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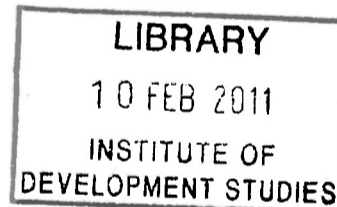
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THE ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF E. AFRICA

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## The Role of Adult Education in the Development of E. Africa

By L. R. CLIFFE

### Definition and Intention:

The concept of adult education tends to be restricted by University circles to evening classes run by extra-mural departments. To most other people it connotes mass literacy campaigns. I intend to use the term here in a much broader sense to mean all forms of instruction to grown-ups who have finished with the formal schools system, or never been involved in it. It includes then not only literacy campaigns but some aspects of agricultural extension, health and community development programmes. It might involve such media as evening classes, residential establishments, radio and television, public meetings, correspondence courses as well as instruction of peasants on their shambas. Most of my remarks will be set in an East African context, but are mainly based on my own experiences of adult education in Tanzania and to some extent Kenya<sup>(1)</sup>. My main thesis is that adult education in its various forms, and with the proper emphasis, is an essential mechanism through which the knowledge and attitudes necessary to development, and especially rural development, can be communicated to the East African populations.

### Development Strategy:

Before taking a close look at adult education and what role it might play in development, we should be clear about some general elements of this process of development in East Africa. In fact I would like to make three general and related propositions in this connection.

Firstly, if we look at the various constraints on development in East Africa the two most important are a shortage of trained manpower and a scarcity of investment funds. Other constraints such as a shortage of

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The basis "research" on which this study is based was largely a matter of osmosis through being involved in the adult education process in Tanzania as a Tutor and then as Acting Principal of Kiukoni College, DSM from 1962 - 65 and as a member of the National Adult Education Advisory Committee in Tanzania.

foreign exchange are not as yet so significant. Tanzania perhaps faces these problems to a greater degree than its two neighbours, and so points up the general problem rather more sharply. In terms of manpower, especially, Tanzania faces real limitations. At the time of Independence, there were perhaps 50 graduates. Many projects in the first year of the current Five-Year Plan did not get off the ground because of this fact. Despite an ambitious programme of Africanisation and a more thorough effort to plan education and training to fit manpower requirements than in Kenya or Uganda, Tanzania cannot hope to be self-sufficient in personnel for at least 15 years, according to present projections.

Given present National Income levels in East Africa, the amount of domestic savings must inevitably be small. The level of capital investment therefore depends on the extent to which the population can be squeezed to yield up a slightly higher proportion of income, and how successfully the countries can attract foreign aid. Thus to quote Tanzania experience again, the Three Year Plan covering the period 1961-4 required £25 million of public investment expenditure, of which less than £1 million was financed from taxation. In the current 5-Year Plan, some £80 million out of total public investment of £102 million will have to be found from outside the country. (2)

The second set of propositions I want to make relate to the importance of developing agriculture and the growth of the rural sector generally. There is often a tendency for new nations, intent on 'modernisation' to equate this with the development of industry. This tendency is often reinforced in ex-colonial territories because of the argument, in which there is some truth, that colonies were regarded merely as raw material producers. Fortunately the East African countries have not gone too far in this direction. It is important in this context to maintain a balance between agricultural and industrial development not merely for sound social and political concerns to have the rural majority share in any improvements in the standard of living. In fact, given East Africa's starting points,

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Tanganyika Five-Year Plan for Economic & Social Development Vol.I, P.97: Govt. Printer, Dar es Salaam.

rural development is necessary merely to maintain a rural population which is likely to grow for the next two generations. Again to quote the Tanzania projections: it is hoped to settle 1 million people on newly-opened up land by 1980, and to provide 200,000 new jobs which we might assume will provide incomes for another 1 million. The population is expected to grow by 4.7 million by that date, so there will be an additional 2.7 million people who will have to be absorbed, and given an income, by existing agriculture. (3)

In addition given the fact that the overwhelming majority of the East African population are rurally based, development in this sector is vital to growth elsewhere. To quote the Tanzania plan again:

"Eighty five per cent of Tanganyika consumers are peasant farmers and it is their effective demand for consumer and producer goods which sets the limits to the scope and diversity of the domestic market and, consequently, sets the pace for the expansion of the non-agricultural sectors." (4)

As well as providing expanding markets, it is also evident that in the early stages of industrial development that the rural sector of the economy must provide much of the saving to finance capital expenditure in new industry, commerce and in developing infrastructure.

