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# Some Aspects of Labour Use in Southern Africa – Problems and Policies

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## Introduction

Six of the countries in Southern Africa – Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland – have been independent for well over a decade. Over that period their governments have to varying degrees initiated profound social and economic change. Economic structures are now more diversified, and the real value of production has been greatly increased. More of the incomes flowing from this production are retained nationally, ie flow increasingly to citizen rather than to metropolitan interests. Progress has been made toward ‘citizenising’ the labour force. Major increases in social services provision, particularly of education and health, have been made. Many more adjustments will take place, but in each of these states the economy and polity is set on a course which promotes change within an established framework.

The other countries within the region are rather different. For Mozambique and Angola, independence from Portugal has been won very recently. The wars in each of these countries disrupted industrial and agricultural production, causing major resource problems and, in particular, bringing scarcities of food, foreign exchange and investible resources. Acute shortages of skilled workers have been exacerbated by the departure of most of the Portuguese settlers. Decisions have been taken by these governments to bring about needed changes in patterns of ownership, production and distribution. But the structural changes which these entail are still very much under way, with solutions to some of the key strategy questions facing each nation still being sought.

In the remaining two countries considered in this paper – Zimbabwe and Namibia – such changes are yet to begin. Zimbabwe’s independence came only a few months ago. In Namibia it has yet to be won. The illegal minority governments of these countries have ruled in the context of discriminatory economic, social and political structures which have systematically and pervasively benefited mainly a tiny white minority. The transition to legitimate majority rule is likely to be followed by shifts in production and employment relations which may be no less profound than those currently

underway in Mozambique and Angola. In some ways, however, the problems here may be even more extreme. The likely exodus of whites will create exceptionally severe shortages of local skills, and the problems of maintaining output whilst tackling the pressing need for social and economic reconstruction will be extremely severe.

The fact that these 10 countries are at such different stages in the transitional process implies that within the region a very wide range of employment problems – different in scale and, often, in kind – are to be found. But in spite of this diversity, there are common problems. This paper selects two: migrant labour and skill shortages, particularly in the formal sector. It is argued that these problems may best be tackled by an approach which, *inter alia*, aims to reduce the heavy dependence of individual countries on South Africa, and to exploit the complementary strengths and opportunities provided by other countries within the region.

## Migration for Work Abroad

The 10 Southern African countries, excluding South Africa (RSA) have a combined population of over 55 million, and a combined national product of over US \$8 billion per annum – approximately \$150 per capita. About one-eighth of the labour force is in receipt of regular wages or salaries from formal employment. The 3.5 million formal jobs in the region include 250,000 currently held by Europeans, and a further 500,000 held by migrant Africans working in RSA or Zimbabwe. One in six of all formally employed Africans in the region as a whole (excluding RSA) are migrant workers. Table 1 provides estimates of the scale of this migration for each country. Those most severely affected by the migrant labour system are Lesotho and Botswana, where one-third and one-fifth of the labour force, respectively, are working abroad at any time – mainly in RSA, but to some extent in Zimbabwe. Swaziland, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia are also significant net suppliers of labour to one or both of these countries.

The pattern of labour recruitment by the South African mining sector has changed substantially during the past few years. Three factors have been mainly responsible. First, following an air crash in

Table I  
Dimensions of the employment problem in Southern African States, 1976-77

