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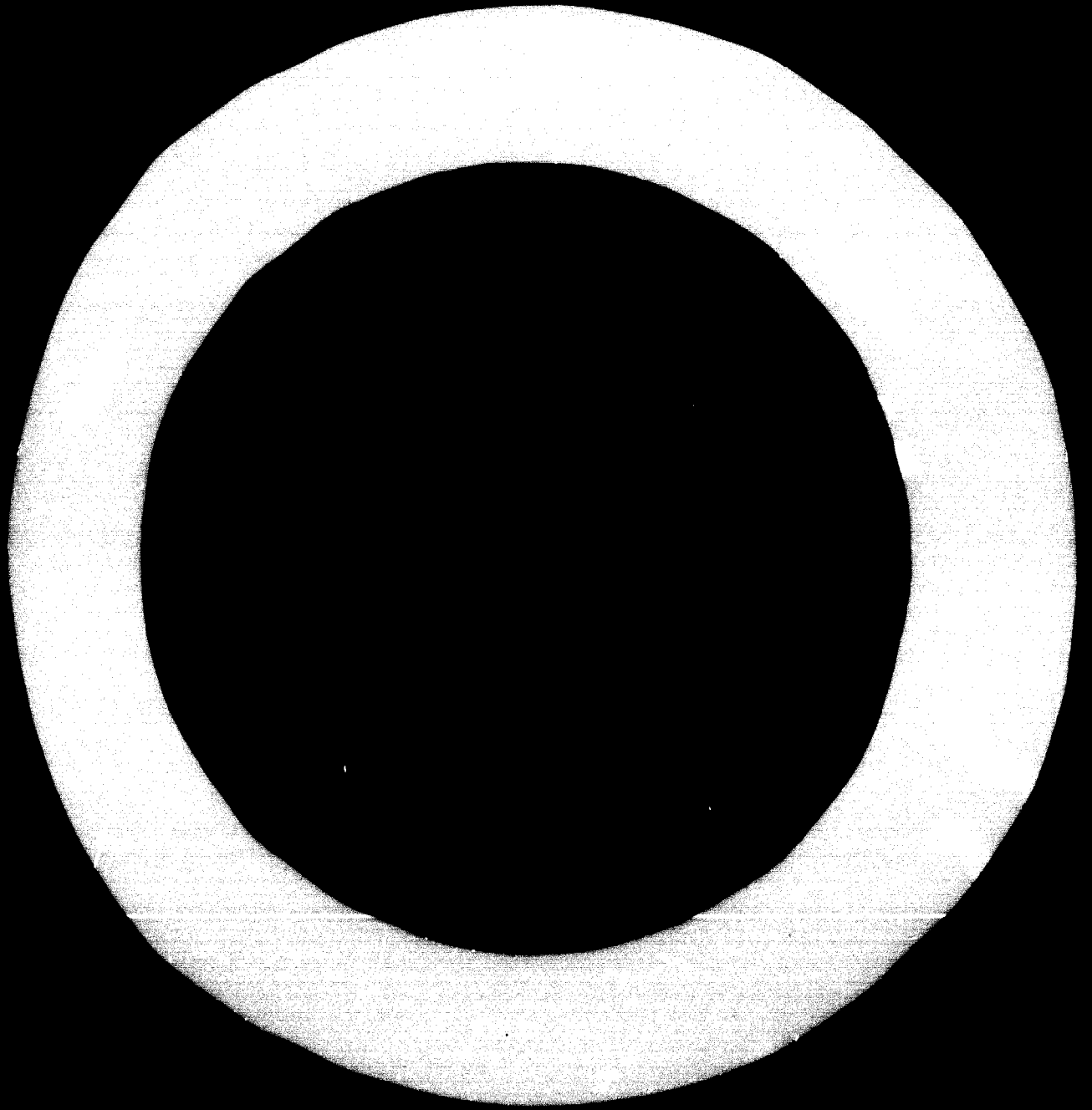
ILO'S ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF LEATHER
(TANNING AND LEATHERGOODS MAKING)

prepared by

International Labour Office, Geneva

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We regret that some of the pages in the microfiche copy of this report may not be up to the proper legibility standards, even though the best possible copy was used for preparing the master fiche.



- 1 -

ILO's activities in the field of leather
(tanning and leathergoods making)

For over 20 years the ILO has been involved in the promotion and development of small industries and handicrafts undertakings based on hides and skins improvement or utilisation, including leather tanning and the manufacture of footwear and fancy leather goods. In order to better illustrate the ILO experience in this field, there follows below a summary description of some of the more important projects which have been executed by ILO over this period and also some of those which are currently in the stage of implementation.

