



UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.35/SR.75
14 September 1953
ENGLISH
~~ORIGINAL: F. NCH~~

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 20 August 1953, at 2 p.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. LOOMES	Australia
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mrs. MENON	India
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. FRAZAO	Brazil
	Mr. YANG	China
	Miss GARCIA-SIERRA	Cuba
	Mr. BRUN	Denmark
	Mr. PIGNON) Mr. CHARTON)	France
	Miss RUSAD	Indonesia
	Mr. KHALIDY) Mr. KADRY)	Iraq
	Mr. SPITS) Mr. GRADER)	Netherlands
	Mr. SCOTT	New Zealand
	Mr. HAMDANI	Pakistan
	Mr. MATHIESON) Mr. WARD)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. SEARS) Mr. BEDELL)	United States of America

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mr. GAVIN	International Labour Organisation (ILO)
Mr. VOGEL	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Mr. AKRAWI	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Mrs. MEAGHER	World Health Organization (WHO)

<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. HOO	Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Trusts, Territories and Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories
	Mr. BENSON	Secretary of the Committee

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: REPORTS SUBMITTED BY
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES (continued)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to continue the general debate on educational condition in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Mr. PIGNON (France) requested the Committee to hear a statement by Mr. Charton, a member of the French delegation and an expert on education in French overseas territories.

Mr. CHARTON (France) recalled that modern education had been introduced into the territories under French administration only thirty or forty years previously, and that the problems which arose there were consequently quite new. Those problems were not peculiar to Non-Self-Governing Territories; it had been noted at the Bombay Conference that the problem of illiteracy was world wide. He associated himself with the remarks of previous speakers on general educational policy and agreed that it was necessary to increase school attendance, to develop the education of girls, to ensure better financing of public education and to achieve participation by the indigenous inhabitants in the formulating and carrying out of educational policy.

He then described the measures taken by the French government in overseas territories since 1946. In France, education was compulsory and free. In the French colonies, it rested on the same principles. The principle of compulsory education had been affirmed in Senegal and Madagascar before 1940. Education was also absolutely free, a fact which involved heavy expenditure for the French Government.

France had had to solve many difficulties arising from the varying levels of civilization of the different populations. Education had had to be adapted to the needs of those populations, in order to avoid the danger of precisely the type of waste to which the Indian representative had referred at the previous meeting. Encouraging results had been obtained; thus, in Madagascar, more than 250,000 children, or 40 per cent, attended schools. In some regions of French West Africa, where conditions for school attendance were less favourable, the proportion was 9.88 per cent, while in the French Congo and Dahomey it was 50 per cent.

The French Government had endeavoured to develop education for girls, laying emphasis on the social and domestic sciences. It was also providing girls with the necessary instruction to enable them to serve in the administration.

Where vocational training was concerned, it had been necessary to take into account the fact that modern economy required technical knowledge on the part of some groups of the population; at the same time, the French Government had kept in mind the need to give the population vocational training which corresponded to its traditions and way of life. Thus, vocational training was provided on very nearly the same level as in the metropolitan territory as well as training in handicrafts which was specially adapted to the needs of the population.

The French Government was aware of the desirability of extending the use of the vernacular as a vehicle of instruction. The application of the principle, however, met with enormous difficulty in territories where there were hundreds of local dialects. An effort was therefore made to give instruction on practical matters, such as hygiene and public health, in the most widely used African dialects, but there were good reasons for providing the basic instruction in French - the language used in contacts with the outside world.

In most cases, the credits allocated for education represented about 20 per cent of the total budget of each territory. France had set up an Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development (Fonds d'investissement pour le développement économique et social - FIDES) which subsidized, on an equal footing, primary education and secondary and technical education.

In all the schools indigenous teachers worked side by side with European teachers, and that France had every reason to congratulate itself on the results of that collaboration.

Miss RUSAD (Indonesia) associated herself with the remarks of the Indian representative, whose views were entirely shared by her delegation.