'000s or percentages

	Tanzania	Malawi	Zambia	Botswana	Lesotho	Swaziland	Mozambique	Angola	Namibia	Zimbabwe	total all countries
<b>Population</b>	17000	5200	5100	700	1200	480	11000	7000	1250	6860	55790
<b>Labour force<sup>1</sup></b>	8500	2600	2550	350	600	240	5500	3500	625	3430	27895
<b>Formal employment</b>	450 <sup>2</sup>	271	368	59	32	60	455	300 <sup>3</sup>	260	1018	3273
% of labour force	(5.3)	(10.4)	(14.4)	(16.9)	(5.3)	(25.0)	(8.3)	(8.6)	(41.6)	(29.7)	(11.7)
- of which agriculture	(24.0)	(44.0)	(9.0)	(7.0)	(1.0)	(33.0)	(30.0)	"	(25.0)	(34.0)	"
- mining	(1.0)	-	(16.0)	(9.0)	(2.0)	(5.0)	(10.0)	"	(9.0)	(6.0)	"
- industry	(30.0)	(20.0)	(31.0)	(19.0)	(19.0)	(18.0)	"	"	(10.0)	(20.0)	"
- services	(45.0)	(36.0)	(44.0)	(45.0)	(78.0)	(44.0)	(60.0)	"	(64.0)	(40.0)	"
- of which non-citizens <sup>4</sup>	5	5	33	4	2	4	36	"	36	110	235
% of labour force	(1.0)	(2.0)	(9.0)	(7.0)	(6.0)	(7.0)	(8.0)	"	(14.0)	(11.0)	(8.0)
<b>Migrant Workers</b>											
- in South Africa	-	17	-	65	200	20	40	-	3	50	395
- in Zimbabwe	-	100	20	5	-	-	80	"	-	na	205
migrants as % of labour force	-	(4.5)	(0.8)	(20.0)	(33.3)	(8.0)	(2.2)	"	(0.5)	(1.5)	"
<b>GNP (US \$'000s)</b>	1500000	430000	1864000	370000	252000	276000	1651000	710000	817000	3200000	8000000
<b>GNP per capita (US \$)</b>	85	83	363	530	210	575	150	100	653	465	140
- % from formal sector	(73.0)	(64.0)	(93.0)	(88.0)	(42.0)	(87.0)	"	"	(97.0)	(94.0)	"
- % from subsistence sector	(27.0)	(36.0)	(7.0)	(7.0)	(17.0)	(11.0)	"	"	(3.0)	(6.0)	"
- % from migrants' earnings	-	"	-	(5.0)	(41.0)	(2.0)	"	"	-	"	"

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Definitions of labour force vary according to data available for each country. As an approximation, we have assumed labour force to equal half of the population. In most cases this is a slight underestimate of available people of working age, but an overestimate of those at present economically active.

<sup>2</sup> Tanzanian employment data for 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Very rough estimates.

<sup>4</sup> Europeans in the cases of Namibia and Zimbabwe.

na not applicable; " data not available; - insignificant.

Source:

Data gleaned from a wide variety of source documents, mainly government reports; see References.

Francistown in April 1974, in which 74 Malawian miners were killed, President Banda suspended all further recruitment of Malawians for the mines. Second, in 1976, recruitment of workers from Mozambique was dramatically reduced following the expiry of the earlier recruitment agreement between the Portuguese and the South African Government. Third, mine wages began to increase rapidly from 1973 onwards, in part fuelled by labour shortages generated by the two factors mentioned above. This allowed a largely compensatory increase in recruitment of labour from within South Africa, and from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (BLS). In addition an agreement to recruit up to 20,000 labourers per year was negotiated with the Southern Rhodesian regime in December 1974. The net result of all these changes is that mine labour from RSA itself has increased from one-fifth to over one-half of the mine labour force. Recruits from Mozambique and Malawi have been cut from one-half to little over 10 per cent of the labour force. Finally, there was until 1977 some increase in recruitment from BLS, with Zimbabwe as a new source of labour.

Historically, the presence of a large, non-citizen African, migrant labour force has acted in the interests of white South Africans. It has depressed wages and increased unemployment of blacks outside the mining sector, and has created even less favourable circumstances in which to make effective demands for improved wages and working conditions in the mines themselves. Wilson [1972] has shown that real wages for blacks in the mining sector were probably lower in the mid 1960s than at the beginning of the century. Ruthless exploitation of the advantages presented by a regional labour force has allowed the South African state and employers to profit greatly over the last 80 years.

Nevertheless, the policy of increasing the proportion of South African blacks employed in the mines has come about not only as a short-term response to recent political developments in the supplier states. It is also part of a deliberate strategy to reduce dependence upon foreign workers. The present supplier states are seen by the South African Government as increasingly unpredictable sources of labour – particularly as the armed struggle for liberation moves steadily south, to focus finally and within the not too distant future upon RSA itself. Increasing dependence upon labour from the ‘homelands’ is seen as a safer policy, and one which will bring few additional costs to the mines. As the transition to so-called ‘independence’ for these regions is made, the South African Government will no doubt use the same arguments to absolve itself from all responsibility

for the support of the dependents of workers from the ‘homelands’ as are used for foreign workers today.

