

The nature and purpose of consulting

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Consulting: a definition

The assistance rendered to a client which could solve a problem and thereby bring about a change or improvement in a state of affairs within some clearly defined area of activity, for example, education

Participants in the Commonwealth workshop on education consultancy skills, Vanuatu 1992

There are many definitions of consultation and its application to educational problems (Steele, 1975, p. 3; Block, 1981, pp. v, 2; Greiner and Metzger, 1983, p. 7). A number of characteristics can be identified as common amongst them. Generally, consultancy is seen as the provision of an *independent* and *objective* professional service in identifying organisational problems, analysing situations, recommending actions and, if required, assisting in the implementation of these solutions.

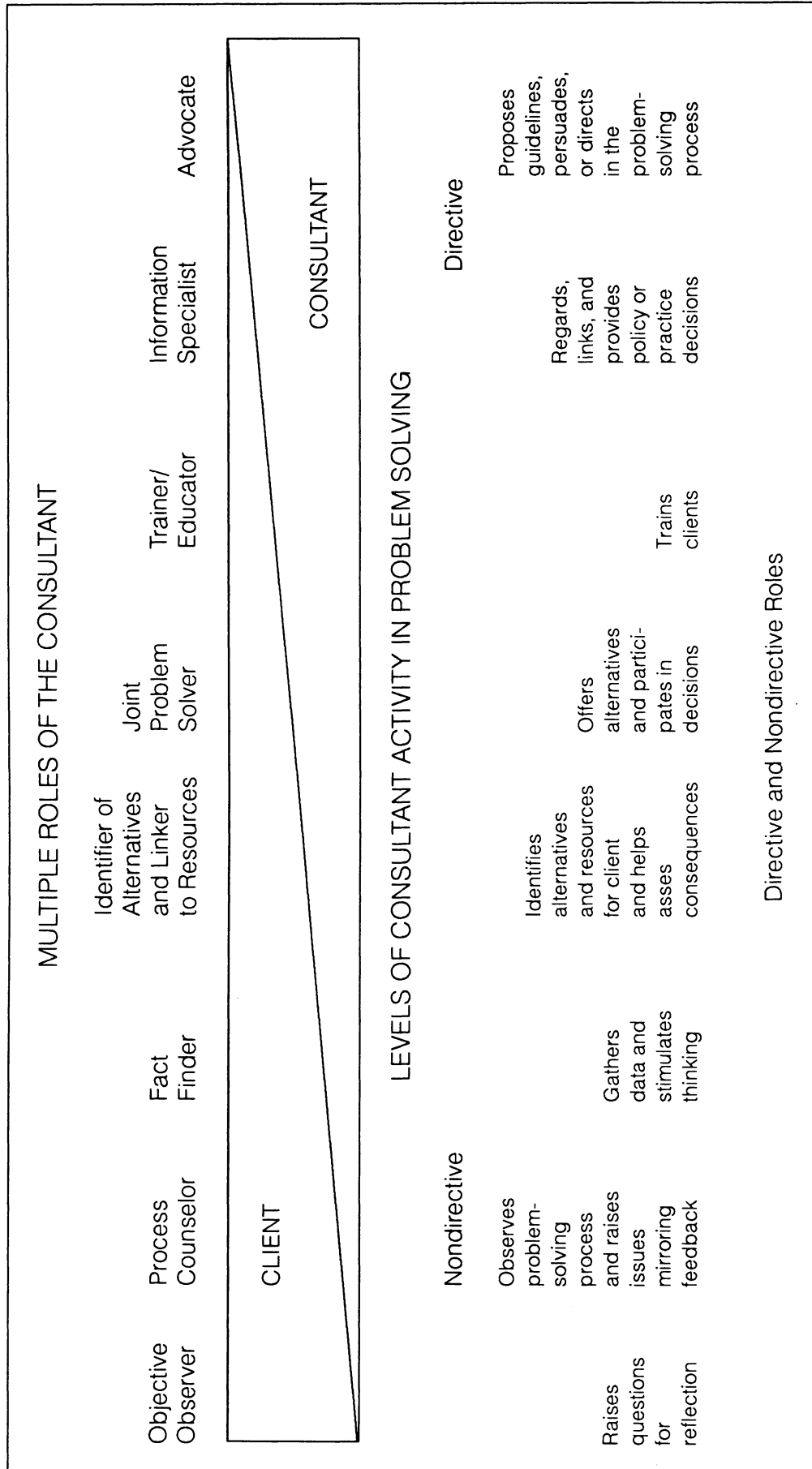
What do consultants do?