The United Kingdom representative had stated that it would be better not to consider general educational policy at the present session because it had been dealt with in the 1950 report. The Administering Powers had not, however, accepted the general principles contained in that report without reservation. In fact, the 1950 report had recommended the most rapid possible development of primary education, to enable the children of all races to receive adequate education. Study of the documents before the Committee showed that the recommendation had not been acted upon everywhere. The report on the educational policy of the Belgian Congo spoke of the training of an élite. The French Government appeared to have the same aim in French Equatorial Africa and Morocco, and it would seem that in British Somaliland the United Kingdom Government was following a policy of limiting school enrolment to those who could find suitable employment. There had been no general illiteracy campaign and the principle of equal access for all to the benefits of education had apparently not been respected. She recalled the example of her own country in which, since it had attained independence, the proportion of persons who knew how to read and write had risen from 5 to 40 per cent.

Universal access to education should be understood to apply to education at all levels, primary, higher primary, secondary and professional. The Iraqi representative had quite rightly remarked that on the whole a small proportion of the indigenous population had access to primary education and that the proportion of those who received secondary and higher education was insignificant. That was hardly the way to enable the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories to assume their legitimate share of the management of their countries. A country's prosperity depended on the knowledge of the population, and it was most important that all those who had received primary education should also have access to secondary and professional education.

The most effective way to suppress illiteracy was, first and foremost, to give the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories a goal to work for, namely, independence. Once national consciousness had been aroused, it was clear that territories which were at present non-self-governing would themselves find a means of raising the level of education of the masses.

Mr. YANG (China) started off by making reference to the Committee's 1950 Special Report on Education. His delegation shared the view that "education in its broadest sense was a necessary basis for progress in economic, social, cultural, and political knowledge and responsibility". While he was generally in agreement with the views recorded in the Special Report on various educational problems he wished to draw special attention to the problem concerning the participation of the local inhabitants in the formulation and execution of educational policy.

In that connexion, the representative of China posed three questions to the Administering Powers: (1) to what extent in the formulation and execution of educational policy in the Non-Self-Governing Territories under their respective administration there had been a due regard to the principle that interests of the inhabitants of those Territories were paramount; (2) whether in Non-Self-Governing Territories, the preparation and the selection of textbooks were decided by advisory educational councils on which local inhabitants were represented or by European officials of the Administering Powers who, for all their good intentions, could not prepare and select textbooks which would be entirely suitable for local children; and (3) who made such basic decisions on educational policy as, for example, the decision as to whether the funds allocated for education should be used to the development of agricultural or medical schools or to the development of a more or less conventional type of education.

Mr. Yang asserted that the local population could not be regarded as playing an effective role in formulating educational policy unless they actually participated in decisions of such type and nature as he had alluded to. It was the opinion of his delegation that unless they did, the mere existence of advisory councils with local participation operating at various levels would be of no significance.

Then, both by way of illustration and as a response to a suggestion often repeated by Administering Powers in the Committee that both Administering Members and Non-administering Members exchange ideas and experience they had in any of the three functional fields from their respective countries, he proceeded to give an account of the educational picture in Taiwan (Formosa) before 1945 when the island was under the Japanese rule and that after 1945 when it was returned to China. Mr. Yang pointed out that education in Taiwan

under the Japanese rule was limited and discriminatory. Its aim was the furtherance of political control and economic exploitation. His Government's policy was, on the contrary, an example of efficient education, meeting the needs of the people and meant for the good of the country as a whole. It was stated that the progress made in the field of secondary and higher education was spectacular. Appropriations for education in national and local budgets being on the increase, the aim of his Government's policy was to endeavour to provide a free universal education that would contribute to human welfare, social happiness, political democracy and economic prosperity in the island.

Mr. PETHERIDGE (Australia) gave an account of the educational situation in Papua.

Despite the difficulties encountered, which could be appreciated when it was realized that there were still some small areas to be brought under administrative control, the Administration was extending the school network every year. There were two types of schools, those run by the Administration and those run by the missions. On 30 June 1952 there had been 799 mission schools compared with 777 on 30 June 1951. The number of mission teachers had increased by approximately 50. In the course of the same year the number of Administration schools had increased from 60 to 77 and the number of teachers by 20, 10 of whom were indigenous. During the same period the number of pupils in the Administration schools had more than doubled. On 30 June 1952, 44,539 children had been attending school.