In other words then the development of agriculture and other parts of the rural sector must be sufficiently rapid to provide for an increasing rural population and to provide for them at a higher level so that there is a surplus for saving and increased demand for the products of new industry. Rural development thus must have a high priority - as indeed it does in East African Plans. In Tanganyika the aim is a 7% annual increase in the value of crops marketed. (5) Similarly the Kenya Plan provides for a 6.8% growth in the monetary product of

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(3) Op. cit. p. 72-3.

(4) Op. cit. p. 12.

(5) Op. cit p. x.

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agriculture and livestock over the period 1962-70.<sup>(6)</sup> Postulating these fairly ambitious growth rates, however, is not the same as achieving them. This problem I shall return to.

The third initial proposition I would make is to reiterate a conclusion which even economists are now admitting to: that economic growth is not a simple function of capital inputs, that human resource development is equally important. In an East African context this means developing the potential of peasants rooted still in traditional ways of life, often concerned merely with subsistence production, and most of whom will be without education.

Promoting Rural Development:

We can then set the following conditions for the strategy of development in East Africa: considerable rural development must be achieved; large inputs of capital or skilled manpower cannot be spared to achieve this growth; other means must be found of mobilising the energies, and developing the potential of the rural masses.

In practice this means that individual peasants have to work harder and better to increase their production; they have to be introduced to and accept new crops, especially cash crops, and new farming practices. Local communities must be ready to take the initiative in starting community projects or other development tasks in their neighbourhood, using for the most part their own resources. These local communities have to grow used to co-operating together for such purposes as marketing as well as self-help schemes, and in other relations they have with the national economic and political system. These efforts of the farmer or the village community have further to be co-ordinated with district, regional and national plans. Finally, it will be necessary to make adjustments to the process of social change which any improvement will set in motion. Because traditional culture and way of life were in equilibrium, any specific change will have an impact on the total culture - the daily life of the peasant and his relations with the society

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(6) ~~such~~  
Development Plan 1964-1970: Govt. of Kenya p. 130.

which he is part.

The first essential then is <sup>to</sup> provide the motivation for increased effort. This is most likely to stem from a combination of economic incentives and political mobilisation. The latter is most important when it comes to communal activity rather than increasing individual productivity. Although even in the latter context, political attitudes are important. The release of energies with the coming of independence has been very impressive in some parts of East Africa, and these values have been reinforced by the spread of such concepts as "nation-building" (in its Tanzanian context) and "harambee". For instance, it is estimated that the Tanganyika cotton production target of 81,000 tons by 1970 (from 33,700 tons, 1960-62 average) will be reached by next year.<sup>(7)</sup> News of similar early achievement of production targets come from other parts of the country. These achievements are mainly a result of spontaneous activity on the part of the ordinary population in response to the politicisation of agriculture. Equally impressive are the contributions to social wealth through self-help activities - for instance, the growth of 'harambee' schools in Kenya, and the construction of feeder roads and buildings in Tanzania.

These enthusiasms need more direction and co-ordination however. For example, in the Mwanza Region of Tanzania, there were very large increases in cotton acreages last year, in some areas perhaps as much as 20%. Agricultural advice tended to put more emphasis on improving the quality of cultivation - planting earlier, use of sprays, etc - and some farmers tended to over extend themselves with a consequent drop in yields. In other words even greater increases in production might have been possible if energies had been directed into technically sounder activities. Similar difficulties arise with regard to self-help activities. There are many examples of schools being put up without teachers to use them.

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(7) Reported in 'Sunday News', Dar es Salaam. 27-ii-'66.

In all these various aspects of rural development, adult education has its part to play. The spread of 'development values', the mobilising of enthusiasms; instruction in the technical steps which should be followed in particular circumstances; the need for organisation and co-ordination - all these are matters which have to be communicated in an organised way to the grass roots level. Granted then that an adult education programme geared to development needs can play a large part in spreading the attitudes, know-how and tactics necessary for rural advance; we must next examine what sort of programme can most effectively do this. What should be taught, and to whom? And how should this instruction be organised?