To this end, recruitment of black South Africans will probably continue to increase, as will mechanisation, together with a policy of encouraging a stable workforce by reducing the recruitment of novices from supplier states. The mines appear to have cut back labour recruitment from BLS by about 20 per cent during 1978-79. This reduction of dependence upon foreign labour is likely to continue over the next few years. Sudden termination is unlikely because it will take the South African labour market some time to adjust, and new technologies can be introduced only slowly. The net result will probably be a lower level of foreign recruitment from a range of different supply sources, with the South African Government attempting to continue to exploit the different attitudes and policies of the sending states.

The future for migrant labour working for non-Chamber of Mines employers is less clear. Such recruitment is not centrally organised, and is more responsive to local labour market conditions. Estate farmers for example will probably continue to recruit seasonal agricultural labour from Botswana, as long as the Botswana authorities and the South African regulations permit. On balance, however, recruitment can be expected to decline as the South African Government increases pressure on employers to hire local labour in the face of rising levels of domestic unemployment. A recession prompted by the introduction of economic sanctions on South Africa would accelerate these trends.

From the point of view of the supplier states, the pros and cons of the migrant labour system are fairly clear. The benefits are confined to income effects – income for (mainly) the poorer households, foreign exchange to strengthen the balance of payments, and additional government revenues from fees charged to the recruiters and the employers. Weighed against this are increased dependence upon South Africa for the nations and the individuals concerned, production (and political and economic innovation) foregone through the absence of males of working age, and the enormous social costs of family separation together with the personal humiliation associated with life under apartheid in the prison-like conditions of the mining compounds. Both from the perspectives of the supplier states, which need to reduce dependence upon South Africa, and of the South African blacks, it is clear that a lengthy continuation of the existing system would be

undesirable. But the difficulties of terminating these arrangements vary considerably amongst the supplier countries.

The re-absorption of migrant labourers must be tackled as part of the domestic employment creation strategies of each of the countries concerned. The most intractable case will be that of Lesotho. As shown in Table 1, one-third of the Basotho labour force works in South Africa – half of them engaged by employers associated with the Chamber of Mines. Employment of Basotho in the Republic is over six times total formal employment in Lesotho. Even in the long run, this proportion of a growing labour force can be productively re-absorbed in the domestic economy only at high cost. Tourism can certainly be further developed, but this is not very labour-intensive. Manufacturing industries would probably need extensive and extended subsidy, and the prospects for absorption of large number of workers in agriculture are not good in view of Lesotho's poor soils. At present, over 40 per cent of national income comes from the earnings of migrant labourers in South Africa. Termination of this system, without compensatory financial transfers from other sources, would pauperise the great majority of Basotho households.

The problems of re-absorption are more manageable in the case of Botswana, although here too the extent of dependence upon migrant labour is such that its sudden termination would bring high costs: allowing for 'illegal' migration, one-fifth of the citizen labour force works abroad, remittances comprise one-fifth of household income for the poorest tenth of the rural population [Colclough and Fallon 1979], and employment in RSA is 10 per cent greater than formal employment in Botswana. On the other hand, migration is not generally a long-term survival strategy, as it is for many Basotho, and the obstacles to rapidly increasing domestic labour use are much less formidable. Botswana tend to use the migrant labour system as a means of building up enough capital to buy cattle and to start farming. A range of solutions could be tried, but research has shown that the most important priorities are to provide the poorer families with reliable and timely access to draught-power, and to increase substantially the resources for both production and research in arable agriculture [Colclough and McCarthy 1980; Lipton 1978].

In the other supplier states, the problems of terminating migrant labour flows to South Africa are less serious. Swaziland, with about eight per cent of its labour force employed in South Africa,

and with a much higher proportion of its domestic workers engaged in formal sector jobs (25 per cent compared to 17 per cent in Botswana, or about three times as many as work in RSA), is less critically dependent upon work in South Africa than either Botswana or Lesotho. Mozambique and Malawi have already coped with substantial severance from the migrant labour system. In both countries this must have caused severe difficulties for thousands of families over the last few years – although no information is available on how and with what success the migrants concerned have been re-absorbed in the domestic rural sector.

