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Report on Intersectoral Programmes of Unesco

SUMMARY

This document contains a report on Intersectoral Programmes prepared by Inspector Bertrand. This report was received in final form on 21 August; the observations of the Director-General will appear as an addendum to this document.

The report was prepared at the request of the Director-General after consultation with the Executive Board.

Report on
"Intersectoral programmes"
of Unesco

by

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Chapter I

REPORT ON "INTERSECTORAL PROGRAMMES" OF UNESCO

1. The Joint Inspection Unit was invited, by a letter from the Director-General dated 4 December 1970, to examine the problem set to Unesco by the existence of intersectoral programmes. This letter recalled resolution 5.2 adopted by the Executive Board at its 85th session. From the initial discussions on the nature of the problem it emerged that what was required was:

to reply to a precise question: is it or is it not necessary to create horizontal administrative structures in order to improve and assist the management and execution of these programmes?

to determine whether there were no other means of achieving this result and, in particular, whether attention should not be directed to the improvement and the perfecting of programming techniques themselves, thus ensuring that wider considerations were borne in mind, with particular reference to the preparation of the Medium-Term Plan (17 C/4);

lastly, the actual content of the notion of intersectoral programme should also be carefully examined.

2. Various circumstances which were unconnected with the study itself prevented the investigation from being undertaken immediately and caused the period involved to be longer than was originally planned, with lengthy interruptions. Because of this, it was not possible to send in an official report before the publication of documents 17 C/4 and 17 C/5. On the other hand, these conditions enabled the author of this report to "witness" the development of the problem, particularly during the period when the two documents mentioned above were being prepared.

3. It seemed to me, finally, that a thorough investigation of the very notion of intersectoral (or interdisciplinary) programme would be the means whereby an answer could be found to the question concerning the administrative implications of the existence of such programmes. This approach will be set forth in the present report in four stages:

- (a) Content of intersectoral programmes: position in regard to the question following publication of documents 17 C/4 and 17 C/5.
- (b) Comparative analysis of the notions of intersectoral programme and sectoral programme.
- (c) Other possible ways of classifying problems, and resulting programmes.
- (d) Problem of horizontal co-ordinating structures.

Chapter II

CONTENT OF INTERSECTORAL PROGRAMMES: POSITION IN REGARD TO THE QUESTION FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS 17 C/4 AND 17 C/5

4. Between 1970 and 1972 the possible content of intersectoral programmes was debated and was seen to vary appreciably. There is nothing surprising in this, considering that a relatively new concept is involved, the administrative implications of which have appeared sufficiently complex for the Joint Inspection Unit to be asked to make a study of the subject. A first source of uncertainty seems to have been the actual name given to these programmes. They were first called "interdisciplinary programmes", and it was after a certain amount of hesitation that the adjective "intersectoral" seems to have been chosen. The title of Chapter O of document 17 C/4 is "Intersectoral programmes", but the expression "interdisciplinary" is still used in various documents and the Director-General has provided the following explanation in paragraph 88 of his introduction to document 17 C/4: "Several countries, in their observations and suggestions, have displayed a lively interest in this pluridisciplinary approach. Not only has it the advantage of reflecting current developments in research and education but, above all, it meets the needs of a type of programming increasingly directed towards specific problems which, because of their complexity, necessitate the use of a multiplicity of intellectual instruments".
5. My own view is that, although the two notions of interdisciplinary and intersectoral are close to one another, they must nevertheless be distinguished. The term "interdisciplinary" signifies the simultaneous use of several scientific disciplines for the study of a question. It seems obvious to me that this is a method which is bound to become more and more widely used, especially in the various matters coming within Unesco's sphere of competence. There scarcely exists a problem in education, for instance, which can be examined without taking stock of its sociological, economic, financial, technical and political implications. This also applies, of course, to most programmes in the fields of science, culture and communication. The interdisciplinary approach seems bound, then, to become more and more widely used within each individual Sector of Unesco's activity.
6. On the other hand, the term "intersectoral" signifies that certain programmes must come simultaneously under several Sectors of Unesco's Programme. The mere use of this term may have implications with regard to administrative structures, since co-operation on a joint programme between two or several Sectors gives rise to problems of hierarchy, administrative or financial authority, exchange of information, etc. I consider therefore that the use of the word "intersectoral" is more correct in this context than the use of the word "interdisciplinary". Moreover, after the initial uncertainty, this view now seems to have prevailed.
7. During the past two years, however, there has also been some uncertainty concerning the content of intersectoral programmes. Thus, the programmes analysed in the report of the Programme Commission (document 16 C/105, Part C.6) of 12 November 1970 under the title of interdisciplinary projects were:
- "Man and his environment", including the programme "man and the biosphere"; ecology;
- Equality of access of girls and women to education;
- Population and family planning;
- Youth activities.