A consultant's work can be described in terms of his/her area of expertise, for example, management, curriculum development, etc. One can also describe the consultancy process as a sequence of phases: contact, contracting, entry, data collection, diagnosis, feedback and implementation. It has been suggested that a more useful way of analysing what consultants do, is to consider the purpose of the consultancy process (Turner, 1982). Clarity about the objectives and goals of consultancy certainly influences an assignment's success.

There are a number of reasons why advisers/consultants do not operate effectively. Some of the problems which may reduce their effectiveness are related to the design of the technical assistance project, failure of the government to specify what it wants the adviser to do, conflicting instructions from the international agency employing the adviser, and a lack of clear understanding by the adviser of what is his/her role.

We agree with J. Woods that many consultants, however dedicated they may be, do not fully understand the role they are to perform (Woods, 1980, p.2).

Figure 7 Multiple roles of the consultant



Source: Robin Bishop, IPACE Institute, University of NSW

Defining expectations and roles

It is important to define at the outset the roles of the consultant and those of the client. Who will do what, when and how? There is a whole range of consultative roles a consultant can play. Different situations and client expectations lead to different definitions of the consultant's role and intervention methods. There are a number of situational roles along a directive and non-directive continuum, as illustrated in Figure 7. In the directive role, the consultant assumes a position of leadership or initiates activity. In the non-directive role he/she provides data for the client to use or not. These multiple roles and the multidimensional nature of consulting result in ambiguity. Organisational theorists see this ambiguity as an integral part of organisational life.

It is nevertheless recognised that such ambiguity can be dealt with by making as explicit as possible which of the multiple roles are to be emphasised in any particular assignment. It is essential to have prior mutual agreement among the parties involved (for example, the consultant, ministry of education, international donor agency) with regard to a more explicit definition of the roles to be performed.

Consultant/client relationship

The nature of the consultant/client relationship depends on a good knowledge of one another and of all the parties involved. Also of vital importance is knowledge of the situation/context. For example, in relation to aid-financed activity, knowledge and clear understanding of the following are required:

- how consultants get into major donor-backed projects
- the level of control these consultants have over the donor-backed projects
- who initiated and designed the project
- the lender/donor agency funding policies.

Figure 8 summarises the critical points of which clients need to be aware.

Case study 1 (page 16) provides insights into how the Ministry of Education in Barbados sees the rules and how it plays the game.

Figure 8 The client's 'Ten Commandments'

1	Learn about consulting!
2	Define your problem!
3	Define your objective!
4	Choose your consultant!
5	Develop a joint program!
6	Participate actively!
7	Involve your consultant in implementation!
8	Monitor progress!
9	Evaluate the results and your consultant!
10	Beware of dependence on consultants!

Source: M. Kubr *Management Consulting: A guide to the profession*, 2nd revised edn., International Labour Office, 1986

Why are consultants used?

Generally speaking, consultants are called in if a need for help in problem-solving is perceived by management. There are many practical reasons which may lead a ministry of education in any small state to seek help from consultants.

Specialist knowledge and skills

Consultants may be called in when the ministry of education is short of people able to tackle a problem.

Intensive professional help on a temporary basis

In other situations the technical skills required may be available in the organisation but senior managers or staff specialists cannot be released for deep and sustained work on a major problem or project.

Case study 2 (page 19) illustrates how ministries of education may identify a need and decide that outside expertise is required to meet it.