1. Haiti

From 1952 until 1956 two ILO experts were engaged in training and demonstration of improved techniques and methods of rural tanning: shoemaking, saddlery and other fancy leather goods making. They also started a number of pilot projects and established a central workshop for training, demonstration and common facility purposes.

2. Afghanistan - Leather tannery project in Charikar

Based upon the results of a short-term ILO consultancy mission fielded in 1958, the Government of Afghanistan requested the services of an expert to assist in the establishment of a model tanning unit at Charikar for the purpose of introducing more modern skills and techniques to Afghan tanners. During the initial period of his

long-term assignment (ending in 1976) the expert designed and established the tannery and trained workers and supervisors in the operation of its equipment. He also rendered advice to local (rural) tanners on improved tanning methods.

Although the National Counterparts Organisation at that time was not in a position to further the project's objectives, namely to extend the work of the central tannery in Charikar to the other provinces, or to provide the incentives needed for entrepreneurs to expand, the tannery actually soon became a common facility workshop for a certain number of local tanners working in the vicinity of Charikar.

Since the desired multiplier effect could not thus be attained, the objectives of the tannery were slightly changed, and following the first expert's departure, his successor devoted the next three years largely to the training of a restricted number of leather technicians, and to the modernisation of the workshop in order to make it more up to date, and up to the level of modern leather technology.

The project was a success in the sense that it definitely has contributed to a general improvement in the rural tanneries even though it was in a rather too restricted area.

3. Uganda - Hides and Skins Improvement and Leather Tanning

For a number of years an ILO expert assisted the Government of Uganda in matters related to:

- a) Hides and skins improvement through the setting up, within the Veterinary Institute, of a section for the training of hide improvement officers and assistants and to establishing the machinery for a hide improvement extension service.

b) The installation and initial operation of a pilot tannery on both a semi-industrial and rural tannery basis and to the training of technicians, foremen and workers in leather tanning and finishing.

4. Morocco: National Institute for Leather and Textile Workers

Started in 1962 and finished in 1970, this UNDP/ILO assisted large-scale project was originally intended, and certainly as far as its training component was concerned, to prepare a number of counterparts, textile and leather technicians and instructors to staff a number of provincial training cum production centres.

Since, however, these centres did not materialise, and taking into account the pressing demand from the industry for national technicians in order to replace expatriate personnel, the project was substantially reorientated, with training activities being concentrated on higher technicians, foremen and production and maintenance workers in both the textile and leather sectors.

More specifically, and concerning the leather sector, the following subsectors were dealt with:

- Hides and skins preparation
- tanning
- finishing
- shoemaking and manufacture of fancy leather goods.

The project, which received a substantial grant from the UNDP and the Government, had several large equipment components to deal with covering all aspects of the leather industry at both the modern small industry and rural tannery and leather handicrafts levels.

During the years of its implementation, the project produced a considerable number of well-qualified technicians: leather chemists, foremen and workers, and as such has contributed largely to an over-all marked improvement of the leather sector in Morocco.

It is worthwhile mentioning a side activity of this project which materialised, namely an extension service for tanneries and shoe making via mobile vans, of which several were put into operation. These mobile vans circulated for several years in the rural and remote areas of the country bringing the message of the need for improved methods in these trades and demonstrating the profits to be derived.

The Morocco project has been quoted on several occasions as being one of the most successful in the technical assistance field.

5. Algeria: Shoemaking and Manufacture of Leather Goods

At the request of the Algerian Government and following an ILO fact-finding mission, an ILO expert in shoemaking was sent in 1963 to Medea, a small town some 40 km from Algiers, in order to set up a modern training and production workshop for shoemaking. The results of the assignment have been seen in the considerable increase in production of valuable footwear from locally produced leather and in the creation of remunerative employment for a number of the local population.

At a later stage the project was taken over by the expert's government counterpart and the expert incorporated into a large-scale project in Algiers where he rendered consultancy services to leather manufacturing enterprises.

In addition to the above leather projects, leather experts were included as a component of multisectoral large-scale ILO/UNDP projects in the following countries: Panama, Chile, Swaziland, Ethiopia.

The following are ongoing projects in which there is a leathercrafts component:

1. Netherlands Antilles

As part of a large-scale multi-island handicrafts development project, an expert has recently taken up duty as a specialist in training in , and development and design of leathergoods for the tourist market. The leather being used is supplied by the FAO sponsored tannery project there. In view of the considerable interest expressed and the market potential for such articles, the Government, even at the present stage, has requested a further two years extension of this post.

