan. But as realized later, to look at development through money economy alone was to take a narrow view of the concept 'functional'. This was also opposed to the national objectives which aimed at the total development and liberation of man. Economic incentives, though they sound powerful are consistently overrated.

In view of the foregoing, it turned out that the initial elaboration of programmes, programme building, and programme contents did not concern themselves with the total human activities and concerns. As a result some of the learners could not attach much importance to the programmes. They came to the classes whenever they wished to or when special pressure demanded that they did so.

The mobilization process during the National Literacy Campaign implied that illiteracy was to be eradicated by the end of 1975. But by 1975 the achievement of the intended goal proved to be an illusion, and we had to remobilize and change the hopes for increased involvement while keeping the campaign on track. . . The assessment of the campaign carried out in that year revealed that the illiteracy rate had been reduced to 39 per cent compared with an estimated 67 per cent in 1967. In 1977 the total involvement of learners has risen to 5.8 million—or about 97 per cent of the total known adult illiterate population.

Different persons may attend literacy classes for different reasons including those dictated by the demands of national goals. For example, an individual may come to the classes simply because he wants to learn how to write his name. If he manages to do that, he will have achieved his desired goal with utmost satisfaction. But the goal of this individual does not meet all the nationally defined goals. . . which go far beyond the writing of one's name. Unless his participation in the literacy programme induces additional motivations, it would prove difficult to retain such an individual for further involvement.

One of the aims of the literacy programmes is to teach the Swahili language. The teaching and learning materials have been written in Swahili, and it is the medium of instruction. It is obvious, therefore, that those learners who have little or no command of the language will experience difficulties and cannot involve themselves effectively in the learning process. On the other hand, the learning of Swahili has been one of the motivating factors for some learners.

Due to the extensive nature of the eradication of illiteracy campaign, there was barely enough time to allow us to concentrate on the formulation, elaboration and preparation of programmes for post-literacy activities. Therefore, we suddenly found ourselves with millions of new literates with nothing to offer them for continuous learning. By the time the post-literacy programmes were ready, some learners had lost interest and had to be remotivated.

Another cause of frustration for the learners is the shortage of personnel. Functional literacy programmes demand the availability of extension personnel who can handle the complicated theoretical and practical issues of a relevant development field which cannot adequately be handled by literacy instructors. Unfortunately the number of extension personnel is not enough to meet the demand. This has placed the learners in an awkward situation for they are unable to practise them whenever they wish because of the half-baked knowledge and skills they have acquired.

### *Radio Education as a Supporting Programme*

Radio education as one of the literacy supporting programmes has been the most effective tool for solving some of the problems. Basically, the pro-

gramme was part of the promotional campaign for effective participation in the National Literacy Campaign not only by the learners but also by the public, the teachers, the supervisors, and the leadership. Literacy songs sung by the literacy and adult education classes, choirs, cultural groups and schools and recorded in the field, combined with motivational slogans and problem-solving components, were parts of a motivational programme that became so popular with the learners that it became impossible for us to meet their demands. A feedback system was established between the field and the management through which the learners could state their problems, ask questions on matters not clearly understood by them, criticize our programmes, suggest improvements and/or topics they would like dealt with, and also report on their activities.

The Radio Education Programme had also the objective of tackling the narrowness of teaching and learning and content in the literacy programmes by enriching the learning and teaching processes. This literacy class support included general agricultural topics, home-life topics (such as child care, nutrition, home budgeting, home crafts, family and community hygiene etc), co-operatives, small scale industries, banking and credit. . .

It was seen in the evaluation that providing the opportunity for adult learners to have their songs recorded and broadcast and letting the listening groups ask questions, state their problems and report about their activities, encouraged the literacy classes to overcome the feeling of isolation. The programme made the learners in the various parts of the country feel part of the National Literacy Campaign. It brought about a feeling of national cohesion and homogeneity. It created a widespread awareness and interest among the people which in turn increased their level of participation through decisions made by the literacy groups and the local leadership. By and large the programme gave higher respectability to literacy in the public view particularly as the roles and functions of literacy became clear.

Earlier we mentioned the decentralization process and the formation of adult education committees. All these are efforts to involve the learners either directly or through their own representatives. In order to strengthen further the participatory democracy process, the communities select the literacy teachers from within the community who are acceptable to them and who are likely to understand the local problems better than an outsider. The literacy classes also establish literacy class committees and literacy centre committees which deal with the day to day problems and affairs of the classes. Local problems which cannot be solved by these committees are referred to a higher authority—that is the education department of the village government.

