

NEW CONCEPTS IN INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

On the anniversary of UNESCO's 20th year, its representative governing body, the General Conference, adopted a resolution of vital importance to agricultural education. This action of the organization could be as important, internationally, as the Smith-Hughes Law was to the field of agricultural education in the United States. The entire resolution is reproduced on pages 2-6.

For 20 years, agricultural education has been a field of controversy among the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations. One side of the argument has emerged from Rome where the FAO has used its influence to discourage countries from establishing agricultural instruction programs within the educational framework of general and normative educational systems. The other side of the argument has come from Paris where UNESCO has insisted that a casual approach was insufficient and that agricultural education was too important to be omitted from the contributions which an educational system must make to the development process.

Both organizations have essentially the same membership. With a few exceptions, the same countries belong to both organizations. Moreover, both organizations rely on the same source of funds for their operations—the United Nations Development Program (a New York based agency), the World Bank (a Washington agency), and the contributions of their Member Countries.

In one respect the controversy has been very one-sided. Vast sums have been allocated by the New York and Washington agencies to FAO sponsored programs in developing countries. Insignificant sums have been allocated to the type of program preferred by UNESCO.

There is little time left for argument. The world food problem is no longer hypothetical. Worse, agricultural development during the "development decade," (1960-1970), has had few innovations and little success. The expected rise in agricultural productivity has been an unexpected disappointment. The supply of agricultural technology has been high but the capacity to absorb it has remained relatively unchanged and thus its demand is low. The rationale of the UNESCO resolution is extremely late on the international scene. It is an essential step which should have been taken years ago. In the United States it was taken with the Nelson Amendment to the Morrill Act (1907) and more fully in 1917 with the Smith-Hughes Act.

It is interesting to examine the geographic distribution of the countries introducing the resolution. Four were from Latin America, 3 from the Arab States, 4 from Asia, 6 from Africa, and 3 from Europe. The region that was conspicuously absent was North America.

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The resolution was approved unanimously by the UNESCO General Conference. Its only amendment proposed that the "World Conference in Agricultural Education should be a beginning step for a development decade in agricultural education."

The United States may have more agriculture teachers, more teacher educators and more students in agricultural secondary education than the rest of the world combined. This growth came as a result of recognizing the value of the rationale contained in the UNESCO resolution. It is reflected in the agricultural development programs of the country. Through the AVA, AATEA, NVATA, and various governmental agencies we are one of the most highly organized countries for providing representative spokesmanship in the field of agricultural education. In international forums, this spokesmanship has been enthusiastic toward the FAO side of the argument. Perhaps agricultural educators should become more alert to the representativeness of its spokesmanship. Perhaps agricultural educators should start by expressing their hope that the "Development Decade in Agricultural Education" may start with its World Conference held in the United States so that delegates from other countries may see the importance of agricultural education in a public school setting.

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UNESCO RESOLUTION ON AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

25 October - 30 November 1966

14 C/DR.97 (P)*
PARIS, 9 November 1966
Translated from the French

Item 16.2 of the Agenda

Draft resolution submitted by

BELGIUM, BRAZIL, CEYLON, CHILE, FRANCE,
GUATEMALA, INDIA, IRAQ, IVORY COAST,
MADAGASCAR, MALI, NEPAL, PAKISTAN, PERU,
PHILIPPINES, SENEGAL, SUDAN, SWITZERLAND,
TANZANIA, UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC.

Amendment to the Draft Programme and
Budget for 1967-1968 (document 14 C/5)

*This proposal was received by the Secretariat on 7 November 1966.

Para. ref. FUTURE PROGRAMME

14 C/5

Part II - Programme operations and services

Chapter 2 - Natural Sciences and their application to development

2.3 - Application of science and technology to development

Section 2.34 - Agricultural Education and Sciences

677-692 The General Conference.

Recalling the resolutions (1.231, 1.232 and 1.233) on technical and vocational agricultural education unanimously approved by the twelfth session (1962) and reaffirmed at the thirteenth session (1964), urges that the Organization's action on behalf of agricultural education and science should be strengthened;

Considering the very close connexion between general education, technical education, scientific education and the growing need to integrate agricultural and industrial technical education in a single technical education system as was recommended by the International Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education adopted by the General Conference at its twelfth session (1962),

Having regard to the fundamental importance of ensuring that all the technical courses in the general syllabus and in the syllabus of technical schools offering specialized training for agricultural and industrial workers and senior staff are provided in the best possible conditions,

Appreciating the fact that the majority of the population in developing countries lives in rural areas, and that the greater part of the active population in those countries is engaged in agricultural production, and having regard to the importance for those regions of having qualified senior staff and an adequate number of specialized teachers familiar with the requirements of rural development,

Recognizing that increased agricultural production is an essential factor in economic development as a whole, due more particularly to the part it can play in the formation of capital and the growth of the national income,

Convinced that, in addition to immediate action, long-term efforts are needed in the development of education and science for rural and agricultural development as a basic factor in the solution of the world food problem and as one of the best contributions which could be made to the achievement of the aims of the Development Decade.

