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I. A. E. MONOGRAPHS



**No. 7: Mass Education and Community
Development in Ghana -
A Study in Retrospect 1943-1968**

KWA O. HAGAN

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Development in Ghana -
A Study in Retrospect 1943-1968

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Published by the Institute, June 1975

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Preface

INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION MONOGRAPHS

This is one of a new series of Monographs launched by the Institute at the time of its 25th Anniversary celebrations - October-December 1973. The series is meant to circulate (among research students, university staffs, and other interested persons) a body of writing on various subjects which is always being put out by members of academic institutions like the IAE but seldom getting published for general circulation.

By the establishment of this series we hope we have embarked upon a corrective process, and that these monographs will serve the purpose of supplying a quantity of background material to many research subjects. They will not all, or always, be learned papers according to the strict academic definition of the term; they are not planned to be such, though some will in fact be learned and/or scholarly; many will be purely narrative or descriptive. Nor are they issued in strictly chronological order: No.1, for instance, carried the review history of the Institute, was written specifically for the celebrations but published after No.2, which was written in 1968.... The aim of the series is thus simply to release it as useful, helpful academic background material, for those who will find it so.

Titles in the series so far are the following:
"Twenty-Five Years of University-Based Adult Education in Ghana: A Review" (No.1) by K.A.B. Jones-Quartey; "Report on Dag Hammarskjold Seminar on the Use of Correspondence Instruction in Adult Education" (No.2) by E.A. Haizel, E.A. Mensah

and J. Opare-Abetia; "Exploring the Role of Literary Clubs and Youth Movements in Ghana Politics in the 1930s" (No.3) by Kwa O. Hagan; "The Role of Local Government in Nation Building" (No.4) by J.K. Ansere; "Awudome Rural Development Project - An Evaluation" (No.5) by Jette Bukh (Miss); "The Economic Power of Co-Operatives in Developing Countries" (No.6) by A.M. Kusi; "Mass Education and Community Development in Ghana - A Study in Retrospect, 1943-1968" (No.7) by Kwa O. Hagan; "Joint Report on 1971 Third Conference of African Adult Education Association (AAEA) and First Africa Regional Meeting of International Congress of University Adult Education at University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania" (No.8) by J. Opare-Abetia; "Oxford University and an Adult Education Experiment in Ghana, 1947-1950" (No.9) by Kwa O. Hagan.

All the authors named above are members of staff at the Institute, and the first dozen or so of these booklets will all probably be written by such staff members, or by research personnel even if only temporarily attached to the Institute. But in time the series could well carry titles by outsiders, when and as suitable and opportune.

K.A.B. Jones-Quartey
DIRECTOR

September 1974
Legon

I. BACKGROUND TO A PROGRAMME OF MASS EDUCATION

This study attempts to carry out a survey of the activities of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development during the 25-year period indicated in the title. Emphasis is here put on the Department's attempt at the eradication of adult illiteracy in particular and the promotion of community betterment in general. Such a survey must conveniently take the 1940s as a starting point, if only because that decade constituted one notable era of educational reform in Ghana.

The Second World War brought about a spate of social reforms in Britain as well as in its then Colonial Empire. Such reforms seemed desirable in order to emphasise the 'anti-facist' nature of the war. The British parliament had placed on the statute book as matter of priority, in readiness for the post-war era, an act to reform the law relating to education. The 1944 Education Act (successfully piloted through parliament by Richard A. Butler, now Lord Butler of Saffron Walden and currently Master of Trinity College, Cambridge), was intended to supersede all previous educational legislation. It ensured for the first time a new deal in English education, "from which no person, young or old, should consider himself excluded."¹

Contemporary with educational reform in the metropolitan country, the British government was evidently also considering reforms in educational and social structures in the colonies. There were in the 1940s, first of all, the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, through which the British parliament did allocate large sums of money for financing social and economic projects in colonial countries. Such allocation made possible the expansion of university facilities at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone and Gordon

College in Khartoum, Sudan; and it led to the establishment of a university college in Nigeria as well as in the Gold Coast, towards the close of the forties. It was also possible, after the war, for the Gold Coast government and the Colonial Office to set "on foot a considerable effort to promote community development and the establishment of local government institutions as a means of social progress and political education."²

There was, however, an urgent need in West Africa for educational expansion at the lower levels. This need had become especially apparent in the Gold Coast, where educational policy had tended to produce, since the mid-nineteenth century and largely through mission schools, an educated minority to meet the needs of clerical appointments in commerce and government.³ This policy had persisted up to the twentieth century, and was, between the wars, causing much concern among nationalist Africans, regarding the possible danger of the people becoming separated into two halves - "an educated minority wielding economic and political power, and an illiterate proletariat living under conditions which might approach to serfdom." There was, therefore, a pressing need, when considering educational development at university level, to introduce at the same time other measures by which the great mass of colonial peoples, particularly those who had missed formal schooling, could also enjoy the benefits of some education and social progress, however belated such benefits might be.

The report of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, entitled Mass Education in African Society,⁵ was to all intents and purposes designed to meet such a need, because in planning decolonisation during the post-war era there were in the 1940s at the Colonial Office men like Christopher Cox and W.E.F. Ward, who

had long developed, while in the Colonial Service, a great deal of sympathy towards the aspirations of the people of colonial territories. Like-minded men and women in other fields had joined these men to make possible this special report by the advisory committee. The drafting of the Mass Education Report was largely the work of Margaret Read, who was at that time at the Colonial Department of the London University Institute of Education.⁶

Reasons given in the Report as to why adult literacy was considered of primary importance, in the light of the needs of African countries in a post-war era, were briefly put as follows:

It has been proved that the attainment of literacy makes people aware of the need for social and economic improvement, and therefore they will cooperate more readily with welfare and other agencies working on these lines.