Cases are known whereby the literacy class committees and literacy centre committees have recommended the dismissal of a literacy teacher because of unbecoming behaviour or incompetence. Participants are fined for irregular attendance or coming late to the class without genuine reasons or expelled for displaying irregular behaviour like coming to the classes while under the influence of alcohol. Decisions are made on the type of self-reliance actions for meeting costs for materials and equipment, etc.

Another motivating instrument was the use of demonstration plots where learners practised during the growing season the technical knowledge learned in class during the dry season. The long-term gain expected from

demonstration activities is for the learners to be able to control their own environment. The immediate gains have been to enable them to solve their immediate problems and to adopt certain behaviour hitherto not practised. For example, the money from sales of crops and materials prepared by the home economics groups has been used to purchase class materials and equipment or else the groups have opened bank accounts (which enhance their attitudes towards capital)...

A further incentive to learners has been offered in the form of certificates. The significant feature here is that all the learners who have sat for the tests were awarded certificates according to their levels of achievement irrespective of whether they have graduated or not. Although the notion of tests or examinations still lingers on, we have tried to reject the concept of pass or fail as far as our adult learners are concerned. We strongly believe that the adult learners go through an educational process that runs along a continuum, and, by awarding them certificates as they proceed, we are endeavouring to instil into their minds the idea that 'education has no end'. Incidentally, the Swahili version of 'education has no end' is the title of our rural newspaper and also our motto used in the promotional and publicity activities in the campaign.

Some of the motivational and involvement problems have been narrowed down by promoting literacy in the public view. This has been achieved through the general public's involvement, commitment and psychological will. We have already referred to the political role and function in the mobilization and politicization of the masses. However, we felt that we should go a step further and undertook to make the public more responsive to adult literacy and adult education as vehicles for national development. It is our conviction that the more the values of adult literacy and adult education are appreciated by the general public, the more we can expect its moral support. And given such moral support the learners are likely to respond more positively and actively to the literacy and adult education programmes.

This case study raises the following salient points:

- (a) Although a sound political ideology may determine a development policy and the strategies for that policy, the effectiveness of the political ideology will entirely depend on understanding, dedication, commitment and the will to translate that ideology into operational programmes and activities. Mobilization, politicization, support, and actions by political function have become possible by this translation.
- (b) In translating the ideological-operational terms into practical actions, the government committed itself to carry out certain structural changes conducive to the implementation of literacy programmes. These included decentralizing the government and providing an adequate infrastructure to allow for a wider scope of people's involvement.
- (c) This wider scope of involvement was strengthened by further structural changes at the grass-roots level, which included the villagization programme, the establishment of village governments, and the creation of organs and processes which would allow the participants to exercise participatory democracy and control the programmes at village level.
- (d) The mobilization and promotional campaigns and the programmes themselves may succeed only if the programmes are relevant to the participants and not mere efforts which appear to appease them.

- (e) The mobilization, motivation and involvement processes are cyclical and continuous in nature and one has to be alert to revitalize their application.
- (f) Diversified mass media, in approach and content, are indispensable and powerful tools in the motivation process.
- (g) Continuous evaluation is an essential component of the programmes to gauge and guide the extent of the present and future involvement by participants.
- (h) Successful involvement in non-formal education programmes should be expected where these programmes run alongside other development programmes intended to solve basic human problems.
- (i) General public commitment, psychological will and involvement are essential factors in giving literacy increased respectability. This, in turn, provides moral support to the learners thereby motivating them to increase their involvement.

Finally, in discussing issues related to problems of motivation and involvement in Tanzania one should take into account the relatively vast size of the country, the wide variety of resources from area to area, the variegated man-environment interaction patterns, the wide spectrum of the socio-economic and cultural streams, unique problems on myriads of known, partly known and unknown factors, and the historical factors and processes pertaining to development in specific geographical areas and the nation as a whole.

### **Encouraging Participation in Development (Ross Kidd and Martin Byram)**

A people's lack of confidence or feeling of being unable to constructively change their situation precludes them from active involvement in development... The starting point is to challenge prevailing apathy and mobilize interest, participation, critical awareness and self-confidence. Only when people have become aware of the possibility of changing their situation can non-formal education and other strategies for organizing rural development have any impact.

