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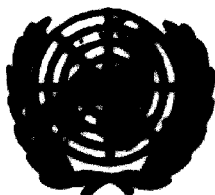
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PROCEEDINGS AND TRAINING PAPERS FOR THE
SIXTH TRAINING PROGRAMME IN INDUSTRIAL
TECHNOLOGY

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Plastics technology is relatively new in Ghana.

The development of Plastics Industries in Ghana began about ten years ago when an industry was set up to produce household plastic containers and containers for pharmaceutical uses.

Five years later two more plastic factories were set up to produce polythene bags. In 1970, there was an acute shortage of pressure pipes for water supply construction in Ghana. The Government therefore encouraged private industrialists to set up pipe production factories. Subsequently, three plastic pipe factories were set up in the country to produce uPVC pipes to meet the country's water supply and irrigation requirements. Since then, a number of smaller plastic factories for the production of corrugated conduit pipes, garden hoses and plastic ropes have been set up in the country.

INDUSTRY STATUS:

Virtually all the plastic industries are privately owned. The machinery and raw materials are however 100% imported. Even though the Government of Ghana has not up to date participated in the setting up of the plastic industries, it has encouraged private plastic industrialists in the way of granting tax relieves and less import restrictions on machinery.

Most of the management personnel are ex-patriate. The middle management and technical personnel are however mostly Ghanaians with few imported technical expertise.

With regards to the production of uPVC pipes, the production output of the three factories together dropped from a maximum of 65% in 1972 to a minimum of about 20% in June 1974. This drop in output was caused by two main factors.

- i. The relative increase in world cost of plastic raw materials.
- ii. Two Asbestos pipe factories were established in Ghana in early 1974 and prices were cheaper on the Asbestos pipes than the uPVC pipes particularly within the higher diameter ranges.

It is however hoped that production output will improve in the near future when our P.V.C. pipe users come to realize the total benefits

of plastic pipe and fittings for water supply and irrigation pipes.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

As already mentioned, plastics factories are only few in Ghana and very little experience in the country in the technical personnel in plastic production. The Government has been supplying spare parts and maintenance of machinery and equipment for the factories.

Whilst import taxes have not supplied the materials have not been the development of plastics, lack of spare parts for pumps and machinery have hampered their normal operations.

Supply and maintenance of water supply machinery is a problem to plastic industries in Ghana. In some cases, manufacturers have to request customers to purchase and install systems to be produced. There is also the lack of proper maintenance techniques and equipment. Very often, moulds are sent to the supply country for major repairs to be carried out.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The future development of plastic industries should be considered within the general industrial development programmes of the country. The Government's policy has placed emphasis on industries that can find local raw materials to supplement their imports, employ more labour and can export their products to attract the neighbouring African countries.

Plastics factories in Ghana have to import all their raw materials, however, they have offered employment opportunities to the people. Whilst the PVC pipe industries have been meeting the water supply and agricultural requirements of the country, the container factories have been exporting about 1/3 of their outputs to the neighbouring African countries. Lack of funds has however restricted their outputs.

At the moment only one of the three PVC factories carries out its own blending. My own factory has been producing moulded pellets. It is however being considered to introduce blending machines to enable us to mix and produce from the powder state.

All plastic pipe fittings and accessories are now being imported into the country, the existing factories are at the moment producing only straight line pipes.

My factory has recently been given the government approval to introduce equipments for the production of pipe fittings.