8. Subsequently, account had to be taken of the fact that the Director-General intended to add to the layout by Sector in document 17 C/4 a new chapter dealing with six important general problems: population, environment, peace and human rights, communication, proteins, drugs (this list being open to alteration after further examination). However, the co-ordination of the studies and activities relating to each of these problems was (at the administrative and budgetary level, in particular) entrusted to specific Sectors. In these circumstances, the study to be carried out by the Joint Inspection Unit was to bear in all - adding together the present and future programmes - on eight questions namely:

Science Sector: (1) environment, (2) proteins,

Education Sector: (3) women and education, (4) youth, (5) population, (6) drugs,

Social Sciences Sector: (7) peace and human rights,

Communication Sector: (8) communication.

9. Finally, as is known, the following intersectoral programmes were selected for inclusion included in Chapter O of document 17 C/4:

0.1 Human rights and peace (in two sub-sections 0.11 and 0.12) under the responsibility of the Director for Social Sciences.

0.2 Youth (Education Sector).

0.3 Man and the Environment (responsibility of the Deputy Director-General and the Natural Sciences Sector).

0.4 Population (Director for Social Sciences).

0.5 Prevention of drug abuse (Education Sector).

This means that the programmes on proteins and communication were finally excluded (although a study on communication is provided for in paragraphs 4042 to 4052 of document 17 C/5 in the Communication Sector), and that the programme on "women and education" has remained a sectoral programme (Section 1.14 of 17 C/5, paragraphs 1149 to 1164, in the Education Sector).

10. The Director-General's introductions to documents 17 C/4 and 17 C/5 provided him with an opportunity for clarifying this important problem. It seems to me absolutely necessary to recall briefly here the main points contained in his analyses and conclusions, in so far as they deal with those matters that form the subject of this report. The essential points seem to me to be the following:

11. Part II of the introduction to document 17 C/4, concerning the main lines of emphasis in the programme, contains two separate sections dealing, respectively, with "international programmes"(1), comprising principally the major scientific programmes: oceanography, hydrology, earth sciences, environment (UNISIST), and with "intersectoral programmes"(2) (cf. the list in paragraph 8 above). It

(1) Paragraphs 68 to 86 of document 17 C/4.

(2) Paragraphs 87 to 93 and paragraphs 62 and 63 of document 17 C/5.

appears, however, that the differences between these two types of programme derive mainly from their "degree of maturity". The characteristics associated with international scientific programmes are the following: they are "large-scale undertakings which have a great future ahead of them" and "their very success will necessitate increasingly large resources"; they enjoy a "relative autonomy" (in that councils consisting of representatives of Member States chosen by the General Conference are responsible for the supervision, planning and co-ordination of their activities); they are essentially "outline programmes" whose "purpose is to provide guidelines for work and organizational patterns", and they are "in no way intended to be exhaustive"; lastly, in the planning stage, the co-operation of the international scientific community, mainly represented by ICSU, is deliberately sought. From these various characteristics it is clear that the content of the programmes referred to is, on the whole, already fairly well defined.

12. On the other hand, the case of intersectoral programmes is markedly different: extremely serious reservations are expressed here regarding the "degree of maturity" of these sets of activities. They "do not yet constitute programmes in the true sense of the word but frames of reference, and conceptual frames rather than practical ones at that". The absence of "a sufficiently clear idea" of the nature of the phenomena concerned, and the lack of adequate experience on the part of the Secretariat, are stressed in the majority of cases. It is this which explains the need to place these sets of activities on their own, outside the various programme Sectors (Chapter 0), and to include them only in document 17 C/4, not in 17 C/5. After a paragraph specially devoted to the "reinvigorating participation" of young people in Unesco's Programme, it is finally proposed, for the future, that more thorough research (the form of which is yet to be defined) be undertaken on "the major problems of modern civilization".

13. The general philosophy underlying the intersectoral programmes which is thus set out in the introduction to document 17 C/4 finds expression in specific proposals in the introduction to document 17 C/5⁽¹⁾. The Director-General states that he is in agreement with the principle that it is the nature and functions of the programmes which should determine the structures, and not the reverse, and that he also agrees that we must begin by considering what sort of interdisciplinary or intersectoral programmes we have to deal with, before deciding in favour of a particular form of administrative machinery for carrying them out. In view of their novelty and "their lack of coherence as regards the ideas behind them and practical substance as regards the activities to be undertaken", these projects "scarcely seem to merit being called 'programmes' in the strict sense of the term" and, this being so, "the time does not yet appear ripe for setting up new administrative structures for these still embryonic sets of activities". Subject to this reservation, however, those for which ideas seem to be most advanced should be equipped with "the minimum machinery required to co-ordinate and more particularly to stimulate the various activities involved". It is therefore proposed that a post of "co-ordinator for human rights" (at grade D-1) be established, under the Assistant Director-General for Social Sciences, Humanities and Culture, and a similar post to deal with population and family planning questions. Following re-examination of the question of the substantive and administrative structure of the programme on "man and the environment", a post of the same kind is envisaged, to be located in the Natural Sciences Sector on account of the relative maturity of the programme on "man and the biosphere". The existing post of Director responsible for the youth programme has been kept. Lastly, it is explained that, in the cases referred to:

(1) Paragraphs 93 to 100 of document 17 C/5

the Director of the intersectoral programme will henceforth have authority to make final decisions concerning the use of the funds earmarked for the various activities which go to make up this programme;

this authority will be exercised in accordance with the work plans described in the Budget, and it will be guided by the advice received from an Intersectoral Committee in which the competent services will be represented by specialists of appropriate grade. On the other hand, a mere Intersectoral Co-ordinating Committee (without the appointment of a Director or Co-ordinator) will be responsible for the very recent programme on drug-abuse prevention.