One of the most effective methods for developing participation, critical awareness, self-confidence, and collective action is the problem-solving group discussion as elaborated by Paulo Freire.<sup>30</sup> Freire\* used pictures which he called 'codes' to depict the essence of the problem ('codification') and to spark off discussion. There are, of course, other media for 'codifying' reality, for example, drama, documentary film or video-tape.

The case study elaborated here is a Freire-type community education and action programme built around the use of popular theatre. The term 'popular theatre' is defined as people's theatre speaking to the common man in his language and idiom and dealing with problems of direct relevance to his situation. It attempts to involve the whole community, not just a small élite determined by class or education.

Popular theatre can be an effective tool in conscientization programmes. As entertainment it seems capable of attracting and holding the interest of large

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\*The approach of Paulo Freire is discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

numbers of people many of whom who have been alienated by traditional approaches to adult education and development. . .

The most important feature of popular theatre is its representation of local situations and problems (codification). It is this which makes it a powerful tool for education. People see themselves and their situation afresh and want to talk about these problems with others. Through discussion (which follows every performance) people can share their ideas about these problems and formulate solutions to them. Often this alone is not enough, it has to be supported by other forms of follow-up such as extension work.

Another important feature of popular theatre is that it is participatory. The theatre form used is one that everyone can manage. It operates on the principle that anyone can learn to play a role, improvise dialogue, or handle a puppet. Extensive rehearsals or memorized lines would discourage participation. So instead of a heavily scripted approach, the performances are based on improvisation, enthusiasm, and a plot line which is worked out by the actors themselves. This approach works well precisely because the actors are familiar with the issues and situations they are presenting (since they are their issues) and they develop dialogue, gesture, and action in response to each other and the audience without having to remember a fixed script. By keeping the form rough and simple, popular theatre can be kept within the control of local people—therefore it can be used on a mass scale.

Thus, popular theatre is an appropriate medium for mass social transformation programmes since: (a) everyone can handle it; (b) it is inexpensive and has no technical limitations; (c) as an already familiar medium (drawing on indigenous creative expression) it provides an acceptable means of bringing development issues into the community.

This latter aspect of drawing on local cultural expression is very important. Folk media enthusiasts have emphasized the ‘familiarity’ of the medium.

Colin Low has commented:

In many communities of limited literacy, the habitual response is ‘We can’t speak, we have no education’. There is a belief in educational inferiority and there seems to be almost compulsion for self-denigration before the mystique of education. Yet many people in these communities, because they are not influenced or inhibited by extensive schooling have a great oral tradition of story-telling, versifying, singing and so on. They can be witty and colourful and the language is sometimes richer than the homogenized textbook variety. Making use of this talent can change attitudes toward the educational mystique.<sup>31</sup>

What is more important is that people are good at it. This makes it immediately useful as a force for increasing self-confidence. By neglecting indigenous creative expression we ‘inhibit people from active participation in the process of modernization, because an abrupt denigration of traditional forms of culture means denial of access to a kind of literacy to which they have been used’. On the other hand, by using a popular theatre which makes use of local forms of cultural expression, ‘the creative forces that reside in the people are being brought to bear on the development process’.<sup>32</sup>

Finally it is important to emphasize that the popular theatre performance is not the whole experience. It is the initial catalyst for a programme of

education and action.\* It is used in a deliberately functional sense, not as an end in itself but as a medium of social transformation. In this way art becomes socially relevant and part of a larger concern for the creation of a more human and justly ordered society.

Adult educators in Botswana have been experimenting with popular theatre as a tool for raising critical consciousness (i.e. 'conscientization')... and this study focuses on an example of popular theatre work in Botswana to illustrate its motivational power to mobilize interest, participation, critical awareness and develop people's confidence to participate in their own development...

The traditional territorial areas of the Basarwa (popularly referred to in the past as 'Bushmen') in Western Botswana have in the last fifty years become fenced cattle ranches. The Basarwa have been employed as cattle-workers or live as squatters on these ranches. They have become dependent on food rations from these ranches and on milk from the cattle they are attending, and many have lost their traditional hunting skills. They also depend on water sources owned by the cattle ranchers and often have no access to land for ploughing or grazing their own cattle.

A recent government survey revealed that the Basarwa had a strong desire to get their own land in order to escape the exploitation of the farms. Government has allocated land and provided boreholes for four new communities. These new settlements will be given other basic services, but beyond that the Basarwa must find their own resources to develop the communities as they see fit.

