

30/5/77

THE FUTURE CADRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

1. These notes are exploratory, designed to provoke discussion rather than to present a finished set of proposals. They consider the demand for UK personnel in development, the gap in supply of such personnel for the future, and possible solutions including the creation of a new Development Cadre. "UK personnel in development" here includes TCOs, ODM and British Council staff, voluntary agency (volag) staff, volunteers, staff on secondment to development agencies, consultants, and university research and teaching staff.

2. The main proposal is focused on the need for a cadre with expertise and experience in rural development. This is, of course, only one area to be covered in a national cadre. If the main proposal is acceptable, then either the cadre might be limited to rural development, or parallel cadres might also be set up in areas such as international economic policy and urban development, or all such development areas might be contained in the same Development Cadre.

The demand for a development cadre with rural experience

3. The proposals in these notes are based upon the following premises about the demand and need for UK personnel in activities requiring understanding and experience of rural development:

- (i) the policy of more aid for the poorest has come to stay
- (ii) the great majority of the poorest will continue for decades to be either rural, or in countries in which the rural sector predominates
- (iii) rural development is peculiarly slow and difficult, and requires skills and insights which come most effectively through combinations of study and research, direct in-depth exposure to rural situations, and hard practical experience
- (iv) more and more in the rural development field will be done and should be done by nationals of ldc's. At the same time the total volume of work that could usefully be done by UK nationals related to rural development (in technical

assistance, aid administration, professional links with ldc's, technological R and D, social science research, university teaching, development education, volag work, journalism, consultancy, training, etc.) will increase. The quality of that work will be sensitive to the training, experience and perceptions of those who carry it out

- (v) ldc's are understandably sensitive to "junior experts", and prefer TC personnel who are experienced and mature
- (vi) UKTC staff concerned with rural development will mostly be professionals in the physical and biological sciences, but to perform well they need a range of competences and insights from the social sciences; similarly, social scientists concerned with rural development need greater familiarity with the natural sciences
- (vii) the quality of UKTC and aid personnel matters more than it may have appeared to in the past. "Quality" here refers to attitudes, personal qualities, and the ability to understand and continue to learn about many aspects of rural situations and rural development.

Problems of supply

4. On the supply side, three problems stand out:

- (i) range of experience.

Those concerned with development often suffer from narrowness of view. Their outlook may be confined to one discipline, or may be "academic" in the bad sense, or may suffer from philistine ignorance of or rejection of knowledge or insights. For the future, especially in rural development, the need is for each person to combine in himself or herself the capacity to take a many-sided view. It means that those in universities and engaged in training others should have practical experience, and that practitioners should have opportunities to broaden their view through periods at universities. Indeed it would be best if the distinction between 'academic' and 'practitioner' could lose its hard edges.

(ii) the experience gap

There appears to be a gap between those who begin to qualify themselves for a development career (as overseas volunteers, as holders of Natural Resources Studentships, as staff of volags in ldcs, as ODINs, as graduates in development studies or in specialised courses geared to ldc work), and the jobs which need to be filled. There are indications that:

- graduates in development studies find difficulty gaining first hand experience in developing countries;
- perhaps half those who work as ODINs leave development work subsequently;
- some returned volunteers would like to continue in development work but are unable to do so;
- only a small proportion of Natural Resources Students serve on after their initial obligatory tour.

More needs to be known about the scale and nature of these tendencies. But in the meantime, it seems that the problem of meeting the demand is not one of shortage of people entering the streams (into development studies, into Natural Resources Studentships, into VSO, etc.) but more one of bridging the gap which follows that initial experience, encouraging and enabling the best of such people to become part of the more experienced development cadre.

(iii) career prospects

Poor prospects for a career in development are probably a major deterrent both for potential entrants and for persons faced with the decision whether to continue in development after a first contract abroad. This has become more serious in the past few years as the job market in the UK has tightened. Those who consider working overseas may be rational in fearing for their future employment, and in considering that their chances of promotion at home will be diminished if they spend a period abroad. The Corps of Specialists as it stands provides a career only for a small and very experienced elite.

Solutions

5. Present relevant arrangements include:

- the Supplementation Schemes
- the TCO cadre
- the Corps of Specialists
- the Natural Resources Studentships Scheme
- overseas volunteers
- ODINs
- the FAO Associate Expert Scheme
- the home-based schemes for government and universities
- direct contracts between individuals and overseas governments or universities
- working abroad as part of normal duties (in government, as consultants, etc.)
- working abroad on secondment from a UK employer (government, university, or public or private enterprise)

6. In general, (and with the exception of the Corps of Specialists) arrangements either fail to provide job or career security for those concerned; or lock people into a set of British-based obligations as well as employment which limits their availability to work abroad.

Individual Measures

7. In seeking solutions, some individual measures can be proposed for consideration:

(i) supplementary field staff for volags

Direct ODM support for supplementary field staff for volags working in ldc's. Oxfam and other volags are often criticised for their administrative overheads. This may lead to understaffing in the field. Useful experience could be gained, helping to bridge the experience gap, by staff recruited by the volag but paid by ODM for as long as they were working in the field.

(ii) training support for consultants and volag staff

A scheme for funding the first period in the field for young professional staff working with consultancy firms or volags.

(iii) volunteers for emergencies

A central list (combining existing lists) of people available at a day or two's notice to respond to an emergency call. Links could be established with volags and with UNDRO, UNHCR, WHO, etc., who may have urgent needs for people at short notice. Aspirants for this firebrigade role could put their names on and take them off, according to changing circumstances.

(iv) associate expert schemes

Exploring the possibilities of making use of the associate expert schemes of other organisations in addition to FAO.