14. The positions defined by the Director-General, then, serve to provide a very complete picture of the problem of intersectoral programmes and horizontal structures, which forms the subject of this report. Speaking for myself, the arrangement thus proposed seems to me to provide a satisfactory and reasonable response to present needs. It may therefore legitimately be wondered whether, in these circumstances, there is any point in continuing to explore the question.
15. There are, however, several concordant reasons which make it possible to justify an investigation of this kind:

As was pointed out by the Director-General himself, these "sets of activities" which are not yet real programmes will obviously become so in a not too far distant future; it is therefore necessary to consider what courses it will be possible to adopt when that occurs.

Moreover, these first sets of activities or programmes will in all likelihood be joined by others. At the present historical conjuncture, indeed, everything seems to point to the need for the systematic development of the study, from the international point of view, of the problems of modern civilization.

Lastly, concomitant with the present emergence of this type of problem, important and clearly-defined work is being undertaken with a view to establishing rational long-term and medium-term programming. Research aimed at the "rationalization of choices" is, then, being superimposed, as it were, on research on the typology of problems. It is essential for these two types of research to be conducted side by side so that they may progress towards global findings that are satisfactory. The next step needed therefore seems to be a detailed examination of the notion of intersectoral.

Chapter III

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NOTIONS OF "INTERSECTORAL"
PROGRAMME AND "SECTORAL" PROGRAMME

16. If we were to content ourselves with an operational conception of the problem, the notion of "intersectoral" could easily be defined as comprising those questions which, because of their magnitude, call for simultaneous and, if possible, co-ordinated action on the part of several Sectors of Unesco: Education, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Culture, Communication.

Grounded on a definition of this kind, the main problems raised by intersectoral programmes would obviously appear to be problems of co-ordination: officials belonging to different Sectors, chiefly engaged in the pursuit of "sectoral" objectives, legitimately engrossed by activities which they regard as essential, are somewhat reluctant to divert part of their time from their principal objectives so as to participate in intersectoral tasks, the main responsibility for which does not rest with them. From this point of view, problems to be solved would in fact relate to administrative structures or definitions of responsibility:

Are light administrative structures required (task forces) or heavy ones (horizontal structures)?

To whom should responsibility for the financial management of these programmes be entrusted?

Should overall co-ordination be provided, and at what level?

Should the proportion of time to be devoted to these programmes by officials from the various Sectors be determined in advance?

Should the full-time assignment of an official in each Sector be considered in the case of certain programmes?

Who should assess the performance of these officials?, etc.

17. There is no question of denying the existence of problems of this kind, but it seems essential, before examining them, to arrive at a better definition of the notion of "intersectoral", by way of the reason for its existence or the original character of its contents rather than by way of its administrative implications. Considered from this angle, the list of questions currently selected(1) appears at first sight to be heterogeneous: it does not seem very easy to discover features that are common to this set of research projects or activities. The present list seems to have been established in consequence of a certain number of historical circumstances, or under the influence of the urgent preoccupations of certain Member States. Apart from these circumstantial reasons, it is not clear why this list does not include other possible "titles" chosen from among the existing activities of Unesco - such, for instance, as "racialism" or "artistic creation" - or from among the major problems of the modern world: "urban life", "development", "the social and human aspects of industrialization", "international co-operation", etc.

(1) or that it is proposed to select.

Subject to the foregoing remarks, it seems to me that the three main characteristics to be noted are the following:

18. Most of these programmes are characterized by the fact that some very important aspects of them are already being examined and studied as major issues by other organizations of the United Nations system (United Nations: peace, human rights, drugs and population; Stockholm Conference: environment). None of them, by reason of the vast field covered by its title, can escape the "interorganizational" character of the concerns which it involves.
19. The share taken by promotional activities in the above-mentioned programmes is obviously preponderant: as regards human rights (or equality of access of women to education), almost the sole concern is the promotion of ethical concepts (document 17 C/4, paragraphs 0122 to 0124); as regards family planning, it is proposed to assist in the definition of policies and to develop public knowledge on the subject (paragraph 0221 of 17 C/4); as regards drugs, it is proposed to combat harmful practices⁽¹⁾. Great importance is also attached to promotional activities in the "environment" programme (paragraphs 0193 to 0198 of 17 C/4). The "promotion of peace through action" comprises, in particular, education for international understanding, the participation of young people in the achievement of the objectives of peace of Unesco, the rôle and use of the mass media (paragraphs 0141 to 0147 of document 17 C/4).
20. Lastly, all the intersectoral programmes include research activities in areas chiefly concerning international relations, or better still the problems of modern civilization.

