

Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWA) (Ed.)

Article — Digitized Version

Combination of practice and theory: Interview with the German Foundation for Developing Countries, Bonn

Intereconomics

Suggested Citation: Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWA) (Ed.) (1967) : Combination of practice and theory: Interview with the German Foundation for Developing Countries, Bonn, Intereconomics, ISSN 0020-5346, Verlag Weltarchiv, Hamburg, Vol. 02, Iss. 2, pp. 36-38, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02930579>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/137695>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.

a television school. In Colombo (Ceylon) we are planning to set up a new training centre.

QUESTION: Is it your opinion that educational aid should also cover the sector of political education?

ANSWER: That is a difficult question. The fact is that developing countries have to contend not only with technical and economic problems, but also with political and social ones. It would be false modesty or unrealistic if we were to say that we are unable to advise them on this. In this field, assistance cannot always take the form of education. So in speaking of political activity or a political

engagement, I naturally do not mean that German organisations or organisations from the industrial countries should, so to say, interfere in political technicalities, in the direct political dialogue in developing countries.

QUESTION: Finally, we should perhaps ask one other question, which we have already touched upon: how do you keep in contact with trained ex-students and are you able to influence the way in which they are employed?

ANSWER: I think I may claim that we are one of the few organisations in Germany to have an almost perfect system of subsequent contact. We have a special

department for this which is in permanent contact with 80 % of all ex-students. As for the question of placing trained students or trainees in a developing country, it is scarcely possible to have any influence upon this unless such employment is agreed upon before a course commences. I must say quite openly that there are some cases where I am not satisfied with the employment of people we have trained here. However, although we should not delude ourselves about deficiencies in our educational assistance, I think—if we consider the general picture—we can be completely satisfied with the overall success of this assistance.

Combination of Practice and Theory

Interview with the German Foundation for Developing Countries, Bonn

QUESTION: It would be sensible to find out first how your Foundation is organised.

ANSWER: The German Foundation for Developing Countries has been in existence for about six years. It was founded by some German Members of Parliament, together with the Federal Government. Their intention was that the Foundation should organise short-term professional discussions for people in responsible position in developing countries who have no time to devote to longer periods of training, but who want to talk over their problems with colleagues from other countries and with West German specialists. This idea developed into management seminars for Asia, the Near and Middle East, English- and French-speaking Africa and Latin America. So far, we have held about 80 seminars for 2,000 guests from 86 countries. The Foundation is financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation, although we also receive funds from certain of the Federal Lands.

QUESTION: Upon what sectors of development aid do the courses you hold to train specialists from developing countries concentrate?

ANSWER: There is practically no limit to the subject-matter of our international seminars. We deal with specialised subjects connected with agriculture, forestry and fishing, just as much as with aspects of culture, education and economics. Our programme even embraces special subjects, for instance, problems of local administration in a developing society or the administration of universities and hospitals, according to the requirements of such countries. In addition, we organise seminars for mayors and the like and hold talks with countries giving development aid so as to compare our methods. We invite to our functions guests from developing countries who are assuming responsible positions in specialities to be discussed. In addition, we co-opt German experts or experts from international organisations. On the German side, we act as a forum for German experts concerned with development aid, for example, for those who hold responsible positions in technical schools or hospitals, in technical information services, in forestry, agriculture, etc. Where agriculture and forestry are concerned, we consider one of our most im-

portant tasks to be the training of counterparts.

QUESTION: You mentioned the training of counterparts for German technical schools in developing countries. What type of training establishments does West Germany maintain abroad?

ANSWER: Contrary to the wishes of many developing countries, which would like to have a technical college or a machine tool laboratory, in these countries Germany only sets up schools for skilled workers so as to underpin the available technical training. At present, we have about 40 schools for skilled workers in the Far East, Middle East, Africa and South America and they are all working to capacity. About 30 more such projects are planned. Every such project abroad has about 8 German instructors, who work together with one technical instructor and one German project director, who must also have had experience in Germany as director of a technical school.