Consulting and change

Consultancy is about change and consultants are agents of change. To carry out this role they have to understand how to *manage* change. It has often been said that people automatically resist change, but that is not entirely true. There are people who strive for change and welcome it. However, they have to feel that the change is worth having and will benefit them. They have to own the problem and the solution to it.

Resistance to change is often more acute if the change comes as a surprise. Consultants should therefore inform their clients about, and persuade them towards, any new procedure throughout the assignment and not leave everything to a final report. This approach to consulting is defined as *process consulting*: it is the approach recognised as most likely to produce success and results in a situation where the assignment is about implementing change, as opposed to simply providing information. The process consultant is expected to be expert in how to diagnose and how to establish effective helping relationships with clients.

Consulting and culture

One of the many assumptions underlying process consultation is that the consultant should work jointly with members of the client organisation to understand the 'culture' of the organisation. Understanding the culture of the organisation is a vital ingredient for successful consulting in any context, be it national, regional or international.

Ethics of consultancy

As with every profession, there is an agreed code of ethics that applies to any consultancy activity. This code is generally structured on three basic principles.

- 1 High standards of service to the client

- 2 Independence, objectivity and integrity
- 3 Responsibility to the profession

These principles are underpinned by a series of detailed rules, the more important of which are summarised in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Summary of the code of professional conduct for consultants

Principle 1: High standards of service to the client

A consultant will carry out the duties he/she has undertaken for his client diligently, conscientiously and with due regard to the public interest.

- A consultant will only accept an engagement for which he/she is suitably qualified.
- The work to be carried out will be clearly described and agreed in writing with the client. A consultant will not undertake work for a client unless he/she is satisfied that he/she has sufficient competent resources to carry it out effectively and efficiently. He/she will undertake to keep all information concerning a client's affairs strictly confidential.
- A consultant will develop recommendations specifically for the solution of each client's problems. Such solutions will be realistic and practicable and clearly understandable by the client. To ensure efficient performance, the consultant will exercise good management through planning, frequent progress reviews and effective controls.

Principle 2: Independence, objectivity and integrity

A consultant will avoid any action or situation inconsistent with his/her professional obligations or which in any way might be seen to impair his/her integrity.

- For this purpose, a consultant will maintain a fully independent position with the client at all times, making certain that advice and recommendations are based on thorough and impartial consideration of all pertinent facts and circumstances, and on opinions developed from reliable relevant experience.
- A consultant will not serve a client in circumstances which might impair his/her independence, objectivity and integrity and will inform the client immediately should such circumstances arise during the course of the assignment. He/she will reserve the right to withdraw if circumstances beyond his/her control develop to interfere with the successful conduct of the assignment.
- A consultant will discuss and agree with the client any significant changes in the objectives, scope, approach, anticipated benefits or other aspects of the assignment which might arise during the course of carrying it out.

Principle 3: Responsibility to the profession

A consultant will at all times conduct him/herself in a manner which will enhance the standing and public regard of the profession.

- For this purpose he/she will ensure that his/her knowledge and skills are kept up-to-date.
- A consultant will negotiate agreements and charges for professional services only in a manner approved as ethical and professional by the profession.

Adapted from *Code of Professional Conduct* of the Institute of Management Consultants.

CASE STUDY 1: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, BARBADOS

This case study looks at the consultancy game from the client's viewpoint. It was presented at the Vanuatu Workshop by Ralph Boyce (Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Barbados).

Barbados: Key facts and statistics

Population (1989): 255,000
 Population growth rate (1980–1988): 0.3%
 Land area: 431 sq km
 Capital: Bridgetown
 GNP per capita (1988): US \$5,990
 Primary school enrolment rate (1988): 93.8%
 Human development index (1987): 0.925

Introduction

The Ministry of Education has been making significant use of consultants to assist with the provision of technical and professional support, particularly in areas where in-house expertise is lacking. On occasions, it has also used consultancy services where staff had the expertise but, owing to the demands of their regular duties, were unable to undertake the specific assignment. The periodic use of short-term consultants therefore enables the ministry to address pressing issues in the education and training sector which might otherwise prolong the difficulties and delay the attainment of priority policy objectives.