The rapid changes in family life make it imperative to give the people every possible means of understanding and controlling what is happening among them. Health measures in the home and village, enlightened training of children, correspondence with absentees, budgeting and account keeping - all become possible and in time acceptable to a literate people.

In order to progress towards self-government in the modern world, colonial peoples must learn to read, and understand, not only about their local affairs but also those of wider import. If control in local government is to be on a wide and democratic basis, it cannot nowadays be in the hands of a mass of ignorant and illiterate people.

It will be seen from the Advisory Committee's reasons that the eradication of illiteracy was never meant to be an end in itself. Literacy was, in the Committee's view, to be considered "as the inevitable pre-requisite for the political, economic and social advance of the whole people."

The concept of adult literacy and mass education as part of the overall programme of education towards a people's development was fully underlined by the Walter Elliott Commission, when it noted in its report:

...we endorse the opinion expressed in the Mass Education Report that adult education, and especially adult literacy, is an essential foundation of intelligent citizenship in the modern world.... As economic development advances, so must also the political education of the people in the practical duties of citizenship and of democratic local self-government. Ability to read and write, to understand the course of events and form judgment on government policy is one of the necessary steps to this end.⁸

II. EXPERIMENTS IN WEST AFRICA

The Report was taken seriously by the Nigerian and Gold Coast governments. These two colonial territories were among the first to experiment on it. And these experiments, interestingly, produced quite different results in each country: what started in Nigeria as a purely literacy campaign, turned out in the end to be a great experiment in community development; while in the Gold Coast what was planned, in the light of the lessons learnt from the Nigerian experiment, as an integrated course in mass education and community development ended up largely as a literacy campaign.

In 1945 the first experiment of a mass education campaign was carried out in the Udi district of the Eastern Province of Nigeria. The Udi experiment vividly showed that the main task of mass education was to stimulate a people's own initiative. The experiment started as a literacy campaign, but as such was not very successful. Hundreds did become literate; however there was no sign that literacy was generating any creative initiative in them. Presently, the people of Udi themselves told their campaigners that although they were happy to be able to read and write their own vernacular, literacy was, in their view, not what they most needed. What they needed were amenities such as feeder roads, more school buildings for their children, a health centre and a community centre.⁹

The district officer in charge of the campaign did not discourage them. Rather, he welcomed their initiative by calling upon them to get ready to work, themselves, for the amenities they needed, just as they had themselves endeavoured to learn how to read and write. The people supplied labour and some money for the projects they wanted to undertake. Technical advice, mechanical equipment and some of the money came from official sources. Then, constructive and creative village rivalry came into full play, for many other villages wanted roads, clinics and schools. Thus did the mass education movement spread throughout the Udi district. The experiment further showed that 'a campaign which aimed at making people literate without also helping them to benefit from literacy would be uneconomic and unprofitable, even if it could succeed at all.'¹⁰

While literacy was in fact not what the people of Udi were most interested in at the time, it is possible - perhaps even probable - that without the literacy campaign they would

never have been stimulated to take the initiative in demanding the various projects of community development. Had the district officer discouraged the people's initiative, the whole movement would have collapsed.

E.R. Chadwick, the District Officer in charge of the experiment, soon discovered that one enthusiasm led to another: an enthusiasm for Ibo ABC became one for road-making, for building or for sanitation projects in town centres. The Ibos of the Udi district called the mass education movement "civilization." As with William Blake, Chadwick believed that "energy is divine", so long as it was also free. That divine energy was the motive power to mass education in the Udi district. It was its secret of success.¹¹

This important lesson no doubt had a significant bearing on the first experiment, in its turn, on the Gold Coast, where a Secretary for Social Services had been created (in the 1943/44 estimates) with the task of co-ordinating social welfare work throughout the country; where the nucleus of a Social Welfare Department had been established in 1944, and where by 1946 a Department of Social Welfare and Housing had developed.

The Gold Coast followed the Nigerian experiment with a preliminary mass education and community development project in 1948. A Social Development Officer (later termed Mass Education Officer) was appointed by the government on the advice of the Colonial Office in London, "to advise on the initiation of mass education and social development work in the rural areas, since inevitably the work of the Department had had to be restricted largely to urban areas." His job was, therefore, to be basically different from the social welfare service which had hitherto been concentrated in the

urban areas, with emphasis on probation and delinquency services.

Such emphasis had become necessary because a noticeable effect of the war and post-war period had been the large number of girls engaged in prostitution, and the droves of young men, known as 'pilot boys', who aided and abetted them. It happened this way. During the war many young people attached themselves to the army camps occupied by foreign servicemen, in Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi/Takoradi. A good many of these found it impossible to return to family life after the troops had left, and inevitably they found themselves in a 'Borstal' institution which the Salvation Army had opened in Mampong-Ashanti. This industrial school, with some forty boys in it, was taken over by the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, and moved down to occupy new premises at Swedru in the Central Region.¹²

In preparation for his pioneering work, the Social Development Officer, Alec G. Dickson, recruited what came to be known as the 'Wandering Social Development Team', and many organisations in the Gold Coast helped the team to prepare for an experiment in Trans-Volta Togoland (now the Volta Region).¹³

Achimota School assisted with a loan of musical instruments and song books, and also with the preparation and printing of mass education material (the Laubach Reading Card) at the School's printing department; the British Council lent records and advised on drama techniques; the Army helped with equipment and material for physical recreation; the Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian missions each loaned the services of one of their ablest young Ewe teachers; the Gold Coast Police offered the services of one of their top

young bandsmen; the Medical Department loaned a male nurse/dispenser; the Transport and Survey Departments lent equipment, and the Social Welfare Department made available their training school at Christiansborg (Osu), Accra for the preliminary training of the 'wandering team.'