On the whole, it seems possible to say that:

The officials responsible for projects seek to avoid overlapping with research conducted on the same subjects by other organizations, often on a much larger scale (for instance, the United Nations research programmes on population or on human rights, which cover a vast sector). In these cases, the tendency appears to be to choose subjects connected with the problems that are considered as coming within Unesco's sphere of competence - for example, the subjects chosen in the case of human rights: human rights and scientific and technological progress, access of women to education, free flow of information (17 C/4, paragraphs 0122 to 0125); or, in the case of population: family planning and educational programmes, family planning and use of the mass media (17 C/4, paragraphs 0210 to 0212).

In other cases, the problems are considered from a more critical and more comprehensive standpoint. This seems to be true of the way in which the problem of peace is tackled in document 16 C/12 (study of the general factors which constitute a threat to peace: aggressivity, imbalances and tensions), and subsequently in document 17 C/4 (the alternatives to violence in the resolution of conflicts, publications on aggressivity, studies on international law), paragraphs 0137 to 0140.

(1) For the moment, the programme in 17 C/4 consists on this point, solely in exchanges of information (paragraph 0233), but the final outcome of the programme as a whole is clearly intended to be "prevention of drug abuse".

This is also true of the "man and the environment" programme which is even more comprehensive in its scope than is the intergovernmental programme on man and the biosphere. However, in the case of other intersectoral programmes: in particular, youth (or the programme on "women and education" selected previously), the chief concern of those responsible does not appear to have been, from the outset, directed towards a comprehensive definition of the problem; rather, these programmes would seem to be characterized by the diversification and multiplication of approaches.

21. These various characteristics do not, however, seem to me to invest the "intersectoral programmes" with an absolute originality. Certain sectoral programmes exhibit features very comparable to those of the intersectoral ones, and this can easily be demonstrated by an analysis of the activities of the Sectors.

22. From a comparison of the activities of the various Sectors it may be noted, first of all, that within their respective spheres of competence, they do not all give an equal place to activities concerning the development problems of Member States. In all the Sectors, these development problems entail research with a view to helping towards the definition of national strategies or policies, methodological research calculated to assist in the improvement of these national strategies (search for, innovations, etc.) and, finally, operational activities designed to help in the implementation of these national policies (training, technical aid, establishment of institutions, etc.). But, while the share taken by this kind of activity is very considerable, indeed fundamental, in the Education Sector (accounting for more than 95% of the programmes), it is, on the contrary, far smaller in the three other Sectors, in which interest is mainly centred on problems arising at the international level.

23. In the Natural Sciences Sector this applies to methodological research on a world scale and to the major intergovernmental programmes bearing on the human implications of scientific advance, on the possibility of organizing a world science information system (UNISIST), on man and the biosphere (MAB), on geological correlation, on the Hydrological Decade, and on oceanography.

24. The Social Sciences, Humanities and Culture Sector covers, in addition to activities concerning the development problems of Member States, three important types of special activity that are world wide in scope;

standard-setting activities and those aimed at the promotion of ideas (peace, human rights, dissemination and interpenetration of cultures, etc.),

general research activities on a world scale (on research trends in the social sciences, on the methods of application of the social sciences, on the interpenetration of cultures, on the study of the problems of civilization),

operational (and even investment) activities for the protection of the cultural heritage.

25. The Communication Sector, besides aid to the development policies of Member States, also gives a not inconsiderable place to:

standard-setting activities and those aimed at the promotion of ideas (free flow of information, international circulation of persons and materials),

problem-focused research activities at the international level (research and studies on communication, etc.),

supporting activities for the other programme Sectors by "the use of the mass media" (life-long education, rural development, family planning, youth, books, etc.),

lastly, this Sector acts as a base for activities of an administrative type or for general programme supporting services (Library, Unesco Documents and Archives, Office of Statistics, Unesco Courier, Public Information Office).

26. But this first attempt at establishing a typology of the problems dealt with by each Sector should be supplemented by a gauging of the "degree of maturity" of the various programmes being carried out.

This notion of the "degree of maturity", developed by the Director-General in his introduction to document 17 C/4 (cf. in particular paragraphs 66 and 67, 89 and 90) mainly with reference to new programmes and intersectoral programmes, seems to me personally to be a remarkable instrument for analysis, which should be applied to the whole programme. It seems to me that this "degree of maturity" can be measured on the basis of the replies to the following questions:

inventory of problems: has a comprehensive inventory been established of the problems of the Sector, and is this inventory accepted by all Member States or, on the contrary, is the determination of the list of problems still in process and is there some uncertainty concerning the choices to be made?

degree of definition of the strategies appertaining to each problem: has each problem listed already been provided with a first type of solution which has met with general acceptance? Have the first steps been taken to put this strategy into application? Has it, in each case, led to partial or total success? Where it has failed, has a first diagnosis been attempted? Has a new research methodology been developed for the purpose of improving the strategy? Has this research been partially successful and has a new strategy already been tested? ... etc.

extent of political agreement: it is obvious that this degree of maturity depends not only on the state of technical research but also of course, very largely on the degree of political agreement that has been reached between Member States on the concepts, vocabulary, problems and strategies. The bringing into being of increasingly extensive agreements in all these respects clearly demands both effort and time, and there is nothing surprising in the fact that, due to the difficulties inherent in the very nature of the problems dealt with in each Sector, the degree of maturity is very uneven.