QUESTION: How are the counterparts for technical schools trained?

ANSWER: They follow a two-year course in West Germany. Before being trained in Germany, each such counterpart has to have completed a three-year period of training at one of the foreign schools designated by the Federal Government. These future technical teachers or—to describe them more accurately—instructors at the large workshops we maintain in developing countries, receive in this way a 5-year period of training. The two-year course in West Germany begins with an intensive language course lasting four months. During this period we also introduce trainees to German conditions and German training methods. The counterparts follow, at various so-called "Land stations", a one-year course of practical training in various firms, based on a training plan worked out by the German project director in the developing country. After this year of practical training, which is combined with courses at a technical college, they spend six months in a large, specially selected technical school workshop to follow a six-month training course as instructors, where particular attention is paid to educational tests.

QUESTION: Are agricultural programmes organised in the same way?

ANSWER: No. These training programmes cover a much broader range of subjects. Consequently the experts who come to us for training are not of a single type to be prepared for one and the same future occupation. Usually we are sent small groups of two to six people—up to a maximum of 50—for training. A special programme has to be evolved for each group and often even for individual participants. In almost every case it is a preliminary requirement that they follow a four-month language course at the Goethe-Institut. This is followed by a period of training lasting one or, at the most, two years. We should like to concentrate upon the training of counterparts, but are able to do this only to a limited extent (for instance, for certain German agricultural development projects).

QUESTION: Due to your training curriculum, you have to work closely with various German firms or other organisations which accept your people for training. Are you satisfied with the co-operation you receive here and with results of the training establishments?

ANSWER: All in all, our experience has been extremely good—particularly with regard to co-operation with university institutes and research establishments. It is naturally more difficult with firms. We have to rely upon recommendations from associations. The most difficult problem is to select agricultural training bases. However, we can generally depend upon the judgment of Chambers of Agriculture and of the Land Ministries.

QUESTION: To what extent do your training programmes combine theoretical and practical instruction?

ANSWER: Developing countries mainly insist on training programmes with a 50% theoretical content and 50% workshop or practical work. We ourselves believe that it would be better, for instance, for instructors in training workshops, if the ratio were 80% workshop and 20% theory. Naturally, in agricultural training this varies from case to case, although here, too, emphasis is placed upon the practical application of theory. In education, in particular, there is a danger that emphasis may be placed upon subjects which a good craftsman will never afterwards need. This is due to the excessive concern with certificates and diplomas in our partner countries, where people place a much higher value upon a theoretical education with a formal graduation and an academic degree than upon technical capabilities. However, as manual workers come to earn more—in many cases they can now earn more than Ministers—people are gradually beginning to see that a higher value should be placed upon labour and that this might, in the long run, form the basis of a corresponding code of professional ethics. And with a great deal of patience and tact it is usu-

ally possible, during the training period, to get foreign skilled workers to see the importance of practical work and know-how.

QUESTION: Does the training you select not place too much emphasis upon the German type of training and thus take too little account of conditions in the developing countries?

ANSWER: By and large, there is no need to worry about this. The technique is almost the same whatever country you are in. For instance, if a car is defective in Aleppo, the dynamo has to be repaired in exactly the same way as here in Germany. Of course, this is not equally true of agriculture, but in that field there are also many techniques which are the same in every country, for example, work with agricultural machinery, crop protection, etc. It is obvious that we should refuse to train a specialist in rice cultivation in this country. I think that what we teach here is what has brought the rapid upswing in the Federal Republic of Germany after 1945. We continue to hope that governments of developing countries will not only send us people so that they can learn how to adjust a plough or apply insecticides, but to learn something of our way of working. There is absolutely no risk that they will be systematically taught a German way of life which they would probably not be able to make use of back home, but governments do think it important for them to see how we work here and how theory can be turned into practice.