Rather unfortunately, and as the Mass Education Officer later recorded somewhat lamentingly, the Education Department, of all departments, "did not feel it could profitably help!" But school teachers, and ministers of churches as well as managers of local schools, did lend full support.¹⁴

III. MASS EDUCATION CAMPAIGN IN THE VOLTA REGION, AND WHY

The choice of Trans-Volta Togoland (Volta Region) was of particular significance, socially and politically. The Ewes, as a homogeneous tribal bloc, were of a size and vigour that enabled them to lend themselves well to a mass education campaign. For they were very keenly interested in their own language and culture. Some leaders of the church who assisted in the production of mass literacy readers for the government-sponsored mass education campaign had even been active, long before the campaign, in organising a kind of mass literacy primer. This had been done through the inspiration of Dr. Frank Charles Laubach, who in the early forties paid a visit to the Gold Coast and, based at Achimota College, advised on the techniques of vernacular literature production.¹⁵ The Ewe literacy primer was largely the work of the Rev. C.G. Baeta, with the cooperation of others. Professor Baeta (as he later became, and now a Professor-Emeritus of the University of Ghana) was then Synod Clerk to the Ewe Presbyterian Church and a member of the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast.

The Ewes had, towards the end of the 1940s, been increasingly conscious of their nationhood, as a result of their demand for the unification of their people on both sides of the then Togoland frontier. This consciousness was itself a positive factor in any campaign for mass education. The Ewes were known to have a tradition of craftsmanship (particularly in the Ewe pattern of Kente cloth weaving); also an outstanding aptitude for choral music, as well as an enterprising spirit exemplified in the fact that they had, with some help from the Scottish Presbyterian Church in the Gold Coast, taken over themselves the organisation and management of the old Bremen Mission, and sustained it as the Ewe Presbyterian Church. And it was they themselves who had expressed a desire for the mass education experiment to be started in their area.¹⁶

An appeal was made to educated persons in the area to undertake, as a matter of public service, to assist their less fortunate fellow citizens to share the benefits of education. The basis of the experiment was an invitation to "all teachers, clerks, and other educated people to accept social responsibility and offer themselves for training and service as community leaders, without fee or salary or even payment of expenses."

Mass literacy was but one of six subjects which the campaigners were to teach the people. Thus it was placed in a wider perspective within a programme which was planned as a movement for community development, in the light of the outcome of the first Udi experiment in Nigeria. But the campaigners were soon beset by hundreds of women who came to be taught how to read and write, and the outcome was that a campaign which had been meant as a general mass education movement turned out largely to be a literacy campaign of considerable success.

Unfortunately, without follow-up literature for the new literates the campaign lost much of its potential effect. It however succeeded in firing the imagination of educated members of the rural community, particularly school-teachers, through the other five subjects which were introduced: first-aid and hygiene, discussion group techniques, village theatre, community singing and band organisation.¹⁷

The subjects appear to have been carefully selected for an integrated training course. First-aid was vitally necessary, in a rural village where medical facilities are very limited and where villagers are exposed to the hazards of accidents with the hoe or cutlass on the farm, and the risk of snake bites; the formation and encouragement of discussion groups was of great value - for interest in politics in Eweland as a result of the then prevailing unification issue was such that it would have been futile for the government to have tried to suppress it. What was actually done was to show how discussion could be conducted on a reasonable basis, by using the rural mass education group as the democratic unit.

The Volta area was also well suited for the experiment of mass education, for it teemed with village bands, school bands and choral societies - ready-made rallying points and tools of mass appeal. This was in part an inheritance of German colonial rule and of the old Bremen Mission. As a result, Eweland has turned out some outstanding musicians. At the time of the campaign the entire music staff of Achimota College were Ewe: J. Ephraim Amu, who recently retired from the School of Music of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana; the late Robert Kwame, who died in harness while at Achimota; and Philip Gbeho, who later composed the National Anthem of Ghana and was until recently conductor of Ghana's modest National Orchestra.

The use of bands in the programme evoked an especial interest. For there had developed generally in the country a healthy rivalry whereby well-to-do cocoa farmers and successful businessmen indulged in the practice of purchasing brass band instruments together with a full complement of drums, often through the commercial firms, in order to organise local bands in their native villages. With such a large number of bands in the Ewe area during the campaign, there was bound to be a great many would-be village bandsmen who could not possibly know how to make good music with their instruments. This prompted appeals to the mass education officer to arrange for Police bandsman to go out to the villages and help the bands with instructions in the care of their instruments, the proper techniques of playing, of fingering and of harmony. The demand for the bandsman truly indicated that there was a service worth rendering to those rural groups.¹⁸

In the Volta Region the experiment was carried out at various centres for a period of four months during the latter part of 1948, and ended up significantly with a joint Anglo-French project in mass education. This had been the recommendation of the Director of Education in French Togoland (now Togo), Monsieur G. Bonnet, who had visited the experiment when it was in progress in British Togoland (now part of Ghana). A joint Anglo-French team was trained in Accra, and in June 1949 the joint project was first operated in Palime in French Togoland. This was followed by two other courses in British Trans-Volta Togoland. A fourth course was held at Blitta, in French Togoland to round off the month-long joint project.¹⁹

The British and French authorities, in agreeing upon such a joint project, must have been actuated on the one hand by the political pressures of the protagonists of Ewe unification; on the other hand, they might also have been influenced by the imminent arrival of a U.N. Mission in Togoland. In fact the whole business of the experiment in the Volta Region was frowned upon by cynics as a window-dressing preparation for the 1949 U.N. Visiting Mission coming to enquire into the Ewe unification issue.²⁰ While there might have been these pressures on either side, it is also true that this joint project was unusually interesting, for it was the first time in colonial Africa that any such combined team, composed of Africans of the same tribe but under different spheres of colonial rule, had operated in adjacent territories, irrespective of the frontier. The project did indeed attract the Nigerian government sufficiently for them to send over their senior African Mass Education Officer as an observer.