Conscious of the major importance which all Member States attach to the training of staff for agricultural and rural development and the application of science thereto, an importance which is reflected in the resolutions adopted by the Regional Conferences of Ministers of Education and Ministers responsible for Economic Planning in Asian, African and Latin American Member States, and by the Conference on the Application of Science and Technology to the Development of Latin America (Castala),

Reaffirms that the training, at all levels, of staff for agricultural education and scientific research, including the social sciences, with a view to agricultural and rural development, is closely connected with educational and scientific problems and is hence of direct concern to UNESCO, and further reaffirms the need to continue attaching particular importance to the intensification and future development of UNESCO's work in this field;

Recommends to Member States

that general education and technical agricultural education be considered as different but closely related aspects of the same educational process,

that co-ordination at national level be established between all the sectors concerned and especially between education, science, technology and agriculture, including the co-ordination of technical assistance requested from organizations belonging to the United Nations system and from other sources,

that such planning and co-ordination be carried out within the context of national education and science policy in relation to economic and social development;

Requests the Director-General

to continue his carefully planned and well-devised action for the introduction of a sound and effective UNESCO programme in the sector of agricultural education,

to continue giving top priority to the rapid and effective implantation of UNESCO's present programme and, within the limits of available resources, to give it all the necessary breadth,

to call upon all international sources of assistance to development, more especially the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Regional Development Banks, the United Nations Development Programme, to give greater support to agricultural education and to facilities increased assistance to Member States in this important sector of activity,

to continue his endeavours to co-operate with governmental and non-governmental organizations, in particular with ILO and FAO, on a basis of reciprocity, while ensuring that this shall neither be prejudicial to, nor delay, UNESCO's programme vis-a'-vis Member States,

to examine the possibility of instituting a new tripartite co-operation agreement with ILO and FAO, in the light of the resolutions adopted by the General Conference and based on UNESCO's primary responsibility for science and education in the agricultural and industrial sectors at all levels, including teacher training, having regard to the satisfactory arrangements existing with ILO and the United Nations (Centre for Industrial Development) in respect of technical education and vocational training,

to maintain co-operation with ILO and FAO by giving all possible assistance to the activities of those organizations relating to vocational training for young people and adults and particularly to the training of farmers,

to pay particular attention to UNESCO's future programme, more especially by:

- (a) the organization by UNESCO of a world conference on agricultural education in co-operation with the other organizations concerned, as recommended by the UNESCO Study Group Meeting on Agricultural Education and Science. This conference should not only focus attention on this vital sector of activity and present a picture of the present situation, but should also determine specific objectives and plans of action for a concerted joint policy,
- (b) the extension of regional pilot projects and pilot studies, such as the pilot project for Africa on the teaching of agricultural science as an integral part of general education, to all the other regions of the world,
- (c) multidisciplinary scientific research for agricultural development,
- (d) the training, at all levels, of agricultural technicians and agricultural teachers on the basis of educational concepts specifically adapted to agricultural education,
- (e) the necessary studies on the organization and structures of agricultural education, the development of human resources in rural areas, and the educational, social and cultural obstacles to agricultural and rural development,
- (f) a comparative study of all achievements and current experiments relating to improved adaptation of school curricula to the conditions prevailing in rural areas, so as to obtain information of value to all the Member States concerned,

- (g) the required emphasis on agricultural education and agricultural science in UNESCO's contribution to the organization and programmes of the Latin American Centre for the Application of Science to Development (IACASD), with special reference to the role of this centre in the co-ordination of the agricultural educational and scientific work carried out by the universities, the academies of science and the research institutes.

Note by the Director-General

1. The recommendation of the Executive Board at its sessions of November 1965 and May 1966 that "full consideration be given to the programme on the application of science and technology to development with special emphasis on agricultural education and science in view both of the acute present and of the long term problems of agricultural development" may be recalled in connexion with this draft resolution.
2. The Director-General considers co-operation with ILO, FAO and other UN organizations in the field of agricultural education and science to be essential, and, as stated in 14 C/5 paragraph 680, "the participation of international organizations and their co-operation will be sought as a means of ensuring the fullest co-ordination of all programmes of agricultural education and their implementation in Member States".
3. The Director-General welcomes the request to Member States for co-ordination at the national level.
4. If the General Conference so decides, the Director-General will give careful consideration to the items mentioned for future action, both as they refer to expansion of existing programmes and to new items such as the World Conference on Agricultural Education and Science.