In fact, Mozambique and Malawi now have many more workers in Zimbabwe than in South Africa. About 200,000 people – mainly from these countries, but also including significant numbers of Zambians and a few thousand Botswana – now hold jobs in Zimbabwe (Table 1). Many of these have become semi-permanent residents and have severed links with their homes to a much greater extent than is permitted in RSA. Here too, however, such work opportunities may not be available indefinitely. The legitimately independent government in Zimbabwe is now faced with urgent problems of reconstruction and structural change, of rising unemployment, of absorbing tens of thousands of returning refugees, and probably also the 50,000 or so Zimbabweans currently working in South Africa. It will inevitably have to give low priority to the protection of jobs held by non-citizen Africans. Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia must therefore face the repatriation of most of their citizens working in Zimbabwe.

Nevertheless, except in Lesotho, and to a lesser extent in Botswana, the problem of re-absorption of migrants is manageable (albeit difficult and costly) for the majority-ruled countries of Southern Africa – particularly when compared with the much bigger problem of under-utilisation of domestic labour, and with the rapid annual growth of the domestic labour force. The rural sector in each country will have to absorb most of these additional workers. To this end, long-term national policies for agricultural and rural development must be devised which aim to provide productive work opportunities for the people who are displaced from abroad, and for those who are without adequate work at home. Meanwhile the supplier states will wish to maximise the domestic benefits from the migrant labour system as long as it continues to operate, and to prepare contingency arrangements which would reduce the costs of a sudden reduction or termination of the present opportunities facing migrant workers. Desirable action at the regional

and international levels is discussed in the final section of this article.

## **Problems in the Skilled Labour Market**

### **Historical background**

Throughout the region, modern production structures were established during the colonial period without the creation of the required skills among the indigenous population. Most of these states were settler colonies; the colonialists came to stay, profiting enormously from the territories' resources. Education was typically provided by the missionary societies. Metropolitan governments were parsimonious, and expenditure on education in the colonies won few votes. The missionaries, however, needed to educate the heathen in order to convert him, and also needed local rather than metropolitan support. This provided a convenient division of interests, and colonial governments were content to leave the provision of education (and health) services largely to other agencies.

In most countries of Southern Africa, however, education and training were neglected not only because of the expense involved but also as a means of preventing Africans and Europeans from competing on equal terms in the labour market. In Southern Rhodesia and Namibia, the colonists reinforced these policies with job reservation and other mechanisms in order to divide whites and blacks into non-competing groups. Outside RSA itself, such labour policies took their most extreme form in these two territories, but their elements were present in varying degrees throughout the region prior to independence.

As a result, post-primary education and training prior to independence covered only a tiny proportion of the population. Although mission secondary schools often provided education of a high standard, this rarely went beyond a basic three-year post-primary cycle. The number of Africans who had managed to gain higher education was derisively small: in Zambia there were fewer than 100 African graduates in 1964; in BLS the numbers were even lower.

Technical education was virtually non-existent. It is true that the gaps in the technical fields often relate back to an inadequate mathematics grounding at primary level: even today numeracy throughout the region remains more elusive than literacy. But even where students did have both an aptitude and an adequate basis for technical studies, the opportunities for pursuing these within their own countries were almost non-existent, particularly in comparison with the needs. In

Southern Rhodesia and Zambia (though not in Namibia), where the mining and manufacturing sectors were developed early, some training in technical skills became established. But this was limited to comparatively low levels, leading to occupations where settler interests were not threatened. In jobs where there was a strong white involvement, the response to labour shortages was usually to import more labour from abroad, rather than to provide the training infrastructure needed to secure African advancement.

Thus in the six countries which achieved independence during the 1960s, European workers occupied 10-15 per cent of all jobs in the formal sector at independence. At the higher levels of the occupational structure there were hardly any Africans, and the few citizens who had succeeded in attaining advanced qualifications were usually working in the schools and primary teacher training colleges, rather than in government or the directly productive sectors. The manpower problems facing the newly-independent states were thus awesome – similar in quantitative terms (though not in speed of transition required) to those facing Mozambique and Angola today and to those which will face Namibia and Zimbabwe in the near future.