It soon became apparent, though, that beneath the surface of joint operation there were deep differences in the attitude of approach to mass education as between the British and the French. The French understandably felt an uneasiness over a project that tended to emphasise Ewe nationalism. Furthermore, it was somewhat contrary to the French process of colonial assimilation to encourage the development of national languages and tribal dialects, for French educational policy in their territories required all education to be in the French language.²¹ As Lord Hailey has pointed out:

...the most characteristic features of French educational policy have been: first, the universal use of French as the medium of instruction; second, a general policy of relating the provision of the more advanced type of education to the demand which appears to exist

for it; third, the strong emphasis on vocational training as the form which such education should take.²²

In the circumstances, it was a kind of pidgin French that was adopted as the medium of instruction towards the final phase of the month-old joint campaign.

After a series of fortnightly courses run during the space of four months by the social development team at various centres in the Volta Region, it was clear that a completely new brand of social welfare service had come to the rural people. Adults, particularly large numbers of women, had within a short period learnt to read and write in the Ewe language. Village brass bands were grateful for the efforts of the Police bandsman who had visited them; teachers in village schools had carried back knowledge of dozens of games that could be played with improvised equipment; and many had come by practical knowledge in elementary first aid and hygiene. Others - mainly school teachers - had pledged themselves to run local literacy classes.²³

Those who turned up at the various centres to train as voluntary leaders of social work were mainly local school teachers who were determined to put their school vacations and weekends to profitable use, as they still largely continue to do in adult education programmes organised by the Institute of Adult Education and the People's Educational Association. This was not unusual. For, whatever the task in the rural community - be it the organising of annual festivals, scouting for boys and guiding for girls, benefit societies, church guilds and fellowships, or any other activities - it was the never-failing school teacher who offered the voluntary leadership. The mass education officer saw clearly that if future field work in literacy and community development was to succeed in any area, then the general 'leave it to teacher' attitude would have to be avoided, and

other literates - clerks, shopkeepers and traders - persuaded to throw themselves wholeheartedly also into any such project.²⁴

But official and public reaction to the campaign carried out by the 'Wandering Social Development Team' (what was aptly described in a section of the then Gold Coast press as the 'School on Wheels') was somewhat lukewarm.²⁵ The colonial administration was seemingly disinterested initially, in the campaign. It was not until the last stages of the experiment that top-level officials - African and British - showed a somewhat curious, last-minute interest. And this was when a Film Unit from London, commissioned by the Colonial Office, was actually in the country to shoot the project.²⁶

The Gold Coast press viewed the 'School on Wheels' as merely 'a /sic/ government squandermania.'²⁷ A leader in one newspaper demanded that an attempt be made to assess benefits bestowed on the rural population other than the somewhat doubtful result of the literacy campaign. A correspondent in West Africa, commenting on the mass education experiment, queried:

The Gold Coast government has not yet uttered as much as a squeak about a mass education scheme. Has this development team scheme been considered successful enough to justify an immediate, imaginative large-scale application throughout the whole country? Will the Education Department now take an active interest? Will a Literacy Bureau be formed or any other organisation established to 'service' social development volunteers? Is this the beginning of mass education in the Gold Coast - or the end?"²⁸

These questions remained unanswered, and the mass education officer was left in frustration, without the staff, organisational machinery or budgetary vote to advance the plan.²⁹ This was in marked contrast to the Nigerian case, where, by February 1949, the government of Nigeria had shown great interest (following the success which had attended the Udi experiment) by providing for not less than twelve mass education officers in the Ten Year Development Plan for Education.³⁰ On the contrary, the Gold Coast government seems to have been less enthusiastic about furthering a mass education programme. The government was rather pre-occupied with the political and constitutional problems posed by the transitional period of handing over the administration of the country to parliamentary government by the Convention People's Party, with Kwame Nkrumah as Leader of Government Business (later the first African Prime Minister anywhere).

IV. PLAN FOR MASS LITERACY AND MASS EDUCATION IN 1951

In 1951, by the first general election in the Gold Coast under the new constitution, the Convention People's Party (C. P. P.) was swept into power. The C. P. P. in its general election manifesto had laid great emphasis on universal education. On social development the manifesto in part declared:

The country needs a unified system of education, with free and compulsory elementary, secondary and technical education up to the age of 16 years.... The Party will bring the University College to... full university status at once.... The Party lays special importance on Adult Education and will see

to it that a planned campaign to liquidate illiteracy from this country in the shortest possible time is vigorously undertaken. . . .³¹

It is significant to note that it was not until 1960, at the UNESCO Second World Conference on Adult Education in Montreal, Canada, that the term 'adult education' was first conceived in a very broad sense to embrace a whole range and organised pattern of education for adults, from, on the one hand, adult literacy campaigns to projects of mass education and community betterment; to, on the other, the provision of programmes of further and continuing education up to university-level courses. And yet an African government, the C. P. P. of Ghana, was in 1951 thinking of adult education within a framework that, ten years later, under UNESCO auspices came to be accepted internationally.³²

In fulfilment of its pledge, the C. P. P. government set up a Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, and appointed the secretary of the Party, Kojo Botsio, as the first Minister. The new ministry immediately introduced in 1951 the plan for accelerated development of formal education. At the same time it concerned itself with the expansion of that programme of mass education which the colonial government had tried out experimentally but failed to extend to other parts of the country.³³

Botsio, the Minister, together with his Ministerial Secretary, J. B. Erzuah, initiated a series of discussions with the Senior Civil Service staff of the ministry, comprising Thomas Barton as Permanent Secretary and Peter du Sautoy as Assistant Secretary. The other Senior Civil Service staff of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development also took part in the discussions.

