

. KMODEP 3%th (3

xx

W

3.0

4.0

SOUTH H'RICAN EXTENSION UNIT

COMMI'I'EEE PAPER NO; 32.48 1

SAEU: A FUTIRE TMJECTORY

av.

The paper assesses progress being made by the SAEU in responding to tasks outlined in its transfomational plan as recommended. by the IEO Consultants and. approved by the Board. of Trustees in its Annual Meeting in October 1992.1 On the basis of the assessment, the paper further attempts to speculate on what should be a. viable future direction (trajectory) for the Unit in its efforts to institutionalize itself.'

The paper notes that whereas the Unit will have to wind. up the exiles programme as soon as fwu'ling for it ceases, there is a. need for it to adapt its recently launched returnees programme to the South African academic world before it is dismissed. as an irrelevant and. foreim-oriented programme.

As regards the Unit's future trajectory, the paper speculates that this 113 rooted in the SAEU'B dual long-term role. It is, therefore, being argued. that in spite of existing problems, the two roles namer catering for the educational and training needs of refugees on the cue hand. and initiating and Waging human resources development programmes for 11m1-refugeee on the other, should. be pursued eamestlyd

According to the paper, whereas the SAEU'B future lies in the field of refugee education, its source for sustainability is linked with hman resources development programmes for non-rofugee ooummnities in Southern Africa. heading on this middle passage (trajectory) is the challenge ahead of the SAEU in its efforts to institutionalize itself.

Committee Members are requested. to etuiy the paper and recommend it for onward eubmiasion to the Finance and Appointments Committee.

I submit

N E LIGATE

DI HECTOR

WM4

SAEU: A3 FUTURE TRAJECTORY

INTRODUCTION

During its ninth meeting in October 1992, the SAEU Board of Trustees approved a three phase future plan for the Unit recommended w International Extension College's (IEG's) Consultants. The plan consisted of short, medium and long-terms phases. In the short-term (two - three years), it was recommended that the Unit should continue serving its learners still in exile. In the median-term (three - five years), the Unit was reqtnred to initiate and run a retumees' programme for its former students in South Africa? Finally, in the long-term (over five years), it was recommended that the Unit should extend its services to other refugee communes in Southern Africa and later on in the whole . Continent, with a view to assuming a permanent role as a Resource Centre for Distance Education for Refugeesk! '

Besides approving the foregoing plan, the Board of Trustees recommended the inclusion of hman resources development through distance education for Southern African nationals as an essential task within the Unit's long-term role. In effect, this recommendation assigned the Unit a; dual long-term role; for refugees on the one hand and for nationals on the other.! This paper reviews the experience of the SAEU in handling the foregoing tasks. On the basis of this assessment, an attempt is being made to speculate on a possible future trajectory for the Unit.

REVIEW

Since 1992/93, the Uhit has been handling its short-term role as recommended by the IEO 'Consultants. By March 1993, the Uhit was serving a total of 815 students still in exile in Tanzania-(286), Uganda (357). Zambia (73) and Zimbabwe (99). Since then, a significant proportion of these stuients have returned to South Africa, although in the ease of Zimbabwe the students population seems tozrising instead of declining. Thus, by the end of December 1993, there were a total of 629 students still in exile as follows:

Tanzania: 150
Uganda: 245
Zambia: 1 6
Zimbabwe: 218
Total 629

It is expected that unless otherwise, the SAEU will formally wind up its services for its students still in exile in June 1995, when its last group of learners will sit for the GCE Examinations. Moreover, the GF'I'O which is currently funding SAEU's exiles programme has indicated that it would phase out its support in June 1995.

As regards the medium-term role, it is heartening to note that finally the Unit managed to finalize essential preliminaries and effectively launched a programme for its students in South Africa on 02 October 1993. Among the essential preliminaries which had to be finalized, before launching the returnees programme included formalizing relations with local collaborating institutions, retracing former learners, appointing a Coordinator and securing funds for the programme. Conforming with the demands of the donors, for this year, a total of 500 students will be covered by the programme in two Stuvia-centres namely Johannesburg and Durban.