### **The policy response and the emergence of new problems**

The main policy response to the acute manpower shortages facing Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and BLS has been a massive increase in the provision of formal schooling. Over the first decade of independence, secondary school enrolments doubled in Tanzania and tripled in Swaziland; in Zambia they increased five-fold and in Botswana more than six-fold. Universities were established in all these states, and here too enrolments have increased very rapidly. Educational policy has thus been dominated by the concern to expand the fledgling systems inherited from colonial days. Important attempts have been made to secure qualitative improvements at primary level by the provision of better equipment and trained teachers and by the reduction of rates of attrition and of class size. In Tanzania the reforms have gone much further. Inevitably, however, in all countries the major emphasis in terms of the allocation of both financial and administrative resources has been placed upon the post-primary system.

In part as a result of this emphasis, progress has been made in localising the labour force in all these countries: in every case, non-citizen workers now comprise less than one-tenth of formal employment (Table 1), and the influence wielded by foreign workers has been much reduced. They are

now concentrated in technical and supportive professional jobs, and no longer occupy the highest decision-making posts in government. The high initial expectations of national policy makers have, however, been disappointed. Although the proportional importance of expatriates has fallen, in absolute terms there are now twice as many non-citizen workers in Botswana as in 1966; there are more, also, in Swaziland and Lesotho; Zambia – with 33,000 expatriate employees – now has about the same number as were employed at independence. Only in Tanzania has really dramatic progress with localisation been achieved with scarcely more than one per cent of all formal jobs now being held by non-citizens.

These differences are primarily a reflection of differences in economic structure. Very rapid modern sector growth in Botswana, and to a lesser extent in Swaziland, has outstripped the capacity of even a greatly expanded formal education system. In Zambia, on the other hand, the dominance and technical complexity of copper mining largely accounts for the continued presence of so many non-citizen workers: this sector accounts for over one-third of all non-citizens employed in Zambia, and the number of expatriate mining personnel has actually increased by about 50 per cent since independence.

But the different relative emphases which have been given to the expansion of schools, universities and other forms of post-secondary education and training have not always promoted localisation. Each of these countries has had at least one manpower plan since independence, but in most cases these have strongly emphasised the role of the schools in forming required skills, and perhaps underplayed the crucial importance of various forms of formal and non-formal training. Three of these plans (Zambia 1966, Botswana 1973 and Swaziland 1978) attempted to quantify the need for training, based upon survey evidence, but only in the last was caution expressed about the desirability of further secondary school expansion, and importance given to means of promoting employment-linked training schemes for the formal sector. As a result, post-primary school leaver unemployment will soon become a general problem. In some countries this has already happened: unemployment of 'O' level school leavers emerged in Zambia in the early 1970s, and in Swaziland it began to appear in 1978. This relatively new phenomenon in Southern Africa, of rising levels of educated unemployment co-existing with a continued dependence upon the skills of non-citizens, is likely to become more widespread over the next few years.

Governments are attempting to tackle this problem in various ways. First, there is an increased concern to ensure that educational expenditure concentrates on providing a sound basic education for all (including, especially in the case of Tanzania, greater emphasis on adult education for those who never had access to primary school), rather than allowing an increasing proportion of resources to be pre-empted by providing an expensive higher education for a small minority.

Secondly, there are moves towards making the basic cycle of schooling more suitable for the needs of most children. These include attempts to 'localise' curricula, the introduction of mother tongues as media of instruction, introducing productive work and pre-vocational training into the syllabus, challenging the examination-oriented rote learning approaches of existing systems, and introducing alternative means of assessment and selection – both for promotion within education and from education to jobs. Tanzania's policies of 'education for self reliance' have incorporated such reforms during the last ten years. A recent comprehensive review of the Zambian education system included these and other measures amongst its proposals. The policies of Botswana and Swaziland are also moving in these directions.

Third, increased emphasis is being placed upon other institutional mechanisms in order to promote localisation. Whilst selective expansion of university departments, particularly in science-based disciplines, is still needed throughout the region, many of the most critical skills can best be acquired outside the formal educational structure. The prime requisite is to ensure more structured job experience for new educated recruits, and more clearly organised learning-on-the-job, supported by release or 'sandwich' arrangements for the acquisition of technical skills. Such training is the main way in which localisation of the formal sector labour force can be speeded up. Training levies and other incentive schemes need to be introduced by more states as a means of increasing the amount of training undertaken by private employers. Training must be seen as the prime responsibility of those expatriates now working in technical jobs. Although some further expansion of university and technical training facilities is desirable, in general the institutional facilities to provide the required skills already exist. The major problem is in making them function effectively, and in ensuring that training, employment and incentive structures reflect changing priorities on a year-to-year basis.