A Programme for Adult Education:

Adult education programmes at present in East Africa seem to provide non-residential classes at the grass roots level in literacy and language, and, chiefly in the towns, extra-mural type classes either in formal 'examination' subjects such as book-keeping, English etc. or in liberal studies - civics, basic economics, literature etc. There are in addition residential colleges for adults in each of the three countries, which in most cases tend to be junior colleges giving pre-University courses, mainly in the social sciences. A recent Kenya report includes another category of adult education, 'foundation education' - "concerned with making known improved basic ways of living ... These would include: new basic standards of health and hygiene, new basic farming methods, new basic crafts and skills, new patterns of individual and family relationships, and new forms of organisation."<sup>(8)</sup> The first two items on this list are undertaken by extension staff of Ministries of Health and Agriculture respectively and Community Development departments to some extent concern themselves with various items on the list. But these different efforts to communicate with, and promote change in, the local community are not

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(8) R. C. Prosser: Report on the Development of Adult Education in Kenya. P.7



very co-ordinated and indeed may on occasions conflict. Efforts of health workers to improve nutrition by growing new foodcrops may conflict with agricultural policies aimed at increased cash crop cultivation. But even in the absence of such specific conflicts, there is seldom any conception of how any new idea may affect not just methods of cultivation, say, but the whole fabric of life of a peasant community. The introduction of tree crops, for instance may imply profound changes in land tenure and consequently on family and other social relationships. The setting up of a local development committee may have important influences with respect to any traditional authorities within the community.

There is then a great need for this 'foundation' instruction for the ordinary rural population but there must be co-ordinated programmes which can relate literacy teaching to instruction in improved farming techniques, and will further combine these with attempts to communicate ideas on what school syllabuses call 'Civics'. In Tanzania, the present Five-Year Plan provides for such a programme of "popular education in order to speed up the process of change, in the belief that one of the inhibiting factors is the failure of the citizen, and especially the rural cultivator, to identify his (or her) part in the broad process of nation building combined with a lack of knowledge and an understanding of what is required of him."<sup>(9)</sup>

Local development in the rural areas will, as indicated earlier, have to rely on spontaneous initiative from the community and yet this initiative must be technically sound and be in accord with national planning goals. It would seem vital therefore that the leaders of the local community should receive further practical education to make them more effective. The local decision-makers - the members of such bodies as Village Development or Location Committees, County and District Councils, Co-operative Committees, and Party organs - need to be fully

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(9) Tanzania Government: "People's Education Plan" (Ministry of Community Development and National Culture).

conversant with the simpler techniques for development\* in their area, and with the structure and policies of the regime and of the local societies to which they have to relate. Yet not only decision-makers are needed, but what French social scientists call the 'animateurs', "the creative people ... who inspire and organise their friends and initiate developments"<sup>(10)</sup> Efforts should be made to identify the 'animateurs' at various levels and to give them courses in order to equip/to perform this role more effectively. A programme of adult education which would give priority to 'animateurs' and decision-makers implies two conditions which it may be hard for some educationists to accept, especially in a situation where they are mainly expatriates. There must be a "close relationship ... between the adult education agencies and the popular movements of the country."<sup>(11)</sup> Secondly, selection criteria for adult education cannot be based on an objective assessment of academic ability or achievement, but more subjective considerations of an individual's role or potential in the community.

Some attempts have been made in both Kenya and Tanzania to define programmes of adult education designed to promote development, but both are somewhat behind in their implementation. The essential ingredients of such a programme would be to provide 'foundation instruction' at the grass-roots level to the rural population - instruction carried out by people with a little training in adult communication techniques rather than a specialist in agriculture veterinary, or particular field. The small amount of specialist knowledge they would have to know could be provided by district level technical personnel. Their training and supervision could be provided by trained adult educators who also organise training courses for leaders at, say, the district level. In addition, national adult education institutions would have to provide higher-level

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Paul Bertelsen: "Problems of Priorities in Adult Education" in C.G. Widstrand (ed.): Development and Adult Education in Africa, P. 26.

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Op. cit. P. 27.

\* Including techniques of organisation.

training, preparation of teaching materials, and radio and television classes which would be integrated with instruction at the lower levels, as well as longer residential adult courses for the best people emerging from the system.

A greater realisation of the contribution which adult education of the kind described can play in development will perhaps lead to adult education programme being accorded the priority it deserve. Perhaps the most immediate priority is to educate the decision-makers about adult education to get home this point.