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DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

by

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## SUMMARY

The evidence so far have indicated that high levels of human resources development have accompanied high levels of national development. Consequently more and more emphasis have been placed on human resources development both in the developed and developing countries.

In its basic essentials the concept of human resources development has its roots in the traditional 'Training' activity. However, current approaches have wider perspectives based on greater insights into the complexity of human behaviour and organisational effectiveness.

Not unaturally methods and techniques of varying effectiveness have emerged over the years in the field. Specialist assistance is therefore essential in formulating policies and programmes and for selecting the appropriate tools in different environments and circumstances.

Opinions on the organisational framework for the performance of the human resources activity are still divided. It is however our view that this activity is a logical and an essential constituent of the activities within the scope of a 'developed'<sup>1</sup> personnel department/office.

As a critical factor in the economic development process, the need for embarking upon accelerated and concentrated programmes in human resources development in African countries has been overwhelming. In this connection attention would have to be focused on very basic issues such as imparting basic vocational skills and knowledge as well as such sophisticated issues as the design of organisational systems which are effective in local environment.

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<sup>1/</sup> Manifesting the concept of dynamic personnel management. Orichton, Anne - "Personnel Management in Context".

The consultant of African origin endowed with the decisive 'native' attributes of intuition, sensitiveness and instinctive understanding of the social system has a crucial role to play as an instrument for the transfer of the technology, as a 'technologist' to design the requisite systems and as a resource person.

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## INTRODUCTION

The patterns of national development have tended to indicate some correlation (among other variables) between higher levels of manpower skills and knowledge and higher levels of development.<sup>1</sup>

It is generally the opinion that the development of a nation's manpower is a critical factor in the development effort. The development of the human resources is therefore a subject of concern to both developed and developing economies.

In the pages that follow we have endeavoured to provide an insight into the activity of the development of human resources at the organisational/enterprise/company (micro level). We have made some suggestions on guidelines for the development of human resources and outlined the role of human resources consultancy in the African context.

### 1. THE NOTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The concept is based on the notion that human beings are part of an organisation's resources. It underlies the recognition that:-

- (a) people are valuable to organisations, i.e. business enterprises, universities, hospitals;
- (b) the value of human resources is derived from their ability to render services which have economic value;
- (c) the value of human resources can be appreciated, conserved, or depleted as a result of the way people are managed;
- (d) human resources are costly to acquire and develop; and
- (e) substantial investments in money, time and creative thinking are required in order to build up efficient, effective functioning organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> Schultz T.W. "Investments in Human Capital": American Economic Review 1961 Vol.51 pp. 1 - 17.

Although the concept of the human beings or people at work as a human capital/asset as such may not be a new notion,<sup>1</sup> nonetheless, its current application as indicated above embraces wider dimensions. It is for example in the frame of reference of this concept that the 'Human Assets Accounting'<sup>2</sup> which treats human resources as an 'asset' rather than an 'expense' (which has been the traditional accounting practice) has emerged.

## II. THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN ORGANISATIONS

### A. Current Developments

The value in developing human resources at the organisation/enterprise level has not been in doubt. Substantial evidence have accumulated over the years which indicate that the acquisition of improved skills and knowledge have been accompanied by higher productivity.<sup>3</sup> The "Training and Development" functional activity and programmes have consequently proliferated.

However the question of developing effective, productive work force in organisations, the problem of the maximum and effective utilisation of manpower have been burning managerial issues now as ever both in developed and developing countries.

Higher levels of productivity are required both in developed and developing countries (although in varying degrees and dimensions) to cope with economic difficulties. Above all the rapid political, social and technological changes and developments have necessitated the corresponding adoption of new approaches to motivating people at work, the re-designing of jobs, the design of effective organisational structures and teaching of new vocational skills and knowledge. Indeed the indications in recent years have been that there has been an upsurge in the interest in developing human resources.<sup>4</sup>

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1/ Kiker. "The Historical Roots of the Concept of Human Capital" *Journal of Political Economy* Vol.74 No.5 pp.481 - 499.

2/ Flamholtz. "Human Resource Accounting - A Review of Theory and Research". *The Journal of Management Studies*. February 1974 Vol.II No.1.

3/ Schultz T.W. *op cit*.

4/ Mills T. "Human Resources - Why the Concern". *Harvard Business Review*. March/April 1975. Vol.53 No.2.



Fortunately there have been significant developments in the technology<sup>1</sup> of the development of human resources to cope with the need.

**B. The Current Concepts for the Development of Human Resources**

The behavioural/social sciences theories and action-research have provided us with greater insight into the complexity of people behaviour patterns, and the dimensions of organisational effectiveness.

Drawing heavily on such insights and knowledge current approaches and programmes have focused on the developmental process of people, as resources to: themselves, groups, organisations, communities and larger cultures than the traditional field of training and development.