These were Maurice Dorman, then Director, and A.R.C. Prosser, officer in charge of the mass education section of the Department. From the discussions there emanated the "Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education", which was unanimously approved by the National Assembly in August 1951.³⁴

In an appeal for public support, Kojo Botsio, who, as Minister of Education and Social Welfare, piloted the plan through parliament, wrote in a foreward:

The Plan for Mass Literacy, Mass Education and Community Development set out in the following pages has received the cordial and unanimous approval of the Legislative Assembly, and the Department of Social Welfare is beginning to put it into effect. It is a large-scale, balanced plan to help every part of our country to achieve literacy and to go far beyond that and transform its whole life. The government will do all in its power to secure success. But success with any plan for mass education and community development, depends on a spirit of self-help among the members of every community and on a willingness to co-operate with those who seek to help them.

The Minister went on to appeal to all who had been educated at school to help throughout the country "by voluntary and sustained endeavour in the actual work of teaching in literacy classes and in helping in mass education and community development activities and projects." The plan itself emphatically pointed out that:

a literate adult population is almost essential for the effective operation of local councils and a modern system of local government. The procedure of holding

elections is enormously facilitated by mass literacy and the effectiveness of councillors is greatly diminished if they cannot read and write.³⁵

V. WHAT THE PLAN MEANT BY 'MASS LITERACY', 'MASS EDUCATION', AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT'

We have hitherto made reference to these terms, but their signification within the framework of the plan needs examination. A campaign of mass literacy is generally a country-wide programme by which an attempt is made to make the whole population of a country, or a quite substantial part of it, literate within a given period. This was achieved in the Soviet Union between 1930 and 1934, when over 40 million adults were made literate. Another example of such achievement is to be found in Cuba, where, between 1959 and 1961, the country 'was solemnly declared to have eradicated illiteracy.'³⁶

Community development has been observed to deal with the undertaking of minor projects, such as the laying out of secondary roads, village streets, drains and culverts, or the provision of school buildings or community or social centres by the people, particularly of a rural community, on their own initiative and generally through stimulation from outside. The outline plan for India's post-war educational system, the Sargent Report, published in January 1944, revealed how much the idea of 'community development' arose from the rural conditions of India.

What is variously called community development has been described by different terms, at different places and times, as 'fundamental education', 'social education', 'social development', 'basic education' and 'mass education'.

The Gold Coast government is known in the early forties to have employed the term 'social development' for what has now come to be known as 'mass education and community development'. Margaret Read, who, as we have noted, was largely instrumental in writing the Advisory Committee's report on Mass Education in African Society, is known to have admitted that she had not at the time conceived of mass education as a "gospel, plan or panacea", but rather as a whole series of small experimental projects meant to stimulate a village community to "pull itself up by the boot-straps".

Before World War II, the term 'mass education' was in current use to describe mass literacy campaigns and the whole range of simple projects undertaken to bring about betterment in a rural or village community. After the war, the term 'community development' was employed to indicate the various activities which colonial governments were expected to undertake in order to stimulate rural communities to help themselves through their own initiative. Margaret Read and others, under the auspices of the Colonial Office, ran the first training courses in community development in 1949. From the courses and from subsequent conferences in the early fifties a definition of community development emerged, as follows:

Community development is a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community, with the active participation and on the initiative of the community.³⁷

The C. P. P. government, however, seems in the early 1950s in the Gold Coast to have had a clear intent of what it set out to achieve towards the social, cultural and economic advancement of the rural people of the country,

when it declared in the Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education:

Prominent in a mass education campaign must be an attack on illiteracy, but mass education for community development is something more than this. It is an attack on ignorance, apathy and prejudice, on poverty, disease and isolation - on all the difficulties which hinder the progress of a community. It is an education which is designed to teach people, not merely how to read, but how to live. Passive reception of ideas or information is not enough; every programme should be designed through the stimulation of initiative or the encouragement of local self-help to lead to action either by individuals or by the community or both.

VI. THE SCOPE OF THE PLAN AND ITS ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION AFTER 1951

The plan recommended the launching of a national mass education campaign, with emphasis on the combating of illiteracy in large areas in the Colony (Southern Ghana) and Ashanti, and in particular in the Northern Territories (now Northern and Upper Regions). Along with literacy were to be provided increased facilities for training in village projects, in the form of community development as an activity of local government.

With the approval of the plan by parliament, the government made a substantial financial allocation between 1952 and 1957, together with a grant made available by the Cocoa Marketing Board. This allocation enabled the Department to build up within a five-year period a strong organisation

and a corresponding staff under Peter du Sautoy, then acting as director of the Department because of the transfer in 1952 of Maurice Dorman from the Gold Coast to become Chief Secretary of Trinidad.³⁸ By the end of 1953 Robert K.A. Gardiner became the first Ghanaian director. He had previously been director of Extra-Mural Studies at the University College of Ibadan, Nigeria. Gardiner's rich knowledge of his own country, his wide contacts as well as his especial experience of adult education gave the Department a new vigour.³⁹

In April 1952 the plan was launched in the selected areas for periods up to four months. Large numbers of adult men and women who enrolled to learn to read and write were provided with a 'Literacy Kit' which proved exceedingly popular and useful. This consisted of a primer, two follow-up reading books, a pencil, a notebook, and a learner's badge. The kit was sold at two shillings and sixpence to prospective learners, who were most eager to possess it.