Education was free. The Administration bore the travelling expenses of pupils attending State boarding schools and secondary schools at a distance from their homes. Textbooks, educational equipment, and medical care were also free.

The Administration worked in co-operation with the missions and subsidized their schools. Teaching in the missionary schools was given in the vernacular. The primary cycle covered a period of four years, after which the pupils went on to Administration schools where the teaching was in English.

European children attended separate primary schools and went to secondary school in Australia. A certain number of gifted indigenous children took correspondence courses organized by Australian State Departments of Education.

The Secondary Education Centre at Sogeri was also a centre for the training of the more gifted students.

Approximately 60 per cent of the population over ten years old could read and write; in the coastal areas the proportion was estimated at 70 per cent.

With regard to the participation of the inhabitants in drawing up educational policy, he quoted examples of the interest which the indigenous inhabitants took in educational advancement. The interest of the people in schooling had been accentuated wherever Village Councils had been established. School Councils had also been set up to raise funds, provide maintenance and encourage attendance.

The Administration was well aware of the need for training skilled workers in various occupations and at various levels. Hitherto, it had concentrated on general education, but as agricultural and industrial development progressed, academic education would gradually have to be replaced by technical and agricultural training. A technical training centre was already in existence at Idubada, but according to plans prepared, technical training on a sound and proper basis would begin after a period of five years during which preparations would be under way.

The Administration had promulgated an Ordinance on compulsory education, but it had not yet proved possible to apply it throughout the Territory. The lack of trained teachers was the principal obstacle to educational expansion.

The Administration realized the need for special training for girls. It intended to introduce a domestic science course in the girls' schools. Weekly courses were being organized in the villages for girls who had left school and for women who wished to learn cooking, sewing and child care.

The Administration believed that the rudiments of education should be taught in the vernacular languages.

Since Papua was essentially a rural country, the textbooks and syllabuses had been drawn up with a view to helping rural society to improve its position. Increasing stress was therefore being placed on handicrafts and agriculture. Each school should serve as a centre for the development of the community.

The aforesaid facts all showed that the Australian Government was well aware of the importance of education and was making every effort to prepare the peoples of Papua for the responsibilities that lay ahead of them.

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.

Mr. SEARS (United States of America) asked the Committee to hear Mr. Bedell who was an expert on educational policy in the Non-Self-Governing Territories administered by the United States.

Mr. BEDELL (United States of America) recalled that in the United States, the generally accepted principle was that education should be controlled by the local authorities, the States or the government of the territory, but never by the federal Government. The way in which educational problems were solved depended on the particular conditions in the territory concerned.

Education was free and compulsory in all the Non-Self-Governing Territories under United States administration. The educational system must be focussed on the needs of the individual served, for true educational equality was not attained by giving everyone the same education, but rather by making it possible for everyone to receive the type of education best suited to him or her. The level of education was one of the criteria for determining whether a people was ready for self-government. Increased individualization would increase the cost of education. He instanced the case of Puerto Rico which had attained a particularly high stage of development under the control of the local authorities.

Educational advancement could be very closely linked to economic development and there could be no general economic development unless the population had attained a moderate degree of education. It was essential, therefore, to develop technical and vocational training and to adapt it to local conditions and community needs. Puerto Rico was a particularly significant example in that connexion. In any event, the problem of financing education could be solved only on a long-term basis and by taking into account economic conditions in the territory.

In the territories under its administration, the United States was doing everything within its power to encourage and foster both general and technical education since the training of workers and specialists was an essential element in all economic and social progress. It went without saying that the type of technical training should be adapted to the social and cultural conditions prevailing in the country concerned.

Turning to the responsibility of the local authorities for education, he mentioned what he believed was a unique example of American education, in which

the community served by the school had responsibility for the educational programme through its regularly constituted board of education or similar local educational body. The educational programme was developed by the teachers and teaching materials were selected by them. In all instances the educational policies and budgets were to be developed and approved by the communities served according to the school laws of the particular area or territory under consideration.

The problem of community education was stressed by Mr. Bedell as essentially functional education which placed great emphasis on a free exchange of information and the usefulness of the pooling of experience. He instanced the numerous conferences planned and conducted by teachers throughout the United States (including those in the territories) whereby information could be exchanged and experiences pooled.

