

LMT/012/0023/1

REPORT ON LMT VISIT TO NIGERIA OFFICE

7 - 14 FEBRUARY 1993

OUTLINE:

1. PLANNING MEETING
2. VISIT TO STUDENTS IN INSTITUTIONS
3. MEETING WITH SCHOLARSHIP ORGANISATION
4. MEETING WITH STUDENTS IN LAGOS

1. PLANNING 8.2.93.

The aim of this meeting was for LMT/Austcare; to suggest and agree on the issues which need attention during the monitoring visit; to plan the agenda. The outcome of this meeting produced the above agenda.

Other issues arising from this meeting were the following

a) Staff development

This issue arose from the minutes of the July 1992 monitoring visit by Austcare. A need to develop Counsellors' professional skills in working with South African exiles in education was identified. For LMT to meet the managerial and professional requirements of the programme, it was agreed that there must be ongoing training of staff.

b) The meeting noted that there were students i.e. "the transit group" who had completed lower diploma courses and were then waiting for the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board letters of admission into Higher Diploma Courses. There were problems because of the strikes in Lagos at the time. Further study came up as an issue regarding secondary school students who would be in the middle of their courses when the programme comes to an end in 1994. There was an expressed need for planning regarding their continued study in Nigeria.

c) Stipends

Although there was an increase effected at the beginning of the academic session, students were now asking for a further increase. It was also reported that students continue to believe that they were entitled to the equivalent of \$60 per month stipend. LMT lagos requested that a circular letter, signed by the Director, should be produced to explain this matter.

d) Repatriation / Student Return Travel

This issue was to be raised with the UNHCR meeting during that week. The meeting learned that UNHCR would not repatriate LMT students' Nigerian spouses. This issue needs further clarification as to how it relates to this programme and the number of students affected.

e) Education Placements

It was learned that some LMT students have been inappropriately placed i.e. in courses of study which were far above their ability to do well in them. LMT had up to then been adopting a "liberal approach" on the matter. However, the counsellors expressed concern that having done everything to help these students, what else should be the alternative. It was suggested and agreed that LMT need to develop a policy on this issue.

Action required: LMT Lagos will make a written proposal stating this problem, showing details of the extent, and would make a recommendation on what should be considered as a matter of policy.

f) UNDP / UNESCO

It was reported that UNESCO has agreed to fund up to 239 students - i.e. in principle and in accordance with ANC/86/002 and ANC/92/002 Project Agreement.

Action required: LMT need to have the copy of the UNESCO written agreement. LMT Nigeria was advised to liaise closely with the UNDP in Nigeria.

g) Private Tuition

It was reported that some students experience difficulty with Mathematics and the Sciences due to their well-known disadvantaged educational background. These students need private tuition.

Action required: LMT should find out what the experience of other organisations has been, and how this issue is dealt with, and make recommendations to Austcare.

h) Holiday Camps

The agenda for these camps was reported to be a recreational one. It was suggested that LMT should consider incorporating career guidance and employability skills into the camp programme, to benefit especially those students who would be completing. In addition, it was also agreed that students need to be equipped with reintegration and survival skills in South Africa; students need to value the alternatives to dependency on the job market; and to learn skills for self-employment. It was noted that the Nigerian environment is conducive for mentoring students for such skills. There was a lively debate about the merits of imparting such skills to students and broader issues were brought to bear, e.g. self-worth and value, consumer choice, employment opportunities or lack of them within the context of a Third World like South African economy etc.

i) Kano Office

The meeting learned about the setting up of this office and further needs e.g. telephone, fax, etc.

j) Books *(the need to order them abroad)*

Students ought to learn to use the methods to access reading materials in similar ways as their Nigerian colleagues.

k) Report Writing

It was suggested that there is a need for LMT to give guidance regarding the Counsellors' report writing. This is to meet Austcare requirement i.e. descriptive and analytical reporting.

2. VISIT TO INSTITUTIONS 9.2.93.

A. ONDO STATE Counsellor EB Pariola

a) Adeyemi College of Education - Akure

Five students were met, and they stated that they have settled well. They raised the following issues:

- desire to further study by proceeding from the diploma to degree level. The advantage to continue in Nigeria was stated to be the fewer number of years it will take them to complete when comparing with South Africa.

Recommendation: that student should take an initiative and formally inform LMT.

- the issue of the need to increase the stipends was also raised.

b) Technical College - Owo

Three students were met and they raised the following issues:

- increase in stipends and the question of payment in US dollar equivalent currency;
- they wanted to know the LMT policy on compassionate matters e.g. airtickets to attend funerals of close relatives; home visit once a year;
- they enquired about the availability of opportunity to further study.