A campaign in an area, which was generally preceded by a National Literacy Sunday, constituted through the aegis of the Christian Council of Ghana, ended up with literacy tests and the celebration of a 'Literacy Day'. This was organised with a great deal of fanfare, in order to capture and retain public interest. The local chief would attend in traditional style accompanied by his elders, with the drums throbbing, the horns blowing, and the ancestral, gilded swords glittering in the sunshine. The village brass bands of the area would also be there to enliven the gay proceedings of the day. Amidst merriment, the chief or district officer distributed certificates to the new literates, and every voluntary leader or instructor

also received a badge of honour. A great many of the voluntary workers were mission school teachers and members of youth fellowship societies of the churches.

The importance thus given to a 'Literacy Day' tended to put the main emphasis of the scope and purpose of the mass education campaign upon literacy, whereas literacy was to be considered only as an effective component of the plan. What, then, did the plan achieve other than success of literacy? Did it succeed in stimulating rural people to provide for themselves simple projects of community betterment, which a newly-formed African nationalist government, burdening itself with major development projects at national level, and because of limited funds, could not provide in the village community?

Wherever the plan was experimented upon, community development and mass education officers did win the confidence of the people, and talked to them in terms of payment of local rates; in terms of modern methods of farm cultivation, particularly the cultivation of cocoa; in terms of building better houses for themselves; and in terms of the construction, for example, of feeder roads to bring foodstuffs (which would otherwise rot away) on to the trunk roads, and so to the markets of the country. In this way, rural people were helped to increase their purchasing power and were thus led to attain a better standard of living. Under the stimulus of mass education officers, rural people met to decide upon their own immediate needs, and then the Department came to their aid with technical advice and mechanical assistance - in the form, sometimes, of bull-dozers, tractors, block-making machines, pipe moulds and woodwork for housing components.⁴⁰ Community development has for its success thus depended largely upon voluntary service. As Dennis Austin put it:

...community development teams fanned out into the rural areas with such success that the beginnings of local-welfare projects of one kind and another - a new latrine, a new school house, an improved water supply, the concreting of the open drains which ran through town and village alike - were to be seen in almost every district in the Colony and Ashanti.⁴¹

The plan, as implemented in large areas in the Colony and Ashanti, was followed by other development of unusual significance in the North, where it was next tried out towards the end of 1952. The Department had, in charge of the plan in the North, a Community Development Officer, W. L. Shirer, an American citizen and a former Baptist missionary, who had worked in the mission field in the North for several years. He left the mission to join the Department because he saw in the plan a better opportunity of serving the people materially as well as spiritually. Shirer had an able lieutenant in Brother Aiden, another missionary, who was released temporarily by the White Fathers of the Roman Catholic Mission to join the Department as a Mass Education Officer, because of his own wide experience of the North. But the plan had quite a different impact on the people of the North. As there was a shortage of voluntary teachers for literacy classes, and as the people appeared to be little enthusiastic about literacy, the Community Development Officer took the initiative to develop extension work, instead, with the co-operation of the Department of Agriculture, by encouraging the people of the North to cultivate rice as a cash crop, an experiment which in later years was to prove most important.⁴²

In 1954, the objectives of mass education were re-defined in concise terms in the form of an administrative

circular for the guidance of, and execution by, the staff of the Department throughout the country. The basic objective was improvement of the general standard of living of rural people, through voluntary effort stimulated by the staff of the Department. They were to educate the people in methods by which communities might easily improve their standard of living. The Department provided, as we have noted, some measure of technical advice and mechanical assistance for minor communal projects. Success of the mass education programme depended largely upon the degree of voluntary effort which emanated from the people themselves and the extent of support that the Department elicited from other government departments and agencies, for the campaigns aimed also at improving local public health and agriculture.

The programme was carried out between 1951 and 1957 with clearly defined objectives, such as campaigns to reduce illiteracy in all areas of the country; improvement in farm methods of cultivation and consequent increase in agricultural output; better employment prospects on the land, to the extent of preventing unemployment in the rural community and, in consequence, of a drift to urban areas; improvement in water supply through the digging of wells, and better care for existing sources of water supply; and the promotion of indigenous handicraft, and village or small-scale industries such as cloth-weaving and pottery-making.

Special attention was also given to education for the rural womenfolk, and this, besides literacy, laid emphasis on the hygienic preparation of food; methods of food preservation; the need for a balanced diet and the feeding of children, and first aid and home nursing.

Emphasis was placed on special campaigns for other government agencies to which the Department was committed. These were: a programme of political education for the establishment of local government institutions in all the regions of the country; a campaign for mixed farming and manure technique, carried out particularly in the Northern Region of the country in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture; and the provision in that region of school buildings through communal self-help.

There was also, in the Eastern Region where water-borne diseases were endemic, an anti-bilharzia pilot project run in association with the Ministry of Health. In 1955, following upon a report on a rural survey of the Tongu area of Trans-Volta Togoland, carried out by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies in conjunction with the People's Educational Association of the Volta Region, a project of animal health and mixed farming was extensively carried out in the area. In other cocoa growing areas, a campaign was carried out for the Ministry of Agriculture. Thus the Department, between 1951 and 1957, then from independence and up to the sixties, functioned like an omnibus government agency for the promotion of a whole range of projects, many of them carried out on behalf of other government departments, for community betterment in the rural areas.⁴³

VII. STATISTICS OF THE ANNUAL LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

We must, however, be concerned here to find out the nature of the literacy campaigns, as part of the overall plan of mass education and community development. What then are the statistics? A year after launching the Mass Education Plan, the Department claimed that 5,860 voluntary

instructors had made 75,200 adults literate by using the Laubach Card method at some 2,800 literacy classes in three language areas - Ewe, Fante and Asante-Twi. After 1952 the experiment was tried out in other language areas too: Ga-Adangbe in the East, Nzima in the West and Dagbani in the North.⁴⁴

But then, up to 1959, the Department apparently kept no proper returns on adult literacy while the campaign was in progress, from region to region. This failure by a government department must contrast sharply with the efforts of the Methodist Mission, which kept, in unbroken sequence, records of its adult literacy activity through Sunday schools, from 1870 to the 1940s.⁴⁵ It has therefore been difficult to determine with any precision the numbers of those new literates who had any chance of developing their newly-acquired skill of reading by means of follow-up literature. A great many of these new literates must, in all probability, have lapsed into illiteracy.

