



OBSERVATIONS ON THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION
IN MADAGASCAR

Report
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1. During a visit of inspection to Madagascar in May and June 1970, I saw something of the following activities of the ILO in that country:-

a) An operation aimed at the development of the co-operative movement, recently adopted as a Special Fund project from a Technical Assistance basis.

b) A Special Fund project to set up an organisation for professional and pre-professional training and up-grading, which had been in operation for only half a year.

c) Work in the Trade Union field. As this operation comes under the ILO ordinary programme of technical assistance, I have reported on it separately.

2. I understand that there has been pending for some time a request for an enquiry into the present manpower situation and future manpower requirements in Madagascar. This appears to me to be a potential tool for the management of development planning which is at present lacking and which could be of great value.

3. Observations follow on the two Special Fund projects referred to above. Centre for the Development of Co-operative Undertakings and the Like - MAG 20 (Centre pour le Développement des Entreprises Co-opératives et Similaires)

4. This project is on the point of being taken over by the Special Fund after eight years of existence as a Technical Assistance operation. Initial SF activities have in fact already started under financing by the Revolving Fund. The existing TA staff will be taken straight into the SF project. Since 1962, the project worked with the Commissariat General for Co-operatives - a department of government which, together with similar departments covering planning and rural development, were placed under the supervision of a newly created Secretariat of State for Development in May 1969 - a change which is seen as favourable to the hopes of realising the aims of the project. These will be more closely drawn in the terms of the new SF plan of operations and, in particular, the task of co-operating with the Malgache authorities in the foundation of a co-operative Centre should concentrate the mission's hitherto somewhat diffuse activities.

5. A detailed study of the nature and problems of the co-operative movement in Madagascar would be an immense undertaking which I admit I have not envisaged. My only knowledge of the project comes from a meeting with the Project-Manager-designate and three or four members of his team, conversation with the Resident

Representative and members of her staff, study of the more relevant papers and some contacts with Malgache officials. Having dipped into these various sources, I cannot avoid the impression that the problem of organising the various manifestations of the co-operative movement in Madagascar is one of great complexity, on which the TA mission made little real impression during its eight earlier years of effort. The new circumstances appear more propitious:- the direct access to a Minister of Government, the promise of more ample premises and secretarial assistance, and above all the greater stimulus of a concrete target in the establishment of a co-operative centre and the initiation of a staff training programme.

6. The new project has been agreed for a trial period of two years, before the expiry of which progress achieved under the new dispensation will be evaluated with a view to consideration of a possible extension. I most seriously urge that a series of precise bench marks be laid down at an early date in order that the proposed evaluation may be as positive and as independent of subjective judgement as may be possible. Among desirable indicators might be:-

A. Counterparts. This is an acid test of interest, not passed, be it said, during the TA phase. The numbers to be provided (and I suggest that these should not necessarily be limited to one for each expert or associate expert) should be stated and the dates of their proposed secondment to the project specified. It would be greatly to be hoped that their secondment would cover at least the whole probable period of the project. From the point of view of the executing agency, I would hope that careful consideration might be given to the most appropriate programme of training for each individual counterpart according to his proposed eventual responsibilities, i.e. the proportion of training-on-the-job to training elsewhere; the best location for the latter (i.e. Madagascar, francophone Africa, or further afield); the timing of training periods (whether before or after experience at the Centre); the best possible dove-tailing of absences on training abroad with the probable movements of experts etc.

B. A programme of the timing of the various other counterpart inputs specified by the plan of operations.

C. A formal agreement on the provision of suitable temporary premises, pending the construction of the buildings for the proposed Centre. (The Special Fund project cannot function properly in the offices now occupied by the TA experts; without lecture rooms etc. the operation will be ham-strung).

D. A schedule of proposed output covering the training of staff for the Centre itself, numbers of co-operative workers completing courses of instruction, numbers of co-operative branches developed, or whatever other indicators of this nature may seem most appropriate.

I would further suggest that the evaluation should not be merely a terminal operation, but that progress achieved be formally compared with the proposed indicators, say, every six months.

Summary of recommendations

7. That precise bench marks be established for the objective evaluation of the project in view of its possible extension (Para. 3).

National System for Professional and Pre-professional training and

up-grading - MAG 22 (Système National de Formation et de Perfectionnement Professionnel et Pré-professionnel)

8. This project had been in operation for only six months at the time of my visit. It would be premature to form any firm judgement on it, but I may say that I found the four experts present (out of five envisaged) dealing confidently with the initial problems facing them. Progress on the building which will eventually house the proposed pilot centre for technical training appears to be satisfactory, with the site already purchased, the plan submitted and preparations starting for the issue of calls for tenders. Meanwhile, contact has been established with individual firms, in some of which functional training at the middle level has been started. On the secretarial - office workers' - side of the project too, a programme of training within Government Departments has already been launched.

9. Government support appears to be good and what most impressed me was the fact that each expert, on arrival, had found a counterpart allocated to him and ready to start work. Indeed, the Malgache Government are already proposing

to increase the number of counterparts attached to the UN experts from four to eleven, and the numbers of other local staff from eleven to sixteen by the addition of a Director of Studies, a Draftsman, an extra Typist and two Drivers. I welcome the break-away from the usual idea of formal parity between the numbers of experts and counterparts and think that the enthusiasm manifested by this suggestion might be held to justify sympathetic consideration of the corresponding request that the service of the expert in secretarial training be extended. At least it demonstrates an entirely healthy realisation that the object of the exercise is to help the Malgaches to help themselves.