Generally speaking, the United States had applied to the territories under its administration the solution which it applied at home, namely, "community education", which was not to be confused with "community development" and vocational education. Community education meant that education whereby the community learned to recognize and solve its own problems. Vocational education was concerned with the ability of a people to produce more of those things necessary for better living. It was based upon teaching the individual the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for him to become optimally productive in his own society.

He went on to indicate that education in the territories under the administration of the United States was concerned with teaching adults to improve their standards of living, and there were special educational programmes to meet adult needs.

Finally, he stressed the importance of textbooks and other teaching materials being adapted to local conditions. Teachers were being encouraged through both training and practice to supplement published books, maps, and charts by developing their own teaching materials which could be duplicated or printed locally. The problem of an adequate amount of teaching materials appropriate to local needs was suggested as one with which the Committee might occupy itself.

Mr. HAMDANI (Pakistan) pointed out that the Committee could do nothing without the co-operation of the Administering Powers, but its work could not be constructive without the criticisms of the representatives of non-administering Powers. The Pakistan delegation did not wish to enter into purely political considerations, but would like to ask whether the General Assembly's resolutions were not worthy of scrupulous application by the Committee in the spirit of the Charter.

The Committee would have to take the 1950 report as a basis for discussion. All the representatives were agreed in saying that the principles it contained were excellent, but the Administering Powers should be reminded of those principles so that they could devote serious study to them and progressively apply them. The Pakistan delegation further proposed that the sub-committee, when it was set up, should occupy itself with putting those principles into practice by establishing education programmes for special regions - Africa, Asia, and the Carribbean. He would revert to that point in the course of the debates.

Taking the three items of the agenda which the United Kingdom had recommended that the Committee should consider he proposed that the question of financing of education should be replaced by the question of equal treatment.

Since there was in existence a specialized institution concerned with the technical aspects of education, the Committee should pay special attention to the extent to which the Administering Powers furthered the interests of the inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and secured their evolution.

Mr. SPITS (Netherlands) introduced Mr. Grader, a member of the Office for Indigenous Affairs, who would give an account of the development of education in Netherlands New Guinea.

Mr. GRADER (Netherlands) pointed out that in Netherlands New Guinea education for indigenous people was primarily a question of acculturation. There were numerous transport difficulties caused by natural obstacles. The indigenous community, living in the primitive state, was broken up into tribal units, isolated from each other for centuries, so that diverse regional cultures had emerged. There was no institutional authority apart from the family or clan.

To meet the needs of such a society, the Netherlands Government had created "civilizing schools" in which the teaching of the three R's was adapted to local customs and conditions (craftsmanship, agriculture, songs and dances), and in which a foundation was laid for the regular courses on the primary level. The course lasted three years, but in the more backward regions it was often repeated, so that the knowledge acquired should not be forgotten too quickly.

The villages were very dispersed, and pupils frequently lived a long way from the schools, so that all continuation schools and many post-primary schools had to become boarding schools.

Education in New Guinea was above all a question of cultural and social adaption, and for that reason the teacher's personality played an important part. The training of teachers was one of the chief preoccupations of the Netherlands Government, but as a result of the war, the Territory still lacked qualified teachers. The Netherlands Government intended to replace insufficiently qualified personnel by teachers who had received proper training. Through them, the pace of social evolution could be accelerated. The Government and the missions had started to modernize training centres for village teachers.

On the question of equality in education matters, Mr. Grader stated that New Guinea distinguished between schools in rural communities and those in urban centres. Among the urban schools were the primary schools described as "European", which were however, open to all children without religious or racial discrimination, provided that their knowledge of Dutch was sufficient to allow them to follow the instruction. Post-primary schools were open to pupils both in the rural areas and the urban centres without racial or religious discrimination.

The participation of the indigenous population in the formulation of educational policy was bound to be limited, at the present stage of development. However, the district councils and the Council for the people's education, which were consultative organs, attached great importance to educational questions.

For more details and statistics, Mr. Grader referred the Committee to the written information submitted by his Government.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

14/9 a.m.