The orientations of current thinking have been based on one or a combination of the followings-

- (a) The concept of systematic approach to training and development.
- (b) The concept of systems thinking.
- (c) A new concept of man (based on increased knowledge of his complex and shifting needs and the fact that these needs have to be satisfied).
- (d) A new concept of individual and group relations, the effect of such patterns of relations and interactions on output and organisations effectiveness.
- (e) Insight into the various dimensions of power structures.
- (f) An insight into the environment and its influence on organisations, i.e. on individuals and groups behaviour, and the total culture and value system of an organisation.
- (g) The concepts of 'organisational development' and 'organisational renewal'.
- (h) The concept of contingency approaches to developing human resources.

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<sup>1/</sup> Margulies N. & Rais A.P. Eds. "Organisational Development - Values, Process and Technology". McGraw-Hill Book Company. Part Three p.130.

Current programmes for the development of human resources have been designed not merely to impart straight forward vocational and technical skills for the performance of specific tasks, but have also sought to develop an effective, productive, creative and highly motivated human organisations.

#### 1. Methods and Techniques for the Development of Human Resources

A perpley of approaches and techniques of varying effectiveness have developed over the years to provide a technology for the activity. It is needless to emphasise that one has to select methods and techniques which have validity and have proved effective in the local environment.

Attached as Annex 1 is a summary of some methods and techniques in common use.

#### The Organisational Framework for the Performance of the Human Resources Development Activity

In broad functional terms, the activity is inherent in the personnel function.<sup>1</sup> It seems logical and valid that it should be institutionalised within the scope of the personnel department's structure of activities. Nonetheless, it has also been the case that in many organisations the "training and development" activity has developed and existed outside the scope of the personnel department.

However, it is important to note that the current concepts for the development of human resources would more adequately fit into the structure of activities of the dynamic concept of personnel management rather than the traditional pattern which many organisations have so far manifested.<sup>2, 3</sup>

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1/ Bakke E.W. "Bonds of Organizations". Archer Books, Hamden, Connecticut, 1966.

2/ McFarland. 'The Trash-Can'. "The Scope of Industrial Relations Function". Personnel, American Management Association, Vol.36 No.1. Jan - Feb 1959, p.45 - 51.

3/ 'File Clerk Job'. Drucker. "The Practice of Management".

### III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

#### A. The Scope for Human Resources Development

One of the difficult problems which has been frustrating the development effort in Africa is low productivity.<sup>1</sup> There have also been generally acute shortages of trained managerial capability at all levels in many countries.<sup>2</sup> Basic vocational and technical skills have been lacking in many countries. The need for concentrated and accelerated programmes in the human resources development in African countries, as a critical factor in the various development strategies is urgent.

The scope for the human resources development activity is very wide and challenging. Attention would have to be focused among others on the following:-

- (a) The inculcation of basic vocational and technical skills, i.e. vocational training courses, apprenticeship training both formal and on-the-job.
- (b) Inculcation of disciplines and value systems requisite for factory and industrial efficiency and higher levels of productivity.
- (c) Training programmes for Foremen/Supervisors.
- (d) All levels of managerial education and training programmes - basic and post experience.
- (e) Team and group training.
- (f) Leadership training.
- (g) Human relations training.
- (h) Designing appropriate organisational structures which draw on the strengths of the African cultural and value systems for effectiveness.

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1/ Management Development and Productivity Institute, Accra, Ghana. "Measurement of Productivity" 1973 p.6. and "Report of the Research Project on Measurement of Productivity in Ghanaian Manufacturing Industry" 1974 p.6.

2/ Manpower Division, Development Planning Secretariat, Ghana, 1971 "High Level and Skilled Manpower Survey in Ghana, 1968" and "Assessment of Manpower Situation (1971)" p.6. para.16.

## B. **Human Resource Development**

The human resource development policies and programmes should:-

- (a) have clear and specific objectives;
- (b) be designed to meet particular organisations, groups or individuals;
- (c) take into account essential needs of the level of organisation concerned;
- (d) be sensitive to the culture and value systems of the environment;
- (e) be predicated on examples of successful and unsuccessful human performance in organisational systems which have meaning and are relevant in the African context;
- (f) be designed to change or reinforce individual attitudes as well as develop appropriate skills and knowledge;
- (g) provide for evaluation in terms of long-range human and organisational growth;
- (h) produce positive capabilities in individuals and groups;
- (i) be designed and implemented by specialists.

## C. **The Role of Human Resources Development Consultants in the African Context**

The Consultant of African origin role in human resources development is immense and challenging. He is the instrument for transferring the human resources development technology.

As a technologist<sup>1</sup> he develops the technology for human resources development effective in the local environment. He pioneers practical and action-oriented research in the field, and act as linking agent between theory and practice as well as serve as communication conveyor between academics and practitioners. Above all he provides a resource specialist service for organisations who may not be able to afford or cannot engage full-time human resource development specialists. In this, his native intuition, his sensitivity, subtle feelings and his understanding of the dynamics of the local social system are decisive assets.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Technologist' used to contrast 'Technician' by Collins in Crichton A. "Personnel Management in Context" London. B.T. Bateford Ltd.