Identifying the need for consultancy assistance

Projects are identified for development through reviews and diagnoses of the system, usually by the ministry's top planning entity, the Educational Planning and Development Committee (EPADEC). Thereafter, steps are taken to secure the Cabinet's approval which, once obtained, paves the way for further work on the project. In some instances, consultancy assistance is needed to prepare more in-depth analysis and background data, especially if the project is to be financed by grant, aid or loan funds from international agencies.

Recruiting of consultants

There are at least three main factors which determine the source from which consultants are recruited.

- 1 The nature and complexity of the assignment
- 2 The urgency with which the project is to be undertaken
- 3 The source of financing

Nature and complexity of the assignment

Where the assignment is concerned with *designing educational facilities* there are usually local experts available, particularly in the private sector, who could be engaged for the task. This is especially true in respect of architectural, engineering, quantity surveying and land surveying services. Recently, for example, the Ministry of Education engaged a local architectural firm to prepare an outline design and feasibility study for a proposed upgrading of the Hospitality Division of the Barbados Community College. Owing to the complexity of the assignment, the architectural firm sub-contracted a local accountancy firm to undertake the economic and financial feasibility aspects of the proposal, while itself concentrating on the design scheme. The project is now being reviewed by the European Development Fund for grant financing under the Lome 4 EEC/ACP Agreement. Nevertheless, there were times when the ministry's schools building programme benefited from the provision of professional services under the auspices of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

On the other hand, where the consultancy is of a *purely educational nature* (such as setting up specialised educational systems, conducting studies and surveys) the ministry has tended to look to metropolitan countries for consultants.

Urgency of the project

In situations where there is a great urgency to advance the preparation of a project, local expertise may be so tied up with other responsibilities that the ministry, although willing to utilise local

or regional expertise, is forced to draw on the greater resources that are available in metropolitan/rim countries. During the preparation of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) component of the proposed Third Education and Training Project, the ministry urgently needed consultancy assistance in organisational restructuring, management information systems and socio-economic surveys, which was not readily available locally or regionally. It therefore sought and received the assistance of the IDB in recommending suitable consultants to undertake specified tasks.

Source of finance

The procedures of international funding agencies usually require a beneficiary of their resources to open the tendering process to consultants from member states. In such circumstances, consultants from metropolitan countries, because of their wider experience, tend to be more competitive than their local or regional counterparts. At the commencement of the Second Education and Training Project, for example, Barbados was required to use international competitive bidding procedures to engage a management consultant for the human resources development component of the project. Tenders were invited from six short-listed firms including the University of the West Indies. (UWI) The tender from the British Council was adjudged the most acceptable, so the ministry had no alternative but to award the contract to the British Council despite any special preference it might have had for the University of the West Indies. In concluding the terms of the agreement with the British Council, provision was made for UWI personnel to be engaged wherever possible. In practice, however, this provision was 'more honour'd in the breach than the observance.' It may be noted that, on the insistence of one of the beneficiaries of the project, the British Council did engage a local management information firm to undertake an information technology consultancy.

Role of aid agencies

The role of aid agencies has been one of facilitating the attainment of planned development in the education and training sector. They have provided loans and grant assistance which financed the engagement of much needed expertise in technical and vocational training, educa-

tional planning, organisational reform, educational technology and curriculum development, to cite just a few critical areas. While the vast majority of the consultants have been from metropolitan countries, they have been working mainly in areas with few local consultants nationally and, to some extent, regionally. Since international consultants usually work closely with local counterparts, they help to broaden and deepen the skills of local educators and administrators in sector analysis and the determination of standards.

Where the aid agencies have financed the engagement of local and regional consultants, they have helped to strengthen and promote a cadre of indigenous consultants. Such persons could work on their own and/or in joint arrangements with a metropolitan associate in mutually beneficial ways.

