

The fourth and concluding part reviews two conferences: a study day on refugees in France, 1982; and the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II) in Geneva, 1984. The contrast between the two meetings is interesting. The first addressed the causes common to refugee situations and agreed on a plan of action to reduce the flows of refugees. ICARA II opted for a 'strictly non-political and humanitarian' approach, which thereby limited discussions to the developmental aspect of refugee problems.

In a general conclusion, Melaku Kifle, director of the World Council of Churches office for African refugees in Geneva, suggests several ways in which ordinary people can work to resolve the problem of African refugees. While he seems to write for a European audience, his concern is that of the refugees: 'Talk about our country. Don't let people forget us'.

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(published by ZED Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DN)

Training Needs Assessment and Monitoring, Luthar Richter, ILO, Geneva, 1986 (83pp, 17,50 Swiss francs).

The central objective of Richter's study as he outlines it in his introduction is: "to assist all those concerned with vocational training planning on the taking of informed and rational decisions on the nature and content of training programmes and projects".

One of the central theses of the book is that conventional methods of manpower forecasting have been largely ineffective. Thus methods ranging from the Manpower Requirements Approach (MRA), Rate-of-Return Analysis, Normative Methods, Employer Survey Method, International Comparison Method, to Econometric Models and Input-Output Models, have all proved problematic and deficient in manpower planning and forecasting. As Richter points out, criticisms against manpower forecasting include an undue reliance on manpower input-output norms which become rapidly outdated; a failure to take substitution into account; a too heavy emphasis on high-level manpower requirements; a lack of attention to the costs of training one type of manpower relative to another; and finally a series of inaccurate and misleading forecasts.

To complement and in some ways overcome the shortcomings of conventional manpower forecasting Richter is suggesting new approaches which are:

"less concerned with projections and forecasting and more with labour market signalling, ie the regular recording and analysis of imbalances in manpower supply and demand and their underlying causes in different economic sectors, occupational groups, and geographical areas".

In effect Richter suggests new approaches in labour market information that

provide more short term indicators of human resource requirements. In order to collect such indicators he suggests the following methods: assessment of job advertisements; selective labour turnover surveys; tracer studies; and the key informants approach. This last approach is one of the latest fads of the ILO and has come to be associated with Richter. It involves basically:

“an experience and observation that some people, due to their profession, residence and personal interest, possess a more detailed knowledge than others on prevailing and prospective manpower and employment patterns in a given area.”

(eg Local administrators, village elders, farmers etc.)

What are we to make of Richter's suggestions? Clearly he is correct to question the effectiveness of conventional manpower forecasting estimates. However in his move towards complementary short-term indicators, Richter has compounded the problem in what amounts to a recoil from long term planning procedures. The underlying reason for this is that Richter basically accepts the labour market imperatives of capitalism, and therefore assumes that human resource ‘planning’ should increasingly consider short term indicators methods. He does not however abandon affiliation to the efficacy of conventional forecasting under certain conditions.

At a seminar held in Copenhagen in October 1986, on *Upgrading Labour market information reporting systems in developing countries*, these issues were taken up with Richter and other ILO officials by the Zimbabwe country paper. On Richter's work on labour market information, in particular, the paper noted:

“The point is that there is no theoretical framework within which to understand the information on labour collected under conditions of capitalist production in the underdeveloped countries.

It is perhaps in the absence of such a general theoretical perspective that one can sometimes be suspicious of ‘new approaches’. For such approaches are old misconceptions ensconced in new techniques, in which case there develops a fetish of techniques and a predilection for every new fad, that removes us from the central problem of the labour capital relation in developing countries”.

(New Approaches, Methods and Techniques in Generating, Managing and Utilising Labour Market Information in Zimbabwe, 1986, 2-3)

Realistic assessment of human resource training and needs depends on an extensive knowledge of the dynamics of the labour process in a given society. This in turn depends on the manner in which labour is utilised, valued and categorised under given production relations. Unless the trends that emerge from such an analysis are carefully studied, then meaningful human resource planning will remain elusive.

Another major feature of meaningful human resource planning is that the latter should form part of a comprehensive system of national economic

planning, linking up with the planning of production, investment and infrastructure. Richter is correct to point to the absence of coordination of human resource planning in developing countries. In Zimbabwe there is certainly insufficient coordination between the vocational training and manpower planning units. However, Richter does not link this coordination up to a national planning framework for overall economic development.

To summarise, Richter's book is an important indicator (in this case a long term indicator) of the crisis in planning techniques by conventional labour economists and manpower planners who are trapped, by the imperatives of the market economy, into looking at increasingly short term indicators for training needs.

Reviewed by Brian Raftopoulos, Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS), Harare.

Community Participation, Social Development and the State, James Midgley with Anthony Hall, Margaret Hardiman and Dhanpaul Narine, Meuthen and Co, London, 1986 (181 + ix pp, £6.95 pbk).

In the growing literature on community work, community participation and social development, there is a dearth of studies on the relationship between the state and community initiative in social development. However, the topic needs to be examined critically, in the context of the expanding role of the state in modern society. This also seems necessary in the context of many community participation theorists rejecting outright state involvement.

It is not clear from the title of the book whether the authors seek to examine the complex issues of state and community involvement in social development in relation to the third world countries or across the board in relation to both 'developing' and 'developed' countries. However, in the preface to the book, the authors indicate that their intent is to review 'the complex and controversial issues' of state and community involvement in social development specifically in relation to the third world.

The book addresses the central issue of state and community relations in social development. It begins with an acknowledgement of the practical difficulties in efforts to foster effective community participation. The study of the relationship between the state and the community in social development is fraught with difficulties (the authors acknowledge this problem) as definitions or conceptualisations of 'social development' tend to vary. Similarly, 'community participation' tends to be a complex process with varying interpretations based on different ideological beliefs, political realities and administrative and organisation contexts.

There are several pertinent questions raised by the authors in their study of the relationship between the state and the community in third world countries, such as: What is the appropriate role of the state in community participation?