Even so, the Department was able to assert that by 1963 the total number of new literates, through the annual campaigns, stood at nearly 127,000, of which 60-65% were women. Such an aggregate was given against an estimated total of a little over three million adult illiterates. It would be seen then that the sum total of new literates thus far produced was disappointingly low, when it is considered that adults made literate year by year reached only 32,500 in 1955. And even this average was not attained in subsequent years; rather, it had fallen to 22,500 by 1964. It would seem, then, that advance had not been any faster since independence in 1957, and even up to the present time. As Sir Charles Jeffries had pointed out:

The fact that the campaigns have had to be repeated annually over a long period shows that they cannot be classified as a successful attempt to eradicate illiteracy once and for all.⁴⁶

VIII. MAGNITUDE OF THE LITERACY PROBLEM

What the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, in charge of the national literacy campaign, should aim at, given the resources, is a serious attempt to plan an all-out, long-term programme of eradicating illiteracy from Ghana once and for all. This ought to be achieved within a period of, say, ten years.

It is however doubtful whether the Department has realised the magnitude of the problem. For its (mimeographed) document, of as long ago as 1965, 'Mass Literacy in Ghana, A detailed Plan of Action,' tended to portray, even then, a lack of seriousness in tackling the literacy problem. The plan has, anyway, been shelved since the 1966 coup, and it now looks as if the country must await a new decision by the government of the day.

The National Liberation Council (the first military junta) did take the initiative in 1968 to call on experts from UNESCO to advise the Department on the all-important matter of eradicating illiteracy once and for all. But then, after two decades of experimentation with annual literacy campaigns in this country, during which period UNESCO has sponsored people from other countries to observe these hardy annuals, Ghana ought to have arrived at the stage of producing locally the kind of expertise to undertake this tackling of the problem once and for all. Outside support in the form of technical assistance could then be requested from UNESCO and other sources.

A new plan will have to be carefully worked out, as part of the World Literacy Programme which UNESCO has launched on behalf of the United Nations. Such a plan will have to bear in mind the outstanding achievement in the Soviet Union, where at the time of the revolution 85% of the population were illiterate. The new Soviet government assigned top priority to the complete eradication of illiteracy, and achieved great results in twenty years. A more recent success story is that of Cuba, where in 1961 illiteracy among the country's adult population, then running at 25% of seven millions, was totally eliminated in a crash programme which took only one year. It will be necessary for the Department to examine the logistics of the Cuban campaign. More lately still, according to another study by Sir Charles Jeffries, China has also achieved spectacular results in its own literacy drive.⁴⁷

In the two situations in the U.S.S.R. and Cuba, political motivation and the presence of a strong, determined and powerful government have been important factors. In Cuba, teaching the people to read and write afforded an opportunity to instruct them in the ideals and policies of the revolutionary movement. This was in itself a very strong motivation which doubtless provided inspiration for both the instructors and the adult learners. This revolutionary motivation was indeed the secret of success of the Cuban campaign.⁴⁸ However, the overriding factor which must have favoured total eradication in both the U.S.S.R. and Cuba would be the use of one-only major language in each country - Russian, predominantly in the Soviet Union, and Spanish in Cuba.

It is worth noting that in fact some African countries have launched national literacy campaigns within the framework of the World Literacy Programme, and that they are

also each using one major language - Arabic in Algeria, Amharic in Ethiopia, and Swahili in Tanzania. It would also be worth noting in due course the result of two other national literacy campaigns to be launched in West Africa, in Guinea and Mali, two former French colonial territories. Guinea, reportedly, has decided to conduct the campaign in the principal native languages of the country; and Mali, in order to cut down on the cost of the national campaign, has elected to use the French language as the medium of instruction.⁴⁹

All in all, the outcome of the campaigns in these countries severally should provide valuable guidelines for Ghana, whose own campaigns over the past twenty years have had to be conducted in six principal languages (Ewe, Fante, Twi, Ga, Nzema and Dagbani). There has been the problem of having to produce follow-up material in these languages.

In the face of such a problem, the question of a major (national) language as a factor to a successful national literacy programme in Ghana has to be realistically faced by the government of the day. Next to a major language, the other problem will be the production and distribution of adequate reading material. What is needed is the kind of suitable material which serves as a means to utilise and develop the skill of the new literate as well as his day to day experiences, and graded to match his progress. In other words, the new literate will have to acquire such a skill in reading, writing and reckoning as would enable him to relate his awareness and knowledge adequately to his development and that of his community. Literacy as such is what must be termed 'functional literacy', as opposed to 'rudimentary literacy' which is merely the ability to read and write.

It would be seen then that the problems surrounding a literacy programme in Ghana will have to be solved by a process of research, to be initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Welfare and Co-operatives, albeit with the active co-operation of the Universities at Legon, Kumasi and Cape Coast. Indeed, the University's role of effecting co-ordination between university adult education and adult literacy campaigns has been underlined by Dr. Alex A. Kwapong, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, when opening the 18th Annual New Year School of the Institute of Adult Education at Legon in December 1966. Dr. Kwapong is reported to have said that

The University and the Institute must not only provide the tools of education and research but they must also assist in educating the illiterate folk among the nation. 50

It is wholly necessary that universal literacy should be achieved in Ghana, because a country which achieves universal literacy is at once lifted into a new social, economic and political dimension. The government must aim at achieving such a dimension.