A series of workshops for each new group of settlers is organized before they move to the new communities. The purpose of each meeting is to give the new settlers an opportunity to meet and to start talking about the problems and issues related to life on the new settlements. It is important that they realize that they will be responsible for their own livelihood and will no longer be able to depend on others for their food.

Various methods have been tried to make these community meetings work well. Lectures and question-answer sessions tended to reinforce the passivity and dependence of the participants. It made them sit back and listen to government representatives telling them what to do rather than provoking them to tackle the problems themselves. Small group discussions seemed too academic, requiring an academic response only; they failed to generate the necessary enthusiasm and involvement. In this situation, drama was tried as a more dynamic way of involving the participants. The meeting place was set up as a theatre-in-the-round with the performance taking place in the middle.

The drama starts according to an agreed plot. The new settlers are gathered around a fire at the new community. They are talking about the borehole and how they can afford to run and maintain it. Then conversation shifts to subsistence. Some threaten to return to the farms, others say that they should wait and see what government will provide.

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\*Bro Russell and his Ghanaian colleagues have experimented with the use of performance not only in the initial motivation stage but also in the follow-up action programme. In the latter case performances are used to provide discussion on some of the problems in implementing the action programme. See Bro Russell, unpublished report on a Popular Theatre Project in Ghana. Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, 1977.

Two government officers arrive. The senior officer talks about government's contribution (land, borehole, school, health-post) and exhorts them to work harder in the spirit of self-reliance. The translator, speaking in Sesarwa tells them bluntly: 'What he is saying is "No rations, no petrol for your borehole engine. You're on your own. We're giving you nothing".' The Basarwa ask a few questions to confirm this view. When they realize they can get nothing more out of government, the questioning stops. The government officers leave.

The situation must be very carefully demonstrated so that everyone understands and begins immediately to identify themselves in this imaginary yet realistic context. Government's unwillingness to provide everything for the new settlers must be hammered home with constant repetition so that people's expectations become adjusted to the real situation right from the beginning.

The rest of the drama is built around this basic situation—a group discussion around the fire. Once the actors catch the spirit and start to feel themselves realistically in that situation, the 'play' takes off. New situations and issues develop as people start to deal imaginatively with their new situation. These can be fed into the drama from the 'inside' or 'outside'. Actors can create new situations themselves, or participants in the outer circle can join the drama bringing in new problems. The organizers can also feed in issues by briefing certain participants in the outer circle to take a problem into the drama themselves in the role of government officers.

At the first workshop where this technique was used the actors started to improvise their reaction to the opening situation entirely spontaneously. They started to mime how they would use their hunting and collecting skills to provide food and how they would make leather goods and handicrafts for sale. They sent a delegation to see the government about handicraft production. A few men returned to the farms to work on behalf of the group.

The drama becomes a simulation game without documents and role cards, yet it is less structured than a simulation game. The events are not pre-packaged or scripted. There is room for participants to choose the issues and situations which are important for them. It gives them the opportunity to paint their own future in an imaginative yet realistic way. Instead of the learning experience being structured for the participants (by government officers), they choose what is important and they determine what is possible. Because of the sense of community, of collective expression that is found in Basarwa life, the statements and actions of the acting group become in one sense collective statements for the whole group. The actors (who change throughout this continuous play) are speaking for the whole group.

This type of simulation game is used to help participants begin to understand and deal with some of the problems in their own future situation. It will work to the extent that the Basarwa are able to see themselves in that situation. The working hypothesis here is that participatory drama provides a much more effective medium for identifying that future situation than listening to a talk or discussing these issues in an academic way. Through this use of theatre, discussion becomes part of the performance rather than remaining separate from it. Critical analysis of each event develops spontaneously. Each new event is discussed around the fire by the actors and also by the audience.

The foregoing study illustrates the potential of popular theatre for develop-

ing participation, critical awareness and self-confidence. The starting point is the identification of the problem. This is drawn out through a process of dialogue with members of the community, then presented through the medium of popular theatre for discussion.

The performance raises the issues only: it is not prescriptive, there are no pre-packaged answers. Working out an appropriate solution is the purpose of the discussion, and this comes only after a critical analysis of the problems themselves. The performance is the starting point—the motivational force—and it should be emphasized that it is the catalyst for a programme of education and action. Used in this deliberately functional sense the art becomes a medium for social transformation.

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