Management of consultants

The client's role

The ministry seeks to ensure that the contractual obligations articulated in the signed agreement are carefully monitored and fulfilled. On the client's side, care is taken to ensure that all house-keeping duties such as hotel accommodation, proximity to the ministry, local travel, office accommodation, adequate secretarial and other logistical supports are provided.

In addition, a counterpart is assigned to the consultant to work closely with him/her. The counterpart arranges meetings, answers queries, clarifies concerns and gives insights into the intricacies of the local society. The counterpart also provides background reports, papers, studies and other data to facilitate the work of the consultant.

At times, a steering committee may be appointed to supervise the work of the consultant and advise the ministry on the appropriateness of his/her recommendations. For example, a steering committee comprising representatives from private and public sector agencies is currently working on the Barbados Community College Hospitality Institute Project. This is aimed at having a direct catalytic effect on tourism and related sectors in the country.

The consultant's role

The consultant is expected to apply him/herself with diligence to all aspects of the terms of reference. At the outset of the consultancy he/she is invited to an inaugural meeting with senior personnel of the ministry. At this meeting relevant major issues and concerns are raised, the terms of reference are highlighted and the programme of activities reviewed. At the end of the assignment, there is also a wrap-up session with senior officials. The consultant shares his/her findings, observations and highlights of the recommendations, and answers any queries that are raised.

Assessment and follow-up

A full assessment of the consultancy takes place after the submission of the consultant's report. Depending on the quality and relevance of the findings, conclusions and recommendations, follow-up action is taken to implement the pertinent recommendations.

Conclusion

Without doubt, Barbados' experience in using consultants has shown a predominance of consultancy services recruited from metropolitan countries. This is particularly true in areas where the services required are in limited supply at national and regional levels. Most of the resources for engaging these services come either through loan financing or grant aid from technical co-operation agreements with international development agencies. These agencies, in their enthusiasm to honour their procurement guidelines, tend to place emerging national and regional consultants at a serious disadvantage when forced to compete with their rivals from metropolitan/rim countries.

Measures therefore should be put in place to deepen and widen the pool of national and regional educational expertise on which ministries can draw in order to speed the process of educational development.

Questions

- 1 In your experience, is the Barbados analysis typical of the 'consultancy game'?
 - 2 Barbados identifies three main factors determining the recruitment of consultants. Is this true elsewhere/of other countries?
 - 3 Does Barbados play the 'game' right?
 - 4 Barbados has heavy dependence on 'metropolitan' consultants. Why is this?
 - 5 What can be done to redress the balance between 'metropolitan' and local (national and regional) consultants?
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CASE STUDY 2: THE ISLAND STATE OF NIUSTORIA

This fictional case study looks at the priorities and choices facing a small island state about to introduce a new schools broadcasting service.

The Republic of Niustoria: Key facts and statistics

Physical

Niustoria is a chain of 70 islands with a total land area of 21,000 sq km strung out over a wide sea with the population concentrated in 10 main islands. It has an oceanic climate with temperatures ranging from 20°C to 30°C and suffers from occasional cyclones. The average annual rainfall is 156.2 cm.

Political

The government has been independent since 1978. Niustoria was previously administered by Aulandia, a metropolitan country. It is now a republic with a parliamentary system. In line with the government's policy of decentralisation, there are eight local government areas.

Social

The population in 1989 was 149,000, concentrated in the ten main islands. The growth rate in 1989 was 2.9 per cent a year. Of the population, 95 per cent are Niustorians and the remaining 5 per cent is made up of Europeans and other regional groups. Nearly half the population is under 17 years of age.

The capital, Ustor, has a population of 17,500 people. It is home to the main government and is also the commercial centre.

The two other main towns are Bomat (population 8,500) on the second largest island to the north and Riko (population 4,500) in the south.

The national language is Niustorian, spoken by the majority. There are a number of local languages.