Austcare stated that it was the policy of the Australian Government not to fund return visits to South Africa.

B. OYO STATE 10.2.93 Counsellor Samuel Akinlabi

a) Shepard Computers Nigeria Ltd

This is a private computer training business concern. The Director of operations and the Manager were met; informed about this centre, showed us LMT students' results - they had all performed well in the exams except one who missed out due to illness.

At the student residence we met six students, one of whom was a SARF student. The following were their issues:

- the unsuitability of their accommodation and scarcity of water and the implications of the latter on their health. There was also a difficulty experienced by students at the LMT retained Hossana Hospital and students wanted a change;
- students stated that they needed some computer equipment or access to them;
- students enquired about further study and were given similar advice as those in Ondo State;
- there was a SARF student in this group whose issues were outside the scope of LMT/Austcare visit to these students.

3. MEETING WITH SCHOLARSHIP ORGANISATIONS IN NIGERIA 11.2.93.

It was recognised that there is a need for a close liaison between LMT and other scholarship agencies in Nigeria. It was felt that through their experience and skill they may be resourceful to ^{the} LMT programme.

A. UNHCR.

We met the representative of UNHCR in Nigeria and the following issues were discussed:

1) Repatriation: UNHCR reported that there have been the following areas of difficulty:

- 1.1 lack of positive response from IOM in Rome regarding airtickets;
- 1.2 late registration of students for repatriation with the UNHCR;
- 1.3 repatriation of students' spouses who are Nigerian citizens.

2) UNHCR Scholarship Programme.

- 2.1 Students: There are 26 students who are under government sponsorship and undergoing undergraduate study. There are 300 primary/secondary school students. There are 37 students at university (from Liberia and Namibia).
- 2.2 Staff: there are 2 Counsellors, 1 for higher education and 1 for lower school education.
- 2.3 Holiday accommodation: this is at a guest centre.
- 2.4 Problem Areas: poor academic performance by Namibian students, due to their educational background.

As an established organisation, UNHCR is recognised by the Government, whose involvement is in securing educational placements only.

B) SARF (Southern Africa Relief Fund)

The Executive Secretary and an Educational Counsellor were met. Given introduction information as in SARF brochures. SARF also administers a scholarship programme on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The following were issues discussed:

1. SARF Programme

- 1.1 Stipends: the amounts paid have been determined by extensive consultation with the Ministry of Education, selected institutions and universities in Nigeria.
- 1.2 Fees: at university, foreign fees are applicable; in some technical colleges fees are not payable.
- 1.3 Health: students are encouraged to use government hospitals and clinics which are attached to institutions - these are free of charge. A government hospital may refer to a private one. Prescriptions are covered by medical allowance.
- 1.4 Accommodation: SARF do not allow students in the programme to live off campus, because they, as an organisation, have the responsibility for security of foreign students; the security of such students may not be guaranteed if they live off campus. In addition, their budget relates to institutionally based accommodation.
- 1.5 Special Project Allowance: there is no specific figure; the head of department has to certify that a particular item is required by a student.
- 1.6 Industrial Attachment: institutions are expected to procure placements. SARF provide accommodation and transport and may also assist students to get a placement in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.7 Problems encountered: complaints about the scholarship that the amounts given to students are not enough; alcohol abuse; requests for loans; drop-outs from courses and poor performance; lack of academic documentation and going by the student's word. However, SARF allow those willing to step down from an inappropriate course, e.g. from polytechnic to technical college level.
- 1.8 Progress Reports: It is the responsibility of students to get the statement of results and progress reports. Counsellors may assist where there is difficulty.
- 1.9 Student Return Travel: SARF made budgetary provisions for students to return and do not link with UNHCR in this regard. It should be noted that the students were not brought into Nigeria as exiles or refugees, but as students.

B.2 Scholarship Organisation Links

It was reported that there is a working relationship and interdependence among the following organisation in Nigeria: UNEPTSA/UNDP, UNHCR, WUS, SARF and AFRO AMERICAN INSTITUTE. All organisations run their programmes from one office base.