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3. See Philip Foster, Education and Social Change in Ghana, p.86 et seq.
4. Jeffries, *ibid.*
5. Colonial 186, 1943.
6. See J.M. Lee, Colonial Development and Good Government, p.166.
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8. Command 6655, para.37, p.28.
9. 'Wants Mass Education Settlements', West Africa, 22 January, 1949.
10. Jeffries, *op. cit.*, p.49.
11. Portrait on E.R. Chadwick: 'The Urgent Yorkshireman Who Made Udi Famous', West Africa, 28 May, 1949.
12. Departmental Report No.D.P.9, 'Welfare and Mass Education in the Gold Coast, 1946-51'.
13. Alec. G. Dickson, formerly Assistant Editor of the Yorkshire Post, came to the Gold Coast in

February, 1948. He had built up a reputation for effectively organising mobile teams in East Africa during World War II. (Source: Departmental Report, 1946-51).

14. See Alec G. Dickson, 'Mass Education in Togoland', African Affairs, Journal of the Royal African Society, Vol.49, No.194, January, 1950, pp.136-150.
15. Frank Charles Laubach (Ph.D., Columbia University) devoted a large slice of his working life to development of techniques in literacy teaching, in many languages, through what came to be popularly known as the 'Laubach Method'.

An ordained minister of the Congregational Church, the late Dr. Laubach first initiated literacy campaigns in the Philippines with marked success. His approach to the problem of teaching illiterate adults to read and write, and the techniques he developed, were applied by governments and missionaries in efforts to eradicate illiteracy in other countries. In 1935, Laubach visited Malaya, India, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Turkey to advise on literacy work. Between 1937 and 1948 he was invited to put his expertise in literacy campaigns at the disposal of many countries in Africa, including Kenya, Tanganyika and Zanzibar (now Tanzania) in East Africa; and Nigeria, the Gold Coast (Ghana), and Liberia on the West Coast.

Under the auspices of the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature (based in the U.S.), Laubach continued to advise on literacy work in many parts of the world until his retirement in 1955. Thereafter, Laubach, together with his son, Dr. Robert S. Laubach, founded an independent organisation -

The Laubach Literacy Fund Inc. - to encourage and assist research and action in eradicating illiteracy around the world.

Frank Laubach, who became known as 'the Father of Literacy', has recorded his unrivalled experience in three important works: Teaching the World to Read, Lutterworth Press, 1947; The Silent Billion Speak, New York, Friendship Press, 1948; and Towards World Literacy: The 'Each One Teach One' Way, Syracuse University Press, 1960. (See Jeffries, op.cit., pp.38-42, 53, 63, 113, and 131).

16. Dickson, *ibid.*
17. Jeffries, op. cit., p.53-54.
18. Dickson, *ibid.*
19. See P. du Sautoy, Community Development in Ghana, pp.27-28.
20. See West Africa, 22 January 1949 (p.60). On Ewe Nationalism and the Unification issue, see E. Welch, Jr. Dream of Unity, Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa, pp.37-81.
21. Dickson, *ibid.*
22. Lord Hailey, An African Survey, Revised Edition, 1956, p.1197.
23. West Africa, 22 January 1949.
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25. Gold Coast Express, 12 February 1949.
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28. West Africa, 22 January 1949.
29. Thus frustrated, Alec. G. Dickson, the first Mass Education Officer, left the service of the Gold Coast and proceeded to Nigeria. The mass education section of the Department was in consequence placed in charge of A.R.G. Prosser (see du Sautoy, op. cit., p.39).
30. West Africa, 26 February, 1949.
31. Quoted in G.E. Metcalfe, Great Britain and Ghana, Documents of Ghana History 1807-1957, p.706.
32. See Second World Conference on Adult Education: Educational Studies and Documents No.46, (UNESCO, Paris), p.12, et seq.
33. Between 1949 and 1950, follow-up courses were carried out in Trans-Volta Togoland (Volta Region) by the Department at the request of the Regional Officer, Mr. G.E. Sinclair (now Sir George Sinclair, M. P.).

Sinclair also encouraged a series of rural surveys to determine the needs of the Region. Such surveys were organised by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies (Volta Region) and the P.E.A., under the leadership of Miss Lalage Bown (now Professor Bown), Resident Tutor in the area at the time.

See Report of the Tongu Rural Survey, University College of the Gold Coast, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, April 1953.

34. See Advance No.40, S.W. & C.D. publication; also du Sautoy, op.cit., pp.44-45.
35. Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education, 1951.
36. Jeffries, op.cit, pp. 33 and 64-68.
37. J.M. Lee, op.cit., pp.95, 135 & 166; also du Sautoy, pp.1-4 and 22.
38. Maurice Dorman, now Sir Maurice Dorman, KCMG, was after only two years in the Gold Coast, transferred in 1952 to Trinidad as Chief Secretary later becoming Governor of Sierra Leone and then Governor-General of Malta.
39. Robert Gardiner became in turn Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Ghana Civil Service, Personal Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General in Congo-Leopoldville (now Zaire), and was for 13 years Executive Secretary, U.N. Economic Commission for Africa, based at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
40. See Adult Education in a Changing Africa, A Report on an Intra-African Seminar held at the University College, Legon, on December 10-23, 1954, pp.24-25. (Published by the International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations, London).
41. Dennis Austin, Politics in Ghana 1946-1960, p.158.

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