27. In this connexion, it is obvious that the Education Sector, without any doubt, possesses the highest degree of maturity: the inventory of problems is known and accepted almost in its entirety, and in respect of each problem the definition of strategies (with the possible exception of the standard-setting activities relating to equality of access to education) has already reached an advanced stage (strategies defined, accepted, tested, criticized and reappraised, new methodological research in progress, etc.). In contrast, the other Sectors are at unequal stages:

28. In the case of the Natural Sciences Sector, the inventory of problems concerning national scientific development policies is not yet finalized. The definition of strategies in these matters seems still to be at the earliest stage of formulation. On the other hand, a breakthrough has been effected by the choice of a certain number of key problems of world-wide concern on the basis of which intergovernmental programmes have been launched, thus showing that it has been possible to reach a considerable measure, of political agreement on the nature of the problems in question. In respect of some of these problems, however, such for instance as the human aspect of scientific progress, what is involved, in reality, is research with a view to the setting of the problems. There remain, then, likewise on a world scale, large research areas in which the problems themselves have yet to be identified.

29. The case of the Social Sciences, Humanities and Culture Sector (with the exception, however, of the very special field of the preservation of the cultural heritage, in which strategy is so well defined that it results in very precise investment operations) affords an example of an even less advanced stage, at least as far as the Social Sciences and Humanities are concerned: the inventory of problems concerning national scientific development policies is not yet finalized, and the same applies to the definition of strategies. With regard to problems of world-wide concern, the difficulties involved in defining spheres of competence have given rise to the very existence of the question which forms the subject matter of this report - that of so-called intersectoral programmes; and this clearly shows that the rôle of the Sector in relation to the problems of modern civilization has not yet been perfectly defined.

30. In the case of the Communication Sector, the impression gained is that it is extremely difficult for the programme to reach any degree of maturity on account of the particularly political character of the actual subjects involved and of the fact that the Sector seems to be somewhat encumbered by administrative and programme-supporting activities, for the promotional function of which no entirely coherent definition has yet been found. The inventory of problems, at the national or international level, and the definition of strategies require further clarification and improvement.

31. Study of the activities of the various Sectors from the point of view of the main types of objective and that of the degree of maturity of the programme would therefore seem to suggest the possibility of a new typology of programmes, in which the notion of intersectorality would tend to lose a good deal of importance.

Chapter IV

OTHER POSSIBLE WAYS OF CLASSIFYING PROBLEMS (AND RESULTING PROGRAMMES)

32. From all the foregoing analyses it would appear that those programmes which are now called intersectoral do not differ, either in nature or in content, from the "sectoral" programmes undertaken by Unesco. In reality, they are:

new programmes with a very small "degree of maturity", apart from the "man and the environment" programme which is able to profit by the work that has been carried out for several years past on the intergovernmental programme concerning "man and the biosphere". It is no exaggeration to say that some of these programmes - such as the one on the prevention of drug abuse - in fact amount to feasibility studies for future programmes: the essential feature of studies of this kind is that they can equally well lead to positive or to negative conclusions;

programmes mainly concerned with problems of modern civilization on a world-wide scale;

programmes comprising both research activities and standard-setting activities.

But, in all three cases, as has been shown by the foregoing analyses, the characteristics possessed by these programmes are also to be found in a certain number of sectoral programmes which have not been raised to the dignity of intersectoral programmes.

33. In view of this absence of originality, it may be wondered whether it would not be possible and desirable to adopt some other way of classifying problems. From the analyses already made, it would seem that such a classification might be effected:

by broad area, that is to say by Sector,
by type of objective,
lastly, by degree of maturity.

34. Classification by broad area, that is to say by Sector

The emergence of new problems does not appear to me, for the time being, likely to give rise to a change in the classification of programmes according to the four traditional Sectors of Unesco. It seems to me, however, that the sphere of competence of the various sectors should be defined in the following way:

Education: all problems concerning the development of education in Member States or on a world-wide scale;

Natural Sciences: all problems concerning scientific development in Member States, all problems concerning international scientific co-operation;

Social Sciences, Humanities and Culture: all problems concerning the development of the social sciences, the humanities and culture in Member States. All studies and research concerning the future of modern civilization on a world-wide scale. Protection of the cultural heritage.

Communication: all problems concerning the development of the communication media and communication policies in Member States. All problems of civilization relating to communication media. All technical problems concerning the promotion of ideas or standards.

A classification such as the above merely serves to confirm an existing situation. It does, however, lay stress on two points which seem to me to be particularly important on account of their administrative implications:

the Social Sciences Sector is considered competent in respect of all studies and research concerning the problems of civilization and, more especially, the new problems apart from those coming under the Natural Sciences and Communication;

the Communication Sector is considered competent in respect of all the technical operations of promotion.