- 1 -

ANNEX 1

A TABLE OF SOME METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR HUMAN  
RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

<u>METHOD</u>	<u>TECHNIQUE</u>
1. Development of basic skills. Training skilled craftsmen and technicians.	Courses: off-the-job; on- the-job; i.e. vocational training. Apprenticeship training.
2. Developing Supervisors/ Foremen.	Human relations laboratories Games, Role-playing.
3. Management Development.	Management Education - Formal off-the-job institutional courses (degrees, diplomas, etc.) Seminars. Job-rotation; Role-playing; In-tray exercises; sensitivity training; Case study; Project work; Syndicates; Simulations; Business games; Group exercises.
4. Organisational Development/ Organisational Renewal.	T-groups; Sensitivity training; Job designing; Social analysis; Job enrichment programmes; Organisational design; Counselling.
5. Effective Communication.	Organisational design; T-groups.
6. Leadership/Human Relations Training.	Games; Role-playing; Human Relations laboratories.

1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- (i) Management Science. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Penguin.
- (ii) Management Science. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Penguin.
- (iii) Management Science. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Penguin.

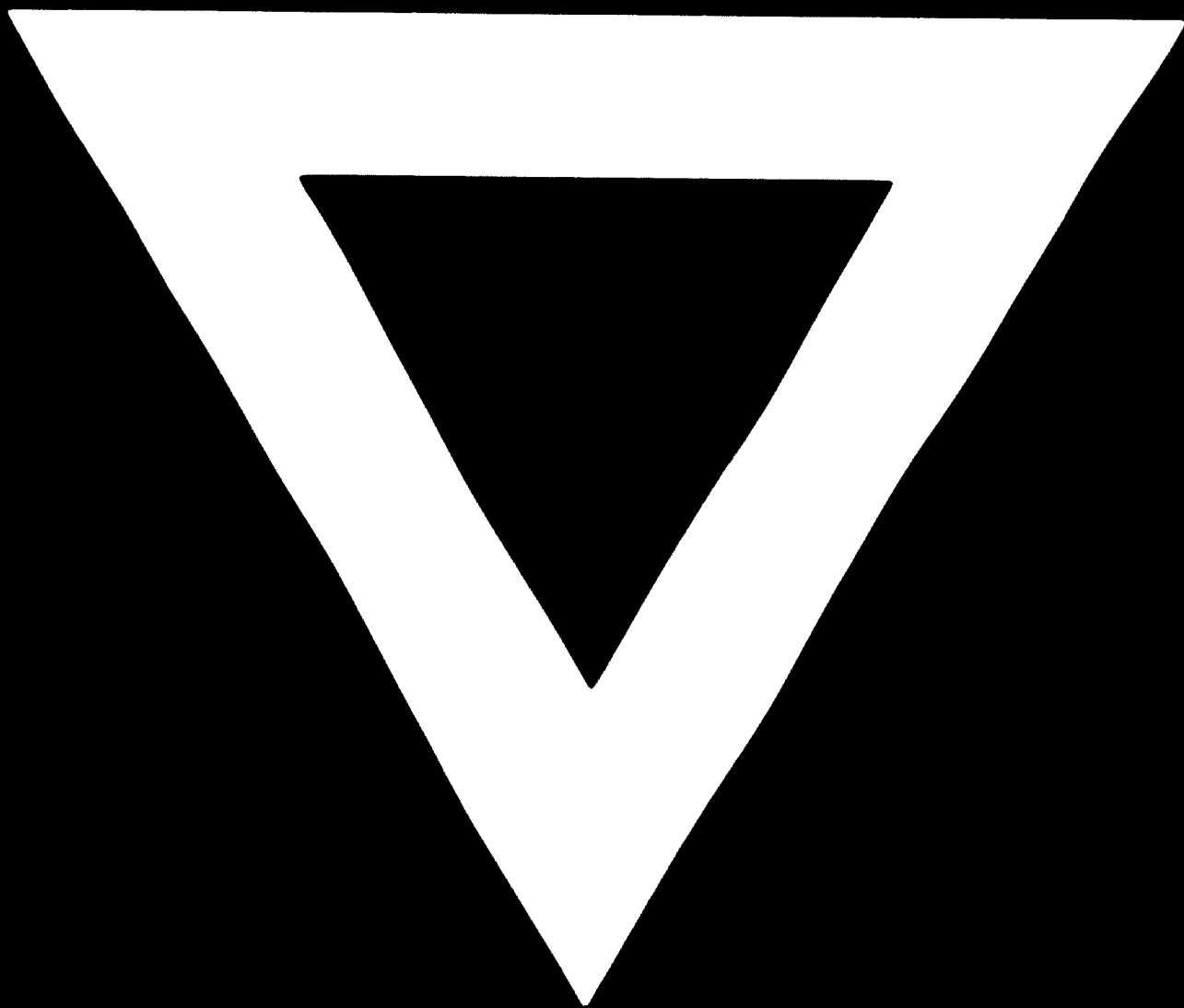
2. MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

- (i) Management Development. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Addison - Wesley.
- (ii) Management Development. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Addison - Wesley.
- (iii) Management Development. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Addison - Wesley.
- (iv) Management Development. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Addison - Wesley.
- (v) Management Development. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Addison - Wesley.
- (vi) Management Development. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Addison - Wesley.

3. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- (i) Personnel Management. - McGraw-Hill, New York, 1971. Addison - Wesley.





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