*Mozambique and Angola* are at a much earlier stage in dealing with these problems. Their

education policies are closer to those of Tanzania: emphasis is put upon basic literacy, and therefore upon primary and adult education; education is strongly integrated with work – both during and after completion of each stage of schooling; strong emphasis is placed upon worker education, and the government organises many small training courses for worker upgrading. Quantitatively, these countries face localisation problems greater than those of Zambia. Precise magnitudes cannot yet be assessed, and the establishment of such data will presumably be an early priority.

*Namibia and Zimbabwe* will also have special problems. These countries have relatively well developed production structures, making them – relative to the distribution of populations – the richest nations in the Southern African region outside RSA. However, as the papers by Green and Riddell show, owing to the racialist policies which have been pursued in education and training, the maintenance of these production levels is at present highly dependent upon the skills held by white settlers and expatriates.

The transition to legitimate majority rule in each of these countries will bring<sup>1</sup> radical changes in production relations, particularly in agriculture, mining and manufacturing, with land reforms and increased state participation in production; radical shifts in the nature and pattern of provision of services, particularly in health and education; probable sharp changes in the distribution of net earnings from work, with large average reductions at the top. One consequence of these changes will be a major exodus of whites – particularly those in more skilled or senior positions.

In many ways this is highly desirable. In Namibia, a large proportion of the whites have South African nationality, and their continuation – particularly in government service – would be inappropriate. Ingrained colonial attitudes will not be helpful under new arrangements. As a result, however, major gaps will be created amongst the most skilled and experienced sections of the labour force.

In aggregate terms, this could mean the loss of between 11 and 15 per cent of the formally employed labour force in both countries. But between 70 and 80 per cent of the skilled labour force is likely to be lost – more than 25,000 skilled persons from Namibia, and as many as 50-100,000 in the case of Zimbabwe. Most of these skills will

have to be replaced. Structural changes in production, ownership and distribution will undoubtedly change the skill mix – particularly in agriculture, education, health and government. But in spite of these changes in composition, the aggregate need for educated and trained persons is unlikely to be much reduced. In Namibia, at least, it is likely to increase. Thus, in both these countries there will be major problems of qualitative, quantitative and structural readjustment in the manpower field.

First, there will be a need to identify those Africans – and there are tens of thousands – who have acquired skills by informal means outside the school-university system, and who are suitable for rapid upgrading to skilled jobs in the formal sector. This will involve designing specific short-term upgrading courses in a wide range of clerical, artisan and technical fields. A flexible system of adult education, training and testing centres is needed, in order to identify existing and potential skills, to organise the basic training required, and to link into other, more structured training institutions which provide longer-term instruction for the acquisition of priority skills. Second, a domestic training and education infrastructure will be required for medium-/long-term economic and structural change. Decisions will need to be based upon a careful analysis of the transitional and projected employment structure – in turn based upon economic and political priorities, and detailed staffing analogues from other independent African states. Third, a framework needs to be established for regional cooperation in training in skills which are of high priority but are expensive to acquire. Fourth, technical cooperation with other countries, in terms of the temporary provision of skilled workers, will be needed during the transitional and immediate post independence phase. The dimensions, sources and nature of this programme need careful thought, as does a framework to facilitate a rapid reduction of dependence upon such outside sources of skills. The initiatives which appear to be required at the regional and international levels are indicated below.

## **Regional and International Initiatives**

### **Migrant labour**

South Africa remains dependent upon migrant labour from surrounding states – but this dependence is gradually being reduced. For various strategic and economic reasons, however, migration is likely to continue – albeit at a lower level. Early termination of labour flows is likely only in the event of a deterioration of South Africa's

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<sup>1</sup> Although Mr Mugabe is currently adopting a cautious approach to policy reforms, the expectations of his black electorate are such that changes cannot be postponed indefinitely.

economic position (eg as a result of international sanctions or if the armed struggle moves into South Africa itself). In this situation, a range of actions at the regional and international levels are desirable.

*Regional initiatives.* The supplier states have an interest in coordinating their policies on migrant labour. To this end, meetings were held during 1978 in Lusaka to discuss matters of common concern. Negotiations with the mines for improving working and living conditions will be more effective if all supplier states speak with a common voice. There is also much to be gained from reviewing alternative national policies for the re-absorption of returning migrants in the event of rapid change in the political or economic circumstances of the Republic.