These two functions seem to me essential; and there is an obvious advantage in their being carried out by the corresponding specialized Sectors. However, it might be admitted that they could be carried out by other specialized bodies, whatever the position the latter might occupy in the organization chart of Unesco. These administrative implications will be considered further on.

35. Classification by type of objective

The principal types of possible objective in Unesco's programmes are, in short, concerned either with development, or with the improvement of international co-operation for the solution of problems common to all Member States, or again with the promotion of ideas or ethical rules. It has been noted that, because of an unequal degree of maturity, the second category of problems (international co-operation for the solution of common problems) is divided, at Unesco, into two categories:

the problems of international scientific co-operation,

the problems of modern civilization.

Moreover, it is certain that, in a great many cases, no very clear distinction is made, within one and the same programme, between research questions and activities aimed at the promotion of ideas or ethical rules, and that it is deemed advisable to pursue them in a parallel manner. The peace programme, for instance, involves at the same time research (on aggressivity, etc.) and promotional activities; this also applies to a number of other programmes. On the other hand, where very new subjects are concerned, such, for instance, as the prevention of drug abuse, promotional activities are not contemplated until it has been possible to determine the general principles which should govern action. Personally, I think that this distinction should always be carefully made, and even that research and promotion should, as far as possible form the subject of separate programmes, even when they appear to be linked by a common title (population, peace, etc.); the objectives of promotion cannot be merged with those of research. Promotional activities can only be applied to ideas or to ethical rules on which a general political agreement has been reached, and they are dependent on very special techniques (use of communication media, publishing techniques, etc.) which can only validly be employed by specialists. Research, for its part, is dependent on other specialists; it seeks to shed light on a question, to define means of action which will have to be subjected to a political assessment before being applied in practice. The merging of research and promotion in a single programme therefore entails serious risks of intellectual confusion. For all these reasons, it seems to me that classification of the various programmes by type of objective should be effected at Unesco, in the present state of maturity of the programme as a whole, in terms of four categories:

problems of development,
problems of international scientific co-operation,
problems of modern civilization,
problems concerning the promotion of ideas or standards.

36. Classification by "degree of maturity"

The notion of degree of maturity has already been analysed in paragraph 26 above. From the standpoint of the classification of programmes, it therefore seems possible to distinguish, in the light of that analysis, the following four phases:

phase of identification of problems: inventory of the problems contained in a vague "set of activities" the analysis of which has been undertaken, identification, feasibility studies aimed at the definition of a programme, etc.,

phase of research with a view to the definition of a strategy or a policy (which must be worked out and then subjected to a political discussion),

phase of methodological research concerning possible strategies and the improvement of the initial strategies, search for innovations, new techniques, etc.,

operational phase.

These four phases are to be found, with variations, in every programme, whatever its Sector or its type of objective; they appear to me to exist in connexion both with research programmes and with promotional programmes (the definition of promotion policies seems to me, in particular, not to have been accorded hitherto at Unesco all the attention that might be desired).

In these circumstances, it seems to me that the most logical and most rational expression of the idea of "intersectorality" might consist in the possible advance of one particular programme between the vertical sectors, as its various stages of maturity are passed. A programme could thus begin to be developed in a research sector and then, once the findings of the research are known and for the purpose of their application and dissemination, it could move on to another sector or even to another organization.

37. Definition of objectives and improvement of programming methods

The proposed classification is, in my view, likely to facilitate the definition of objectives, which is an essential function of programming structures. The use of an appropriate method for the definition of problems is the essential preliminary to the difficult task of defining objectives that are as clear and concrete as possible. In other words, it is by way of a typology of problems that it may be possible to establish a typology of objectives. As this research cannot be undertaken here, I shall merely point out the possibilities it may offer. It should, it seems to me, make it possible:

to distinguish more clearly in all the programmes the initial phase (feasibility studies, clarification of the problem), to bring about a realization

that this phase is essential for any new programme or for any important change of the lines of emphasis in a current programme, and that the necessary time and resources must be devoted to it if the risk is to be avoided of engaging in fruitless research or ineffective action,

to establish separate programmes in terms of objectives that are more clearly characterized in accordance with a typology which is yet to be established but which would take into consideration the fundamental distinctions:

on the one hand, between objectives of development, promotional objectives and objectives of research on international scientific co-operation and on the problems of modern civilization,

on the other hand, between the various phases of development of a programme relating to a specific question: definition of a policy or a strategy (on a world-wide scale or on that of individual States), definition of methodology or search for innovations likely to alter strategies, and lastly operational activities (training, establishment of institutions, technical aid, promotional activities, clearly defined research objectives, etc.) carried out either directly by Unesco or by Member States following a dividing up of responsibilities by means of an international agreement.

In the medium-term plans that might be established on the basis of such a typology an important place should, in my view, be accorded to an explanation of the problems existing in each Sector, to a description of the partial solutions already reached, to a definition of the road remaining to be covered and to the medium-term objective chosen as the next stage on the way to the final solution to the problem. For the preparation of a document of this kind a long time would seem to be required (about two years would not, I should say, be an overestimate). This implies, as is explained in paragraph 45 below, a development of the programming services, both at the centre and in each Sector.