2. Eastern Caribbean Large-Scale Handicrafts Project

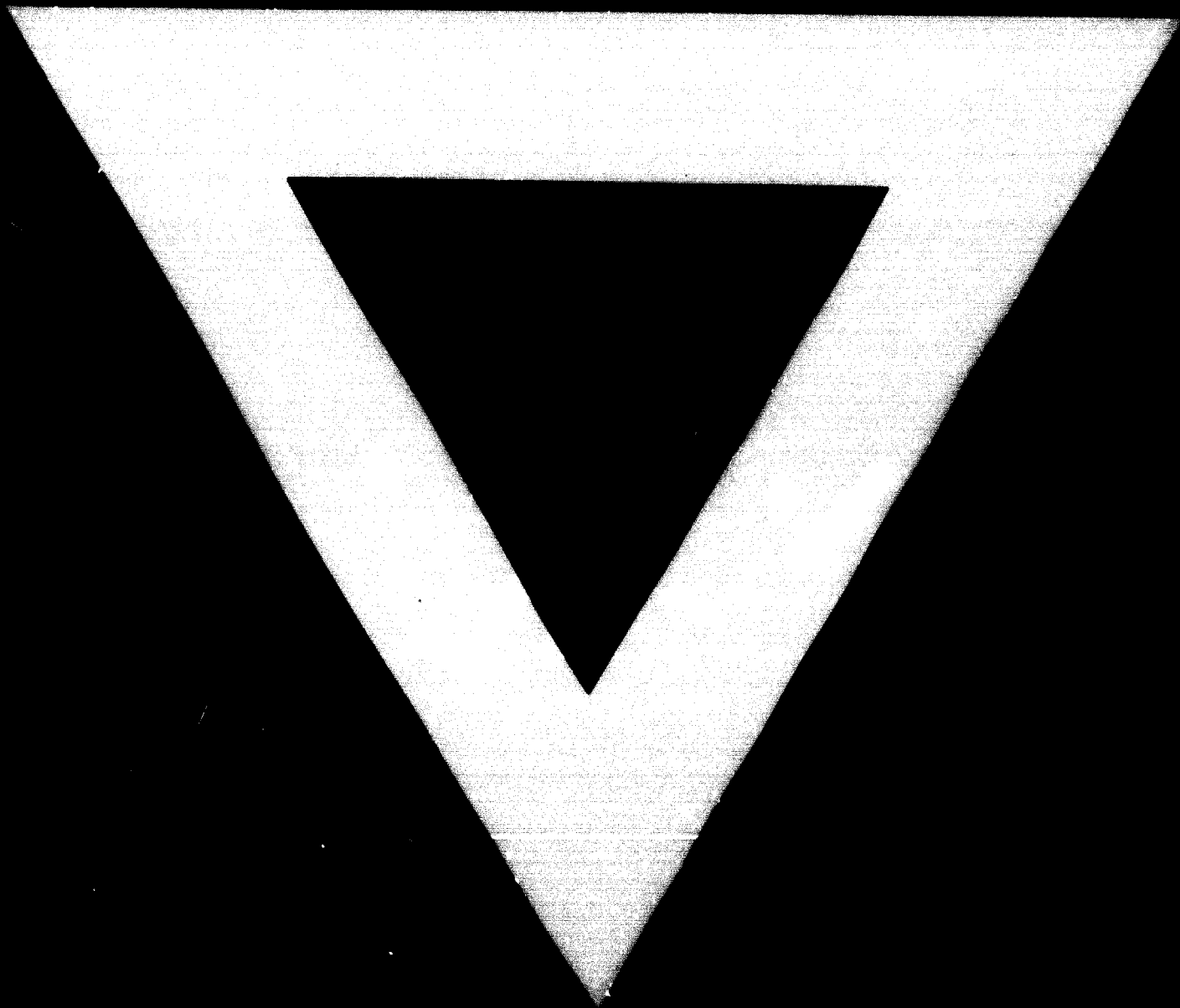
This project, which has recently been approved and is now operational, has among its 13 expert posts in various disciplines, one post for rural tanning and one for the manufacture and design of fancy leathergoods intended for the tourist market.

3. Nigeria

For approximately two years an ILO expert has been active in rendering advisory services and training in technical and managerial skills to the small entrepreneurs (shoemakers and leathergoods manufacturers in the Kaduna and Zaria area of Northern Nigeria.

In addition the expert has been training a number of national craftsmen in small industry consultancy techniques. Since the project is nearing its end, it is expected that the thus trained consultants and counterparts will be able to ensure satisfactory continuation and at a sufficient level after the expert's departure.





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