

ABSTRACT

Educational Planning : its Relevance to the Marketability of Graduates of Secondary Level Educational Institutions

Marlene D. Hines

This study examined the level of relevance of educational planning at the secondary level to the marketability of graduates of secondary level institutions. The focus of the study was the effect of educational planning on students' level of performance in the Caribbean Examination Council (C.X.C.) and the Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C.) examination and their capability to obtain a job after leaving school. The extent of such effect was determined by an analysis of the level of coordination of the processes of educational planning, curriculum planning and national planning.

Emphasis was also placed on the school curriculum; particularly the R.O.S.E. programme, the technical and vocational programme of

Grade 10-11 and its relevance to available jobs, and the level of input of principals, teachers and private sector in the educational planning process.

In the process of collecting data, the objectives and programmes for secondary level education as outlined in the 1978-83 and 1990-95 education plans were compared with the objectives and programmes for national development of the 1978-83 and 1990-95 development plans. Data were also gathered from two policy documents of the Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E.) and an evaluation report of the implementation of the R.O.S.E. programme.

Information was gathered from persons within the private and public sectors through :-

- (a) Telephone interviews with principals
- (b) Face to face interviews with planners/educators from the Planning Institute of Jamaica, Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica, Jamaica Teachers' Association, National Union of Democratic Teachers, Planning Unit and Curriculum Development Unit, Ministry of Education and Culture.

The major research findings were :

1. The process of educational planning was the responsibility of the P.I.O.J.'s Task Force of Education, which comprised

employers, educators, economic and educational planners. It included a combination of the planning approaches of social demand, manpower planning and cost-benefit analysis. The Ministry of Finance must approve all large education projects before they could be selected for inclusion in the education plan. The P.I.O.J.'s Task Force of Education facilitated direct involvement of individuals from a wide cross-section of the society.

The Planning Institute of Jamaica's involvement in educational planning included, manpower forecasting in which employers were directly involved, and the development of a profile of the qualities and attributes of employees of key sectors of the economy.

2. Employers were not fully integrated in the educational planning process. They needed to be more involved in the process of manpower forecasting. Principals and teachers were not directly involved in educational planning, since they were not members of the Task Force of Education. They were involved in educational planning through the :
 - a. Jamaica Teachers' Ass.
 - b. Principals' retreat
 - c. National Council on Education

d. Workshops

e. Principals' Ass.

Principals and teachers needed to be more involved in the educational planning process at the evaluation level. The private sector was involved in educational planning through :

- a. Their involvement in educational projects and programmes
- b. Curriculum development e.g. R.O.S.E.

3. The J.T.A. was directly involved in the educational planning process, since it sat on the Task Force of Education. The N.U.D.T. had no direct involvement in educational planning, but have participated in workshops set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

4. The education plan of 1978-83 was one of the vehicles through which policies for growth, development and structural change as stated in the Five Year Development Plan of that period were to be pursued. There were five objectives of the 1978-83 Education Plan which were concerned with the development of skills which should contribute to social and economic development in accordance with the stated objectives of the national development plan of that period. One educational objective of the 1978-83 education plan which was relevant to the development of productive skills is the grade 10-11 productive work programme. The technical and vocational secondary educational objectives of

the 1978-83 education plan were related to the acquisition of skills which should be able to contribute to the development of productive skills.

There were five objectives of the Jamaica Five Year Development Plan (1990-1995) that were directly related to education and the national development policies and were geared towards the integration of education and training programmes with economic targets. The objectives of secondary education as outlined in the 1990-95 Education Plan did not specifically target the development of human resources .

5. Some principals were not able to identify any level of relevance between educational objectives and national development.
6. The main obstacle to the achievement of relevance of education to the developmental needs of the society was the 'administrative practices' of the Ministry of Education and Culture.
7. The Reform of Secondary Education programme (R.O.S.E.) was able to create relevance between the curriculum of secondary schools and the skills that were needed in the job market. Teachers however, were using the traditional teaching method in the R.O.S.E. programme.
8. The curriculum of Comprehensive, Technical and New Secondary schools provided a more rounded education than high schools, by

preparing students for academic, technical and vocational work. The curriculum facilitated change in relation to economic trends, for example, computer education.

9. The C.X.C. examination was relevant to the manpower needs of the society. Students were however, prepared for jobs at the clerical level only.
10. Data gathered from the P.I.O.J.'s tracer study was used to inform the development of educational and national plans, in terms of human resource development. This indicated that there was a shortage of adequately trained personnel in key sectors of the economy.
11. The Work Experience programme of secondary schools, provided the opportunity to develop relevance between the skills which were acquired in school and those which were needed in the job market.
12. The subjects which constituted the Grade 10-11 Technical and Vocational programme were relevant to the skills which were needed in the job market. Students however, needed to acquire other skills which should be able to assist them to effectively utilise, apply and develop these skills to which they were exposed.

It may be concluded that although the findings have indicated that the practices of educational planning were followed, and there were

efforts, since the 1970's to have a curriculum that was relevant to the needs of the job market, as was evident in the Grade 10-11 programme, work experience, C.X.C. and R.O.S.E., there were other issues in the education system that were affecting the level and quality of the output of secondary education.