Chapter V

PROBLEM OF HORIZONTAL CO-ORDINATING STRUCTURES

38. The foregoing analyses, bearing on the activities of the programme sectors and the possible classification of problems, might at first sight seem to be rather far removed from the initial question concerning the possibility of setting up "horizontal co-ordinating structures" to facilitate the execution of intersectoral programmes.

In fact, the improvement of programming methods is at the heart of the problem thus set, and the aforesaid analyses were absolutely necessary to justify the negative answer which I feel obliged to give with regard to the creation of horizontal structures of this kind for the intersectoral programmes. The reasons justifying this answer can now be summed up in the following few remarks:

39. The notion of "intersectoral programme" should apparently not be maintained

The Director-General's analyses in the introduction to document 17 C/4 show that these "sets of activities" do not really exist as yet. The examination made in paragraphs 16 to 37 above leads to the conclusion that the most desirable and most rational typology does not accord them any particular place in the future. The contemplation of special structures to deal with a category of programmes which do not yet exist and which are unlikely to exist in the future therefore seems to me to constitute a false problem.

40. Nevertheless, the actual notion of horizontal structure needs perhaps to be clarified and the particular situation of programming structures to be more clearly defined.

Every administrative body which has reached an elementary stage of development (commercial enterprises, armies, public services, etc.) comprises vertical structures - organic sectors responsible for pursuing the principal objectives - and horizontal structures.

These horizontal structures vary in number and magnitude according to the size of the organization in question and its degree of development or complexity. However, it is usually possible to distinguish:

structures relating to administrative operations: centralization of information, supervision, evaluation, inspection, public relations, lastly programme and budget (these I shall call horizontal structures of type I);

programme structures relating to servicing or supporting activities: personnel (recruitment and management), current financial management, documentation, general services, library, publications or publicity, bureau of organization and methods, other common services, etc. (horizontal structures of type II);

structures "for co-operation" (particularly at the local level, in the event of the deconcentration or decentralization of activities), through which given officials in the organic sectors are in fact subjected to authority from two different sources (horizontal structures of type III).

41. The relations between horizontal structures and vertical structures always set delicate problems with regard to the distribution of responsibilities and consequently give rise to tensions. This phenomenon is inherent in administrative life, and only exaggerations, which are of course always liable to occur, would give cause for alarm concerning the general health of the organization in question. In this connexion, it is not the administrative structures or the servicing structures (types I and II above) which raise the largest number of problems, since their functions are generally well defined and do not overlap with those of the organic sectors. The same does not apply, however, to the structures for co-operation (type III) which have a natural tendency to enter into direct competition with the organic sectors, for what happens here is the giving of orders to the same men but from the point of view of different preoccupations.

When these co-ordinating structures are established at the local level, their normal rôle is to ensure the extension at this level, in a more concentrated form, of the central administrative structures and servicing structures. But the fact of distance, the particular standpoint from which problems are viewed at the local level, often impart a kind of autonomy to local co-ordinating structures and, consequently, if the tie with the central authority is not strictly maintained, symptoms of administrative disorder are apt to appear: tension between the central authority and the local authority, instructions from both sides, emergence of "empire building". These risks are of course inevitable, but it should be noted that they are more serious than those to which the other types of horizontal structure may give rise.

42. It may become necessary to have recourse to "co-ordinating structures" not at the local level but at the centre, to cope with unexpected problems or the appearance of new objectives. An instance of this might be the regrouping of existing units under a temporary authority, to deal with an unforeseen problem which can be solved within a limited time. The risks are not very serious if really provisional solutions are all that is involved. But if the problem is of a more lasting kind, it will be necessary to proceed to an overall reorganization.

A profound and lasting change in the objectives assigned to an organization can and should entail changes in its structure. These alterations or innovations vary in accordance with the actual nature of the new objectives but in fact, in the majority of cases, they fit in with the following two types:

- (a) Establishment of additional vertical structures (when there are new activities to be dealt with).
- (b) Establishment of semi-independent bodies, of the "affiliate" type (when it is a question of a new compounding of earlier objectives and new objectives pursued according to a new method).

In the latter case, the new administrative machinery comprises a combination of vertical structures and horizontal structures peculiar to itself, but a clear distinction is maintained between the new structure and the older ones, thus avoiding conflicts between authorities.

43. On the other hand, what must be avoided, as far as possible, is the superposition of co-ordinating structures at the centre (structures of type III above) on existing vertical structures as a long-term measure. The best known example of systems of this type is the superposition of field offices⁽¹⁾ on

(1) Responsible for the administration of activities "in the field".

offices at headquarters; such a mechanism can in fact only function properly on the condition either that the competence of the field offices is very strictly limited to general service activities or that they are made to specialize in certain types of programme activity (with which the headquarters offices are then less concerned). But, even in this case, the risk of tensions and difficulties is too great. Generally speaking, any system under which given officials become subject to several direct authorities may be considered as unsatisfactory and dangerous.

