

MANPOWER AID

by Richard Jolly\*

At present about a quarter of all world aid is in the field of manpower - education aid to develop local manpower resources, training to produce specific skills; technical assistance and various topping-up schemes like O.S.A.S. to plug gaps with expatriate skills and expertise and Peace Corps, V.S.O. and U.N. volunteers to pack a bit of youth and enthusiasm into the programme. In one form or another, all these are parts of what can be termed "manpower aid" a broader classification than technical assistance (because it includes all aid to education as well as all forms of technical assistance) and for many purposes a better one too, because it groups under one head all the various forms of aid whose purpose is to provide or develop the skills and expertise needed for development.

British bilateral manpower aid can be used to illustrate the breakdown of manpower aid by function and form. In 1967, Britain provided about £40 millions of manpower aid. Half went towards education and training, just over a third to the direct provision of skills and expertise to fill gaps in the present manpower structure and the remainder towards 'consultancies, surveys, research and equipment'.

Table 1

Approximate distribution of major forms of British Bilateral Manpower Aid: 1967

	Education	Experts	Consultancies, Research & Equipment	Total	%
Financial Aid:	7.2			7.2	18
Disbursements on experts & volunteers:	7.7	13.5	2.8	24.0	59
Student trainees in U.K.:	5.7			5.7	14
Training in home country:	.6			.6	2
Research, surveys & equipment:			3.0	3.0	7
Percentage	21.2 52%	13.5 33%	5.8 15%	40.5 100%	100%

/see Notes overleaf

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N.B. This particular distribution is not readily calculable from published British Aid Statistics and accordingly certain assumptions had to be made in allocating some items. This will not have affected the broad picture though some individual figures may not be exactly correct.

Source: O.D.M. "British Aid Statistics 1963-67" H.M.S.O. 1968: calculated from Tables 1, 21, 24, 25 and supplemented with direct information from O.D.M. statistics section.

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Table 1 also gives the breakdown showing the forms in which manpower aid was provided: nearly two-thirds of this went as wages, salaries, topping-up and pensions, mainly on the 15,000 operational staff, volunteers, and experts working in developing countries. Of the remainder, just over an eighth went in the form of capital aid, another eighth to students and trainees in Britain, and the balance on training, consultancies, research, surveys and equipment in recipient countries.

But the main point of looking at manpower aid as a whole is not just to re-arrange statistics, but to consider whether its distribution by purpose and form represents a reasonable balance, judged by the interest of donors and recipients. This is not a question which can usefully be answered without reference to the particular situation and manpower needs of individual countries, but it is possible to divide countries into broad groups and suggest some common objectives and criteria which may have some general validity for each.

The first main group comprises all those countries, mainly African, which are still significantly dependent on expatriates to man skilled and educated posts in the country. From Britain's point of view, the group may be further divided - into those countries primarily dependent for manpower aid on Britain and those primarily dependent on some other donor. About two-thirds of British manpower aid goes to about twenty such countries in the first sub-group - and in financial terms in 1967, half British manpower aid went to only seven of them, in order: Kenya, Zambia, Nigeria, Malaysia, Uganda, Malawi and Tanzania. The second main group of countries comprise all those not in the first group - those which are not dependent on short-term expatriates in any general way. This is by far the largest group of countries. The majority receive small amounts of British manpower aid but it is in most respects a marginal contribution.

In practice, of course, there is a spectrum of differences in degrees of manpower dependence rather than a sharp dividing line between dependence and independence. And there are different dimensions of dependence. But substantial general manpower dependence is a recognizable situation and since the bulk of manpower aid goes to only a few countries in just such dependence, it is

useful to consider these countries separately.

If one had to suggest a single objective for manpower aid to a manpower dependent country, it would be "to assist it to achieve self-sufficiency in skilled and educated manpower as soon as possible". Such an objective accords with the broad interests of both recipient and donor. Politically, the recipient country generally has strong and obvious reasons for moving away from dependence on expatriate manpower as soon as possible. It has good economic reasons also, not the least being to minimize expatriate influences on local wage and consumption standards. The objective of attaining self-sufficiency in manpower also has attractions for the donor countries - particularly the main donors which supply the bulk of manpower aid and would like to see an early end to the recurrent obligations which this sort of dependence entails.

Self-sufficiency in manpower as an objective of manpower aid has parallels with the objective for capital aid proposed by Millikan and Rostow in the late fifties and subsequently taken up with variations by U.S.A.I.D. in the Chenery era. With capital aid, the objective was to enable countries to achieve self-sustaining growth. The rationale for this possibility was largely built on a Rostovian conception of take-off, in which with gathering speed hastened by aid, countries would reach the position where, on their own, they generated sufficient savings to be independent of aid. As a single criterion for capital aid, this has been largely discredited, because it rests on assumptions about aid and about development which are over-simplified and over-optimistic and because if rigorously applied it would leave out in the cold many countries which at present don't measure up to the criterion.