An area of common interest is the fees collected from labour recruiters. Apart from the small charges made for recruitment licences, 'attestation' fees are currently levied by the supplier states on a per capita basis. These vary between R5 per labourer recruited in Swaziland and R15 in Lesotho. The evidence suggests that if all supplier states were to adopt the same level of attestation fees for mine work, the level of charges could be raised very substantially without significantly reducing the flow of recruits in the short-term.

Fees of even R100 per recruit would increase African labour costs in the mines by less than ten per cent – far less than the tax revenue raised by the South African Government on the profits and other incomes generated by migrant workers.

*International cooperation.* Other initiatives require both regional and international cooperation. Swaziland and Botswana, but especially Lesotho, would require substantial additional aid in the event of a sudden contraction of employment opportunities in South Africa, in order to avoid huge income losses to the poorer families. The scale of transfers would be at least of the order of \$5 mn, \$20 mn and \$100 mn per year respectively, if full compensation were to be provided. In Swaziland and Botswana, domestic employment policies can be designed for absorbing repatriated migrant labourers within the medium-term. The case of Lesotho is different; large amounts of aid will be needed over the long-term if that country's present dependence upon employment in South Africa is removed.

An urgent study of employment possibilities in Lesotho is required. This should focus upon identifying public projects which are capable both of absorbing large amounts of unskilled labour, and of

providing the capital to sustain and employ a growing labour force. The costs of such a programme will be large. But short-term investments of this magnitude will be less costly and more beneficial over the long run than continuing indefinitely the scale of recurrent support which would otherwise be required.

Indeed, especially in the case of Lesotho, international support is needed now for poor peasant-oriented rural development and formal employment creation related to skills acquired in South Africa. Migrant levels have begun to fall; the re-absorption problem is already confronting many households. To delay building up international support until a crisis emerges will guarantee that the support will be too little, too late, too irrelevant.

### **Training and technical cooperation**

The most urgent skilled manpower problems to be faced in Southern Africa over the next few years will be those generated by the transition to legitimate majority rule in Namibia and Zimbabwe. These countries account for over half of the whites employed in the region outside RSA – the majority of whom may have to be replaced. This is not to underestimate the profound manpower problems at present faced by Mozambique and Angola: almost one million Portuguese residents (including workers and dependents) have left since 1975, and have been supplemented by much smaller numbers of *cooperantes*, mainly from Cuba, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Substantial skill shortages remain. However, large numbers of the Portuguese workers were unskilled or semi-skilled; this is not, in general, true of the whites working in Namibia and Zimbabwe. Moreover, because industrial structures in these countries are more developed – relative to the skill level of their African populations – transitional problems will be more acute than those which have been faced by other countries in the region.

Whites in Namibia and Zimbabwe dominate the professional and technical occupations [UNIN 1978; Colclough and Murray 1979]. The most acute shortages, in the event of a European exodus, are likely to occur in the engineering, geological, medical, veterinary, dentistry, accounting, legal and architectural professions. There will also be a general shortage of workers in science based occupations – including science teachers – and of technicians, artisan foremen, and skilled craftsmen at all levels of production. Few Africans have acquired such skills domestically through formal training. Although between six and eight thousand Zimbabweans have received scholarships for





*Lesotho women winnowing sorghum.*

training abroad since 1966, the numbers trained in the above fields are still far less than will be required. Namibia is in a much worse position, with no more than about 300 graduates from post-secondary courses abroad.

Although the magnitude of the training requirements is greater in Namibia and Zimbabwe than elsewhere, the skill priorities themselves are not significantly different. In all occupations which require specialised training at post-secondary levels, shortages are widespread. Each country has developed – or will shortly do so – an infrastructure sufficient to meet its needs for workers with general educational qualifications – including the basic university disciplines which lead to jobs in government administration, management and teaching. Nevertheless, regional cooperation in the development of more specialised education and training courses along the following lines is highly desirable:

- in some occupations and countries, the immediate requirements for citizenisation are very large, relative to long-term needs for growth and replacement. This is true for civil, electrical and mechanical engineers, geologists, other mining

skills and related technicians, in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and, to an extent, Botswana. An appropriate strategy might be to expand the school of mines at UNZA, and the faculty of engineering at the University of Zimbabwe, to admit both more nationals and students from these other states. During the first few years significant numbers of Batswana and Namibians would study elsewhere in Africa, or in the UK. Over the medium-term, however, more of the increased capacity in Lusaka and Salisbury could be taken up by other non-nationals, as the immediate localisation problem diminishes in these two countries;

- national faculties of medicine, dentistry, forestry and veterinary science are too expensive to justify in Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia. Economies of scale in these disciplines are very high. Their provision could be tackled on a multi-national basis, taking account of the needs of all the states in the region;
- the need for other graduate specialisms will in some cases be small. Degree courses are desirable in architecture, surveying, town and regional planning. Such courses could take more account

of local needs and resources than those available in western universities. But limited enrolments will require that these be introduced on a regional, rather than a national basis. In addition, undergraduate courses in non-priority disciplines – eg some European languages, religious studies, psychology – together with most postgraduate degree courses need not be represented in more than two or three of the national universities during the early years;

with regard to sub-degree programmes, the possibility of making firm long-term arrangements amongst 'anglophone' countries in the region could also be explored. Railway training is an urgent priority for Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana. In view of the strong possibility of additional railway links between these three countries, some cooperative approach to training (and staffing) is desirable. Facilities are already well developed at the railway training school in Bulawayo. These could be expanded, or alternatively a new centre could be built up as part of a new maintenance/servicing centre which will almost certainly be required in Botswana and/or Namibia;

- as regards other skills, Swaziland would be an appropriate centre for forestry training; Namibia for fisheries; Botswana and Swaziland, in the context of expansion of the Institute of Development Management, for planning, finance, taxation and customs administration. Training for these latter skills, which are still scarce throughout the region, could also be developed at a number of centres, including the Institute of Finance Management in Dar es Salaam;
- the training of science, engineering, and medical technicians is such a large and urgent priority that most countries will wish to establish their own facilities. BLS and Namibia may wish to explore the possibility of using facilities in other countries in the region on grounds of cost effectiveness, but even in these countries, national programmes would in most cases be viable. It would seem sensible to integrate this 'tertiary' level training in one national institution: the Malawian polytechnic concept appears particularly relevant. The danger is that the unit cost of training may be pulled up by association with university departments, rather than vice versa; but this need not necessarily be the case.

Regional cooperation in tertiary level training does not involve the creation of new joint universities or colleges. Recent experience with UBLS

demonstrates the inevitability of tension if national funds are used to build up jointly owned facilities in other countries. But unless students from one country can be trained in another, many tertiary level courses will not be viable. If regional training initiatives are to succeed, capital costs must be met from external sources, as part of a technical cooperation programme financed by the international community. This would be separate from, and in addition to, monies received by individual countries through existing bi-lateral and multi-lateral channels. For some countries, also, provision of recurrent costs will be important because of foreign exchange constraints. For a host state to be willing, over the long or even medium-term, to provide a substantial number of places for citizens of other states, it must receive the full recurrent costs either from the sending states or through international cooperation. Such financial guarantees would facilitate the negotiation of medium-term cost-sharing agreements for particular tertiary level courses.

#### **Temporary expatriate manpower**

Namibia and Zimbabwe combined may need the temporary assistance of up to 75,000 skilled expatriates during the early post-independence period (Green's figure of 15,000-17,500 for Namibia, together with author's estimate of about 60 per cent of the present level of white employment in Zimbabwe). Holding post-independence requirements down to these levels would represent and require a significant step towards Africanising the labour force. But, relative to the size of the national populations, this still implies very large technical cooperation programmes.

If one-third of these recruits were financed through technical cooperation arrangements, the costs to the international community would be around £300 mn per year at current rates. Full use could be made in recruitment of friendly governments and agencies. If the destabilising presence of 'unsuitable' expatriates is to be avoided, it is important that a high proportion of these foreign personnel are interviewed and selected by Namibians and Zimbabweans themselves. Strong recruitment 'vetting' offices could usefully be established by the two governments. One aim is likely to be the recruitment of technical cooperation personnel from other friendly Third World countries with specific skilled labour surpluses. Some countries in the region have already initiated technical cooperation agreements with Nigeria and with India. Such programmes could usefully be initiated in Zimbabwe and in Namibia after its transition to majority rule.

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