44. The foregoing analysis explains why, in any case, even if intersectoral programmes were to become real programmes forming a coherent whole, the type of solution to be sought should be in the direction of the creation of a new vertical structure (a new sector, for instance, or the strengthening of an existing sector) or in that of semi-independent structures (specialized institutes, etc.) rather than in the direction of new horizontal co-ordinating structures through which given officials would be subjected to authority from two different sources. But I do not think (cf. paragraph 39) that there is even any reason why the question should be raised here.

45. On the other hand, one of the consequences of the analyses made in paragraphs 16 to 37 above should be the continuation and strengthening of the development of programming structures, not only in the interests of the intersectoral programmes but in those of all the programmes of the Organization. Among horizontal administrative structures (of type I above) programming structures are doubtless the newest but they are also the most important from the point of view of facilitating the most harmonious and effective organization of labour. Through these structures it is usually intended to obtain in advance, for each service and for each official, and with their participation, a perfect definition of the objectives pursued by the Organization and by each of its agents. If they could function perfectly these structures would, at best, dispense with the need for any co-ordination during the execution of the programmes. When everyone knows what he has to do and seeks to do it in full knowledge of the overall aims, co-ordination comes about, one might say, of itself. It is for this reason that the strengthening of these structures⁽¹⁾ a constant effort to improve methods, is, finally, the most economical and most rational way of arriving at good results. For the rationalization of choices the necessary means must be made available, but it leads in the end to increased efficiency and real savings.

46. Perhaps investigations should also be made with a view to determining whether structures that are better specialized, particularly in the matter of the promotion of ideas or standards and in the matter of futures research, might not in time to come improve the effectiveness of the Organization. Here again we are concerned with horizontal structures of types I and II, the general development of which goes hand in hand with the improvement of administrative organization.

(1) As is known, in addition to the Office of Pre-Programming, the staff of which is to number 11 persons in 1973-1974 (one Assistant Director-General, one D-2, four Professional category, five General Service category), these structures now comprise offices which are responsible for programming in each Sector (cf. paragraph 83 of the Director-General's Introduction to document 17 C/5). The offices of programming in each Sector should, it would appear, be given priority in the matter of future development.

47. This negative answer in regard to specialized co-ordinating structures of type III does not mean, however, that at various stages in the evolution of the programme it may not become necessary to provide for closer co-ordination between Sectors. Reference may be made, in particular, to the example furnished at the present time by the programme on "man and the environment" which, after being developed primarily in the Natural Sciences Sector, has reached a sufficient degree of development to allow of the entrustment to the Social Sciences and Humanities Sector of a large share of the research involved. A case of this kind explains the institution of a "Co-ordinator" as proposed by the Director-General in his Introduction to document 17 C/5. At the stages leading up to the operational stage, a policy for the promotion of ideas or standards on a given subject may perhaps have to be put into application, for instance, simultaneously by the Education Sector (school curricula) and the Communication Sector (use of mass media of communication), etc. Operations designed to ensure co-ordination between programmes pursuing related or complementary objectives may appear necessary at any time. But, if the programming mechanisms function properly and provide the definition of precise objectives for each programme, I do not think that the requirements of co-ordination will make it necessary to go beyond the proposals made by the Director-General in his Introduction to document 17 C/5, on the subject of the institution of "co-ordinators" at the head of the most important programmes with the possibility of receiving occasional assistance from other sectors and the establishment of a small number of intersectoral committees to examine the problems common to several related programmes. But this is not a matter of new structures; it is at most a matter of normal practice in good administration.⁽¹⁾

48. Conclusions and main recommendations

The advent of "intersectoral programmes" and the development of a certain number of other activities indicate that an important process of change is taking place in the composition of Unesco's programme. Every important evolution in the programme justifies an examination of the possibility of alterations in the administrative structures.

In the present instance, however, examination of this evolution and of its nature leads me to conclude:

1. that it is pointless to contemplate the establishment of new horizontal co-ordinating structures proper to the "intersectoral programmes" (paragraphs 39 to 44);
2. that, on the other hand, to meet the needs of the programmes as a whole, it is necessary to contemplate for the future the strengthening of certain traditional horizontal structures and, in particular, of the new programming structures (paragraphs 37 to 47);
3. that the notion of "intersectoral programmes" could be abandoned in the future (paragraphs 32 and 33);

(1) I do not think, however, that, if the classification proposed in this study were to be adopted, the need would often arise for entrusting to certain co-ordinators powers of decision with regard to the use of funds not assigned to their programme, as it has now been decided to do in the case of certain intersectoral programmes: this would mean the beginning of real structural changes which do not appear necessary.

4. that new typology of problems, classified by sector, then by main types of objective (development, international scientific co-operation, modern civilization, promotion of ideas or of ethical standards), lastly by "degree of maturity" of programmes (phases of identification, definition of a policy, methodological research, operations), might be studied in the future so as to make it possible to establish a new typology of objectives and thus to reach a new stage in the continual improvement of programming methods (paragraphs 33 to 37).