QUESTION: As well as longer-term technical training for instructors and agricultural workers, you also organise specialist discussions and courses on special subjects. How long do such events usually last?

ANSWER: On the highest level, they do not last more than four weeks because participants from abroad cannot remain away from their duties, for which they are responsible, for any longer. In addition we have various special courses lasting from six months to one year.

QUESTION: With such short courses, is there not a fundamental danger that people are developed who have a very high opinion of themselves but, in fact, are not too competent professionally?

ANSWER: Naturally this depends very much upon the selection of candidates to be trained and we have no real influence upon this. Initially we did have some bother, but selection has improved over the years and this risk is decreasing. We have constantly had to insist that the selecting bodies re-examine the criteria for selection so that standards can be raised.

QUESTION: What are your criteria for selecting participants?

ANSWER: Skilled personnel is invited via the German Embassies and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. German Embassies in developing countries pass the invitations to the Government in question, which nominates those who are to attend our courses. Agricultural workers are generally nominated by the developing countries on the basis of government agreements. The instructors are selected according to the requirements of the German projects.

QUESTION: This is where quality control is the most precise.

What experience do you have of how people you have trained fit into the development process in their native countries? Is this skilled labour used in the proper way?

ANSWER: It is impossible to give a generic answer to that question. With regard to the discussions with skilled workers, i.e. the 4-week courses, we have found that our seminars give good results. For special training courses, the Zentralstelle für Landwirtschaft (Central Office for Agriculture) has made practical studies upon how the counterpart is fitted into his surroundings after his return. In view of the small amount of experience which we have in this sector and our difficulties with the numerous authorities concerned, the results have been very satisfactory. We have a very good control on how industrial instructors are used in industrial workshops. Project directors abroad report to us on their experiences at the annual instructors' working week. At the moment, we have 300 fully trained counterparts. It has been found that their training was very successful and that these people are working enthusiastically as directors and instructors on our German projects abroad.

QUESTION: Is the most important part of your activity training

in Germany or do you also organise courses and events in developing countries?

ANSWER: We should say once more that the word "training" is, in general, not quite the right one for our activities. Many of our courses are more discussion groups on specialist subjects. We increasingly choose a developing country as the venue for such exchanges of experience, or any country which appears suitable as an illustration. It is our experience that we can work most effectively when our work is closely tied up with that of international organisations i.e.—UNO—or when we make use of the experience of such organisations to define our own tasks. This is why we organise many such courses jointly with UNO. The longer-term training of counterparts, on the other hand, is done solely in Germany, for the reasons stated above, in order to broaden the experience of trainees.

QUESTION: Finally, do you maintain contact with your students once training is completed?

ANSWER: We always endeavour to maintain contact. As has become apparent, the best chance of doing so is with counterparts for special projects. In other cases it is naturally much more difficult.

Objective: Highly Qualified Labour

Interview with the Carl-Duisberg-Society, Cologne

QUESTION: The Carl-Duisberg-Society is a private organisation. Who supports, promotes and finances it?

ANSWER: Our Society is a registered association of public benefit; its members include both individuals and firms. Our funds are derived from members' contributions, large private donations and state subsidies. We are backed by important industrial organisations, the Federal Association of German Industry, the Federal Union of Employers Associations, the Central Association of German Chambers

of Industry and Commerce and the German Trade Unions Federation.

QUESTION: What about the aims of your Society. How far are these directed at aiding training, in particular training aid for developing countries?

ANSWER: The aims of the Carl-Duisberg-Society—which was founded in 1949—are first connected with experience gained in the 'twenties that a period of residence abroad is essential for the further education of young people. Therefore the Society endeavoured

to send Germans abroad for continuation education, first to America and later to the industrial countries of Europe, too. In 1955 our experience in the field of training led to the Federal Government making us responsible for the progress and welfare of trainees from developing countries.

QUESTION: Does this mean that today your training aid is concentrated on principle only upon candidates from developing countries, or have you maintained your traditional activities as well as this?