The official languages are Niustorian and English (the Aulandia influence) which are also the languages of instruction. English is taught as a second language up to primary school Year 4; a transition to the language of instruction occurs in Years 5 and 6. It is the language of instruction in secondary education.

Religion. There are various Christian denominations.

Communication between the three main towns is by good air and road links. Small airstrips on the other larger islands are served by AirStoria but are often affected by bad weather.

Ustor has an international airport which provides links to Aulandia (2000 km), Kaipan (3500 km), Grindoma and the Butolian Islands (950 km). Niustoria's international airline, InterNiustor, operates in association with Aulioop. Intermittent shipping facilities, not always reliable, are available.

Primary education takes the form of a six-year course in school from the age of six years. At the moment, over 80 per cent of the primary school-age population is in school. At one time only 52 per cent of Year 1 entrants reached Year 6; this has improved dramatically and now 90 per cent reach Year 6. In Year 6 all students take the Primary School Leaving Certificate. Because of financial constraints, currently only about 15 per cent are selected for secondary education.

Number of schools: 256 (widely dispersed)
Number of students: 25,000 (approximately)
Number of teachers: 980 (all local)
Number of trained teachers: 526

Secondary education raises a number of crucial issues due to its nature and extent. The country urgently needs to increase the number of students in secondary schools in order to counter the shortage of trained local people available for government and commercial positions. The demand for places greatly exceeds the number available.

Finance is one of the main constraints on increasing the number of secondary places, and to this is added the shortage of local secondary teachers available. Over 80 per cent of secondary teachers are from overseas and this leads to a high annual turnover of teachers and a lack of staff continuity in the schools. A secondary teacher training programme is being planned; training at present takes place overseas.

The issue of what is a 'relevant curriculum' continues to be a matter of controversy. The pressure for vocational studies conflicts with the views of those opposed to such utilitarian aims and who advocate 'a good general education as a sound foundation for any future occupation.'

Number of schools: 10:7 with forms 1-4; 3 with forms 1-7
 Number of students: 3200 (approximately)
 Number of teachers: 135 (80 per cent from overseas)
 Percentage of teachers who are trained: 90 per cent

There are three examinations.

- In Year 6: Primary Leaving Certificate
- In form 4: Niustoria Secondary Certificate (NSC)
- In form 7: Aulandia Higher School Certificate

The Niustoria Examination Board is responsible for the organisation of examinations, but AHSC is administered and marked in Aulandia.

Tertiary education is represented by two institutions.

- Niustoria Teachers' College (primary teachers)
- Niustoria Technical College
(Minimum entry qualification is the NSC; the staff is 75 per cent expatriate.)

The consultancy dilemma: Priorities and choices

No sooner had John Primo, the Director of Education, arrived at his office desk on Tuesday morning than Manly Foster (Chief Education Officer Primary), his colleague from the next office, tapped on the door and burst in.

'Hey, John, do you think I'm for the high jump? I've just found this note from the Minister on my desk, telling me to be in his office at two this afternoon.'

Sure enough, all heads of department were to meet the Minister at two. 'Maybe we really are going to go ahead with the schools broadcasting idea we've all been talking about for so long.' Manly was always hopeful.

'Mmmmm! Wait a minute!' interjected Angelina. 'I heard on the news last night that the Cabinet had been discussing it. Didn't listen long

enough to find out if they gave the go-ahead, though.'

'Ah well, all will doubtless be revealed this afternoon,' Manly sighed, thinking of all he'd planned to do during the day.

The Minister sat behind his desk and beamed at the assembled company: his secretary and two of his personal staff; all the departmental heads; heads of the ministry planning, accounting and personnel divisions; as many senior personnel as could be located at such short notice; and the principals of the teachers' college and the technical institute.

'Good afternoon, everyone,' the Minister began. 'Good to see a full attendance because this is quite a ... well, shall we say ... historic moment.' A rustle of increased interest. 'I don't know how many of you heard the evening news bulletin yesterday, but those of you who did will have heard that Cabinet has at last given the go-ahead for us to launch our schools broadcasting project. Took a good deal of hard talking on my part, I might add.