(v) recipients as donors

Reducing the asymmetry of the aid relationships by asking recipient countries to be donors of experience to young professionals.

(vi) sensitive recruitment

Recruitment to take account of family circumstances, attitudes, etc., more than in the past, and to be sympathetic to be aspirations of younger people. Some of those engaged in the selection process should themselves perhaps be under, say, 35. A deliberate attempt should be made to increase the proportion of young people recruited.

(vii) research organisation

Encouragement by ESCOR of multi-disciplinary research projects which include young researchers, including doctoral candidates.

(viii) ldc personnel

Recruiting ldc personnel who have just retired in their own countries for TC work in other ldcs.

8. While these measures should help, they do not tackle the problems comprehensively. They are stitches in an old fabric, not a new suit of clothes. The linked proposals which follow seek a more comprehensive solution, combining what is best from past experience with recognition that a new person, a new career, and a new framework are needed.

A Development Cadre

9. The proposal is to institute a Development Cadre. This would combine features of the Corps of Specialists (10 year appointments) with others of the Home-Based Scheme (flexibility in moving between different jobs, organisations and countries, including the UK). It would differ from both in establishing a framework which would entitle those in the cadre to spend proportions of their 10 years in a variety of activities. For a ten year period, averages might work out as follows:

	months	where ldc	UK	other
Technical assistance/ consultancy in ldc	48	48	-	-
Work in ODM or other development organisation in UK	20	-	20	-
Development education	4	-	4	-
Field research in ldc	6	6	-	-
Analysis and writing up	6	-	6	-
Sabbatical at university	8	3	5	-
Specialised training, courses seminars	6	1	5	-
Secondment to other aid agency	6	2	2	2
Leave	12	-	12(?)	
Residence in ldc villages	4	4	-	-
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Total	120	64	54	2

These are averages in order to indicate the range of possible activities. They do not imply that every person would engage in every activity.

10. Each person appointed to the cadre would be entitled to claim that during the ten-year period, and subject to feasibility, he could take up one year of field research in an ldc, spend one year on a sabbatical at a UK university or similar institution, have six months

of specialised training, and spend periods totalling up to six months resident in ldc villages (normally perhaps about two weeks at a time).

11. In terms of contractual obligations and a "minimum management" approach, the scheme could operate in two main ways. In the first, individuals would be contracted for the whole ten-year period. The cadre's management would then be responsible for organising a pattern of assignments for each person and for making arrangements with institutions to which each person was sub-contracted. No doubt arrangements would in practice be developed in close liaison with the individuals involved, but ultimately it would be the responsibility of the cadre management to ensure an appropriate variety and balance of assignments.

12. The second would involve institutions as well as individuals directly in the scheme. Institutions would join the scheme and undertake obligations to take on staff from the cadre for relevant periods of their development careers. These institutional obligations would need to be flexible or the scheme as a whole would become over-rigid.

13. Probably some balance between the two approaches would be best.

14. The advantages of this Development Cadre over the Corps of Specialists are:

(i) it provides greater flexibility in relation to changing demand. Staff would not necessarily have to be re-employed abroad as soon as they returned from overseas assignments. Instead they could be retrained, or trained in new specialisms to meet changing demand, or provided with other opportunities on the list;

(ii) broader competence and wider perspectives should be developed in staff as a result of the varied training and experiences. Natural scientists would learn about the social sciences, and vice versa;

(iii) the training, research, teaching, and university sabbatical components should make it easier to recruit and prepare young professionals, thus helping in bridging the age and experience gap;

(iv) the opportunities provided for sensitive career development, and for adapting the sequence and nature of the career to family and other personal circumstances;

(v) the degree of security provided for ten years, and the opportunities for self-development and the acquisition of experience and skills, both of which should make the cadre attractive to some of the more able and ambitious younger people.

(vi) it could be required, through a quota system, that the age distribution in the cadre be maintained in a way which would ensure adequate replenishment with younger people.

15. Difficulties with the Development Cadre might include:

(i) cost. Financing arrangements would have to be worked out in detail. It might be simplest for ODM to finance members of the Development Cadre throughout their ten years. Depending on the numbers involved, however, and given the run down on OSAS staff, this might not involve higher real expenditure than at present.

(ii) management. The Cadre would require a heavier management input per person than the existing schemes.

(iii) early career experience in ldcs. This would remain a problem, but could be reduced through secondment to volags, through sponsoring field research, through attachment to consultants and to aid missions, and through the other individual measures suggested above. By virtue of joining the Development Cadre, the chances of gaining experience would be enhanced, if not guaranteed, for a young professional since those managing the Cadre would have to find him experience or have him on their books as an embarrassment. This in turn would require those engaged on recruiting to be careful in their selection of younger people, preferring those with the personality, versatility, and ability to go on learning, needed for varied roles and experiences.

16. A probationary period might be sensible so that those found unsuitable could be weeded out, and in order to maintain flexibility.

17. The Development Cadre would immediately absorb the Corps of Specialists and reduce some of the management problems which they present. It could progressively absorb some TCOs, but entry would be competitive and by no means all TCOs who applied would be admitted. It might also absorb a substantial proportion of the more able, qualified and committed younger people who at present wish to work in development but cannot get started.

18. The creation of a Development Cadre would also provide a timely opportunity to re-examine the attitudes and training of development staff. The Development Cadre could be created as a body of professionals who were not only able and versatile, but whose attitudes and orientation were appropriate for the last quarter of the twentieth century. Such a cadre, if well managed, ought to make much more effective, over time, the attempts to implement the difficult policy of more aid to the poorest.