The immediate challenges ahead of the SAEU as far as the returnees programme is concerned are basically three. First, it is the expansion of the students' body to cover a significant proportion of the targeted former learners who number more than 2500. However, besides the former exiles there is both a cause and a need of considering extending the programme to non-exiles who have also been victimized by apartheid. Second, it is the diversification of the programme; In line with the recommendations of the IEG's Consultants, the programme presently concentrates on the provision of secondary education based on the London 0013 Syllabus. However, it has been noted that there is a great demand for vocational training among the former exiles. Further, it has been noted that some of the exiles require remedial training in basic education courses in order to enhance their capacity in pursuing successfully secondary education courses. It is, therefore, essentially necessary to diversify the programme in order to address and tackle effectively the varying needs of the target group. Third and last challenge is the localisation of the programme. The Consultancy Report recommends the use of the London GCE Syllabus in the returnees programs as long as SACHED's Alternative Secondary Curriculum is not yet functional. Although so far nobody knows when the curriculum will become operational, there is a need for the SAEU to start exploring modalities for adapting the returnees programme to the South African academic world. This measure is extremely essential as short of this the programme may soon be dismissed as an irrelevant foreign oriented educational

In the past, we have pointed out that whereas the recommended short and medium terms phases address the future of the students, that of the Uhit itself is addressed under the long-term phase. For this reason, a discussion on the Uhit's future trajectory need to be well informed by both the prospects and challenges of the long-term role. As already hinted, SAEU's long-term role is essentially a dual role envisaging educational services to refugee communities on the one hand and human resources development tasks for nationals in Southern African countries on the other. Perhaps it is quite proper to question the rationale for one institution to assume such seemingly divergent roles. It should, however, be stressed that the roles are more complementary than divergent. Refugees are not only human beings but also nationals of specific countries. Their status as refugees is not only unfortunate but also abnormal. It should, therefore, be normalised as soon as it is practicable. . In a way, this is the basic essence of education and training for refugees. On the other hand, lack of educational programmes specifically designed for refugee communities tend to strain limited resources available for the educational needs of the nationals concerned. Moreover, under such circumstances, refugees are taught in the local curriculum, something which denies them access to education and training appropriate and relevant to their specific national needs. Incidentally, this is an incidence of the violation of human rights. There is, therefore, a need of pursuing both roles as carefully as possible. As far as the role of human resources development in Southern Africa is concerned, so far, the situation has not changed significantly in SAEU's favour from what we noted in our last review. For instance, ESAMI and ICHRO have not given firm indications on their positions in cooperating with the SAEU . in running human resources development programmes in the Region. However, the Regional Training Council (ETC). of the sumo, recently reiterated its position of declining to enter into a special arrangement with the SAEU in relation to the proposed Centre for Distance Learning (GDL) to be based at the University of Swaziland. On the contrary, the RTC proposed that SAEU should tender for its contracts alongside other distance education institutions in the Region. It should be stressed that the RTC's posture puts the SAEU in a tegmaaygasiim la in giantihg 7135' aant'egciaj'haizm him be given priority over International NGOs and InterGovernmental Organizations (100s). In practice then as an 100, the chances of the SAEU winning the contracts are almost nil. There is, therefore, a need for the SAEU to revisit its status as an 100 if it is still interested in assuming a role in human resources development under the auspices of the SADG.

As the process of reviewing its status is underway, the SAEU is arranging to carry out consultancies in distance education with the Lusaka based Commonwealth Youth Programme (an) and Tanzania's Ministries of Health and Labour and Youth Development. In either case, the SAEU will merely act as an implementing agency of the Donor Agencies funding the consultancies and for this reason its present structure will not affect in any way its reception as a project implementer.

On the other hand, as far as education and training for other refugee communities are concerned, it should be noted that project proposals for specific refugee groups have been submitted to UNHCR's Representatives in Tanzania and Zambia. In the case of Tanzania, a project proposal was submitted for the Somali-Zigua refugees in Handeni District and for Angolan refugees at Maheba. Settlement in the case of Zambia. The Unit is planning to prepare more proposals of this kind when and where UNHCR Regional Offices request them. Further, drawing on its experience among South African returnees, the SAEU has contacted Tanzania Mozambique Friendship Association (wmom) and Zambia Refugee Counselling Services for consultancies with Mozambican returnees; On the other hand, recently, the International Extension College (IEO) approached the SAEU for collaboration in designing and implementing a distance education programme for Burumii refugees in Tanzania. The request has been accepted. and currently a proposal for the initial survey is being worked out.

.THE TRAJECTORY:

In ascertaining on the SAEU's future trajectory, it would seem preferable to argue that the SAEU has a brighter future in the area of education and training for refugee communities than in the education and training of non-refugees. However, considering the ambivalence of refugee communities, it is more advisable for the Unit to maintain working contacts with non-refugee communities which are normally quite stable. Thus, although admittedly the SAEU has a more obvious essential and relevant role to assume among refugee communities it should not distance itself away from non-refugees for a crisis free future. Treading successfully on this trajectory between two seemingly divergent territories, is perhaps the greatest challenge ahead of the SAEU.