'I've called you all here, as soon as possible, so that we can begin to thrash out together some of the matters which need to be addressed. The sooner we get these sorted out, the sooner we can get on with planning and implementation. Now, to begin with, I'd like to hear why some of you believe we need a good educational radio service in Niustoria and how widespread you think it should be. John, as Director of Education, I think you should have first say.'

John didn't need a second invitation; he'd even come armed with some of the notes he'd been making over the past year or so, ever since the idea had been raised. 'Well, my first point is that whatever kind of service we set out to provide it's got to be the best possible; none of this second-rate, ineffective nonsense we know is served up to schools in Grindoma in the name of education.'

'Can Niustoria afford the best, though?'

'Even some school radio would be better than none!'

The discussion was up and running!

'Anyway I'm not at all sure that we have any suitable personnel available. I mean, after all, broadcasting is a very specialised activity. Besides, I can't imagine how we're going to discover these budding radio personalities among our teachers or how on earth we're going

to train them if we do locate them.'

This tirade from the Head of Personnel left the occupants of the room slightly stunned. The Minister looked inquiringly at his Director of Education. John took a deep breath.

'A very valid point,' he conceded. 'Locating teachers with some natural talent for broadcasting will be one of the first tasks to be undertaken and then they will certainly need some training.'

'Radio Niustoria ought to be able to help us with training,' suggested Manly, 'always assuming they can spare some of their staff.'

'Are Radio Niustoria people competent to train our people for educational radio? It's not entertainment, you know.' Another sceptic. 'We may have to consider using overseas training facilities unless we bring in outside experts. And anyway, what about the technical back-up? Can we expect RN to provide that sort of staff or are we going to have to train our own technicians or, more likely, have them trained overseas?'

The Director moved in quickly: 'I'm sure the Minister, and the Cabinet, would want as much training as possible covered by Niustorians before looking beyond the country for expertise. Though, of course, matters which concerned, say, Radio Niustoria would have to be dealt with at ministerial level since Radio Niustoria is not under this Ministry. In the case of the two colleges and how their staff can be utilised, that's internal to this Ministry and can easily be facilitated.'

That brought the two college principals to their feet, each pointing out in no uncertain terms that most of their staff (a) were not particularly well versed in broadcasting and distance education skills and (b) were very heavily committed already and were therefore unlikely to have much 'spare' time for training educational broadcasters (though there were staff at the Tech. who would probably be able to help on the technical back-up training, the Principal conceded).

'I'd like to know, for example,' the Principal of the Teachers' College was ready to fire his final shot, 'whether the Treasury would be willing to provide extra funds to pay some sort of 'inducement' to any of my staff who put in extra hours to train these people. Come to that, I think we'd all like to know exactly what the Minister has extracted from the Treasurer in the way of firm promises of funding for this scheme;

it won't be just a matter of training a few potential broadcasters, you know.' The College Head was in full flood by now. 'Look,' he continued, 'years ago when I was doing postgraduate studies at the university in the Butolian Islands, I got to know their Director of Schools Broadcasting, and he told me that when they'd launched their educational radio service it was almost all funded from overseas. Kaipau provided all the radios for free, and sent people to train local Butolian traders to service them. All local people who were involved at the outset were sent on courses to Aulandia and the seed money for the initial launching was provided by the World Education Fund.'

The Principal's very necessary pause for breath at this point enabled the Minister to buy back into the debate, to set out a few facts and to raise what he considered to be realistic issues and options. Murmurs of approval or disagreement could be heard at appropriate moments, frequently from predictable quarters.

'I'll deal with the matter of Treasury first,' he said firmly. 'I, personally, have put in considerable spadework there and at the moment I'm very optimistic that we shall get some initial funding from them; enough, say, for the preparatory phase, perhaps a pilot scheme and then for the first year. By then, who knows? We'll be due for a general election ...' he let the fact hang in the air. 'Whether we also apply for additional funding from an international agency is up to us. We all know how long funding approval from WEF, for instance, can take; we've been there, done that!