B.3 Luthuli Memorial Trust/SARF Issues

- 3.1 SARF undertook immigration responsibility for LMT students when they arrived; they therefore need to be provided with an up-to-date list of students together with required evidence of documentation.
- 3.2 As a sponsoring agency, LMT is responsible for the regularisation of students' immigration status and for obtaining residence permits. LMT needs to liaise directly with SARF on this.
- 3.3 LMT students have been changing institutions and LMT have failed to inform these institutions of the change of school. SARF feels that this practice, or lack of it, does not create goodwill or good relations for the future.
- 3.4 LMT itself should regularise its legal status as an organisation in Nigeria. ANC representative will respond appropriately regarding this matter.
- 3.5 Kano Office: enquired whether LMT sought any clearance from the Nigerian Government nor from the ANC regarding the opening of that office. It was unclear whether LMT has any clearance to operate in Kano.

C. WUS Meeting:

The WUS Programme is being managed by the Secretary General of the YMCA based in Lagos. WUS manages a programme of Namibian students.

- C.1 Stipends are almost similar to those of SARF, except that female students are given N30 more than male students.
- C.2 Remedial Classes and Extra Tuition are provided for in the budget.
- C.3 Medical and Clothing - a specific amount is allocated to each student.
- C.4 Problems raised were school drop-outs and pregnancy.

4. STAFF MEETING 12.3.93

The following issues were discussed:

4.1 Relationship between the LMT offices and Austcare Requirements and Expectations

Austcare stated that there is an agreement between themselves and LMT in London. LMT is responsible for the administration, reporting, planning, policy matters and co-ordination with other international agencies UNESCO/UNDP regarding this programme. The London office is expected to offer a supportive role to the Lagos office.

4.2 Timetable for Visits to LMT Nigeria Office

Austcare will continue to do 2 monitoring visits per year to cover the Jan - June and July - Dec periods, together with a representative from the London office.

Austcare has had a critical look at the management and administration capacity of LMT in Nigeria. It therefore expects the London office to make regular visits, i.e. every three months, in addition to the 2 monitoring visits, i.e. April, Sept/Oct (holiday camps) and January. The accountant to make a visit in preparation for a financial report.

4.3 Staff and Professional Development Needs

Austcare stated that there was a need to develop the quality of the staff. There must be a better system of reporting and therefore a need to create a format for report writing with the emphasis on analytical techniques as aids to the assessment and appraisal of their caseload. It was suggested and agreed that in-house training must be organised by LMT to enhance the Counsellors' own understanding of the plight and needs of exile students. Some staff members express a need for this type of training, as well as some reference material for this purpose. It was agreed that the UNHCR and UNILAG Career Guidance Counselling will be approached. LMT will have staff development as a permanent item on its . It was also stated that the staff need to know more about South Africa, in order to be able to give career guidance and advice to students.

4.4 Accounts

- a) The accountant reported there were difficulties experienced by LMT with the present bank and suggested LMT should change the bank. Doubted the trustworthiness of the bank, e.g. transfer of money from dollar to naira account without instructions to do so; request for dollar statement and exchange rates not given, etc.

Action: LMT Treasurer to facilitate the opening of an account with Union Bank.

- b) Another problem was reported to be the way the Counsellors "~~retire~~" their advances and thus make it difficult for the accountant to keep the accounts up to date due to late returns.

Proposed solution: every Counsellor must 'retire' their accounts as soon as they return from their journeys.

4.5 Students' Newspapers and Mail

LMT will facilitate the connection between students and South Africa. The method proposed by LMT London was agreed and a circular to students to that effect will be sent. LMT will subscribe to selected newspapers.

4.6 Water

Austcare/LMT noted that the water problem was one of the new issues which students raised. This may be the reason why medical bills are very high, as there is a relationship between lack of clean water and illness. LMT staff were to make suggestions regarding the water problem.

4.7 Further Study

LMT will follow up this matter by producing a circular requesting details from students without making any commitments or promises.

4.8 The areas of programme success were also explained by the respective Counsellors. The general feeling was that the programme is now stable since students have adapted and settled well.

When evaluating the Nigeria programme, LMT stated that it is of importance for Austcare to recognise the context within which it was set up, and the local environment and its influences, so as not to neglect reality.

5. Meeting with Students 12.2.93

There were 5 students who requested a meeting with Austcare and LMT. They raised the following issues:

- 5.1 LMT students need to be informed when the donor will be visiting them.
- 5.2 Further study after 1994 was the predominant concern of the students as a whole.
- 5.3 Some students wished to further their studies elsewhere, because of problems such as strikes, inflation, and they wanted assurances of sponsorship.
- 5.4 The issue of \$60,00 stipend equivalent was also raised.
- 5.5 They did not know the total number of students in the programme.
- 5.6 On Saturday 13.2.93, about 25 students at Translat Guest House were met, some of whom expressed a strong desire to be repatriated to South Africa to continue their studies there.



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