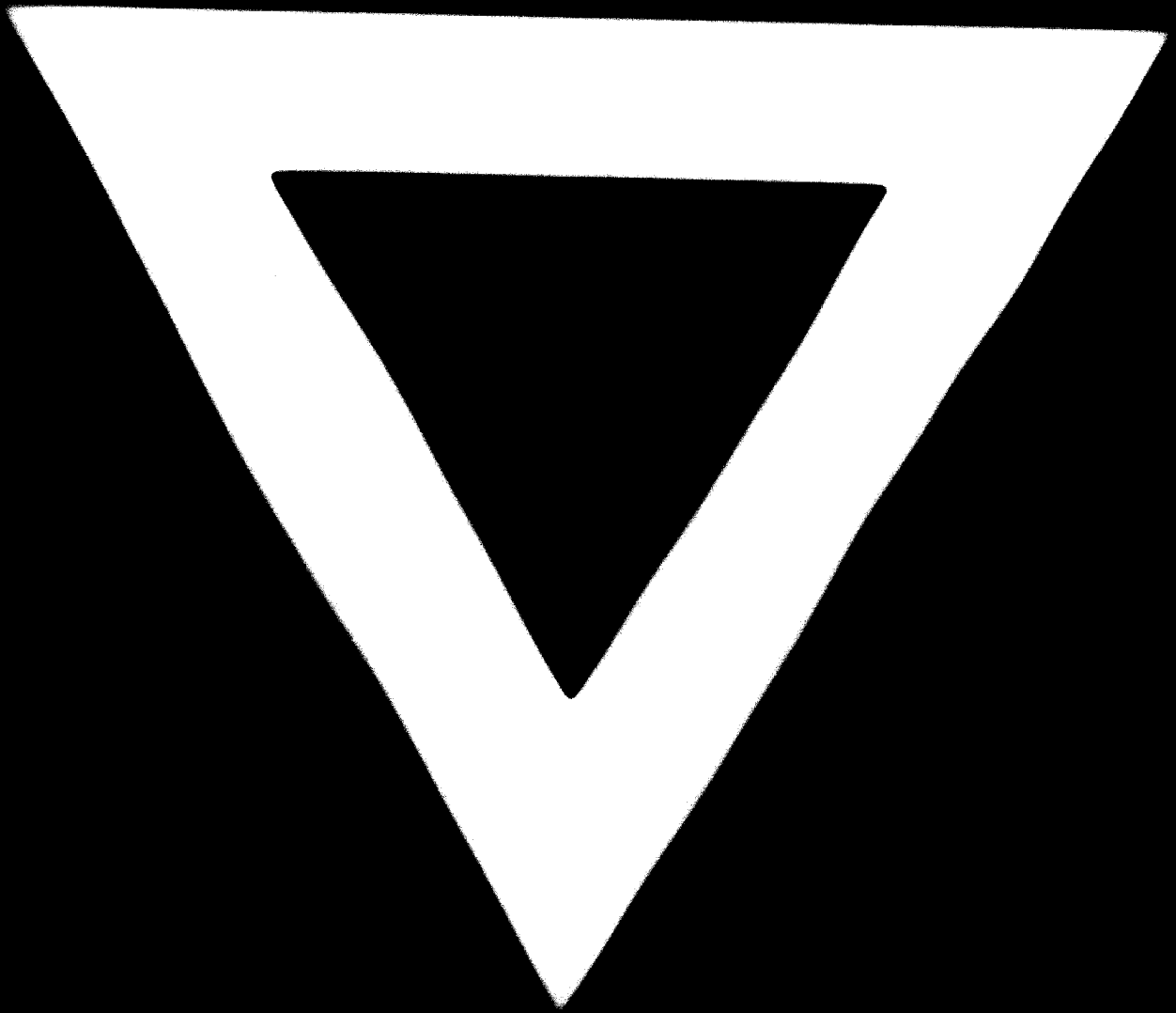
Plastic sheeting has still not been developed in the country. There was enough timber now to support the furniture industries. Up to date very little has been done in our factory to produce Plastic sheets to fabricate plastic items on customer's requests. It is hoped that when our Electrical Industries have been sufficiently developed, there will be the scope to expand more seriously into the plastic sheeting and plastic component parts.

In concluding, I would mention that the introduction of plastic pipes and tubes in Ghana has helped to accelerate the development of water supply and irrigation programmes in the country. Even though the establishment of the Asbestos Pipes factories has seriously affected the production outputs of the plastic pipe factories, there is high demand for the smaller sizes and the tubes.

Supply and maintenance of moulds has been major set back to the container and household plastic industries.

It is also hoped that as more Ghanaians get themselves trained in plastic technology the uses and usefulness of Plastic will become obvious to them.





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