'Finding a donor country for the actual radios may depend on how many we need. Certainly, the Cabinet envisages all primary schools having sets. After all, nearly every MP has some needy school in his or her constituency!

'On the matter of training, and endorsing the Director's remark about providing the best possible service, I think we shall have to look to overseas governments or institutions to provide training expertise of international quality. I'm not belittling the home-grown contribution, mind you,' he hastened to add, 'but there are plenty of organisations ready and willing to assist in such projects, we've had their "salesmen" and advertising material through this Ministry at regular intervals for years now.'

'Oh yes? And have their so-called experts

running rampant all over the country, telling us what to do and how to do it, when they wouldn't know a Niustorian custom from a television soap ad?' The speaker didn't sound too happy at the prospect.

'Now then, that's a rather jaundiced view,' remonstrated the Minister. 'It's up to us to select the most suitable and sensitive people or institutions to come in on the scheme.'

'I'm sure it's possible, Minister, to provide appropriate criteria by which we can choose the most suitable overseas expertise,' interrupted the Director reassuringly, 'and to find ways in which those who do come to Niustoria can be, shall we say, sensitised to our particular culture and needs. After all, this is all such a new field of activity for most of us that we may even have to call on, say, UNESCO or UNDP personnel to help us put together a realistic policy and turn it into feasible plans.'

The Minister took up the Director's point. 'Whether we go for all the expertise we can get from anywhere, or whether we just concentrate on one or two sources, for example, one metropolitan country like Aulandia and a nearer, smaller, neighbour like the Butolian Islands which have been through this already ... well, that's up to us to decide. Whoever does agree to advise us and help implement the scheme, there's no doubt that such organisations and their ideas, whether home-grown or imported, will have to be accepted by our own staff at all levels, otherwise nothing will be achieved.'

'Well, not without a great deal of unnecessary friction,' added Manly.

A sort of collective sigh seemed almost audible. It was getting late; watches were being surreptitiously consulted. It was obvious that everyone was in need of some time and space to consider all the issues which had been raised during the afternoon. The Minister stood up. 'Ladies and gentlemen, I think it's time we drew our opening discussion to a close. I'm going to ask the director to organise those present, and any other appropriate personnel, into smaller discussion groups which will meet during the next week or so to look in more detail at the matters we've been discussing today, and to draft some concrete proposals relative to those issues. We can look at those proposals at another

general meeting. The most important aspects which need our attention are, it seems to me: What are the needs, especially of our primary schools, which can be alleviated by an efficient schools broadcasting service and how would the service fulfil those needs? How can we best identify potential staff for the service and the expertise necessary to train them to provide educational radio that is fully effective? And how can we ensure that our teachers use the service efficiently? What is the overall general policy we all need to be working to, and how do we decide scope and priorities? What are the practical implications of all this planning in terms of funds, people, imports, contacts, technical back-up?

'It's a tall order, I know,' the Minister had noticed that collective sigh. 'But it's up to us to start off fully aware of all we and the whole education service of Niustoria are undertaking.'

'So, I wish you good discussions over the next week or so and look forward to your group and individual contributions at our next gathering.'

'A tall order, indeed!' The phrase was echoed with feeling by some as they left the room and headed for the sanctuary of personal office or home.

Questions

- 1 What do you perceive to be the key issues and priorities in this particular consultancy dilemma? Would these differ from those identified by the Minister of Education?
- 2 Role play members of one of the small discussion groups. Your brief is to suggest ways you can achieve a balance between utilising local expertise and overseas consultants. (You may wish to relate this to a specific consultancy dilemma in your own country/region.)
- 3 Predict what decisions, both short-term and long-term, might have been made about the role of overseas/local consultants in implementing a schools broadcasting service.
- 4 In your experience, are the issues raised here typical of the consultancy dilemmas which face small states?