But self-sufficiency as a major objective of manpower aid (there would in practice be other objectives too) would avoid these three difficulties. It is not over simplified to aim for self-sufficiency in skilled manpower in a broad sense nor is it over-optimistic - most countries have achieved it and, given the tendency for educational output to run ahead of job creation, it will no doubt be achieved in the others. Nor are the implications for the distribution of aid between countries unreasonable. Since manpower aid is only a fraction of total aid and would remain so even if self-sufficiency was the accepted objective, the criterion could be applied without large distortions in the whole pattern of aid (though for some countries there might be important shifts in the balance of manpower and capital aid).

If self-sufficiency was adopted as the main criterion, the amount and direction of manpower aid to a particular country would be heavily influenced by six factors:

- (1) The present stock of skilled and educated manpower, local

- and expatriate, i.e. the number of persons with skills and education above some specified level;
- (2) the proportion of skilled and educated posts at present held by expatriates;
  - (3) the planned rate of localization;
  - (4) the forecast rate of growth of economic output (GDP)
  - (5) the present size of the educational system, and
  - (6) its forecast rate of growth.

The first four factors largely determine the present demand for skills and education and how fast this level of demand will grow. Factors 5 and 6 will indicate both how the demand for teachers will grow and also the size and growth of the supply of outputs for the education and training system available to meet the demand. The higher any of the first four factors, the larger would be the need for manpower aid and vice versa, if any of the factors was smaller.

The effect of 6 - the growth of the educational system - differs in the short and long run. The short run effect of an expansion of education is to raise the demand for teachers; only in the long run does it increase the supply of educated persons. This is an important point since countries heavily dependent on expatriates are likely to start with an educational system well below their manpower needs. In this situation, a move towards self-sufficiency requires educated expansion, but the immediate effect of this expansion is to increase even further the needs for manpower aid - compounded by an expanding need for teachers and a declining number of local staff with education and skills as more of them stay within the growing educational system, instead of taking jobs outside. It requires straight thinking and a constant commitment to self-sufficiency from both donors and recipients, to realize that this is the price for achieving self-sufficiency sooner rather than later.

If the increase in the demand for manpower aid is misinterpreted, and there is a premature attempt to reduce it, the result is more likely to be a decline in quality than a surge of vacancies. Posts will be filled, but with persons well below the level required, leading to confusion and inefficiency in administration and declining quality in the schools and thus also in future standards.

The argument so far has concentrated on the first group

of expatriate-dependent countries. What should be the objectives and criteria for manpower aid to the second group of countries, those already largely self-sufficient in skilled and educated manpower? To answer this, one can start by noting that British manpower aid to most of these countries is small in relation to their own total of manpower effort and resources. In addition, it is for about half of these countries small in relation to total British manpower aid. In the other half, of these countries, particularly in Latin America, manpower aid, though small, forms the dominant part of all British aid. A fair proportion of this manpower aid usually goes on training abroad - in about fifty countries, more than is spent on the supply of experts.

For these countries, self-sufficiency would be too narrow a criterion for manpower aid. Indeed, no single objective can realistically be treated as generally dominant: objectives are mixed and varied. They are much more liable to be affected by the particular circumstances of each country, and it would be silly not to recognize this.

This is not to suggest that a systematic approach to manpower aid for these countries is not possible - indeed a clarification and evaluation of objectives is particularly important, because without it the application of 'many criteria' soon becomes in effect, the application of no criterion. As a start, most manpower aid programmes would benefit from a systematic evaluation of objectives and an assessment of how effective aid has been in achieving them. Once this has been done, there will be a strong case for concentrating on those areas in which the training or expertise of the donor show greatest comparative advantage in terms of the defined objectives.

In summary, what are the implications of this approach to manpower aid, for planning and implementing the aid programme? Particularly for the first group of expatriate dependent countries, there is an obvious need to plan manpower aid as a whole rather than in separate pieces or as separate programmes: only thus will one avoid duplication and inefficiency through putting too much into manpower aid of some sorts and too little into others. Secondly, manpower aid needs to be planned in detail in co-operation with the recipient country and preferably with other major donors also. The broad lines of manpower aid can probably be judged at a distance given published information on the six factors identified above (all of which can readily be quantified). But this information, even when available, is never sufficiently detailed or up-to-date to do more than indicate the broad lines. There is a

need for direct discussion and negotiation between donor and recipient over the specific programme to be implemented over the next two years or so.

Third, recipient countries need to be strengthened in their own manpower planning machinery so as to be able to plan and implement efficiently the co-ordinated programme which accelerated self-sufficiency will require.

Finally, as all of this implies, donor countries will need their own units for making periodic assessments of their manpower aid programme, of the needs of particular manpower-dependent countries, and periodic evaluations as these countries progress to self-sufficiency.

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