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Development Issues

Human resources development coordination

Lorraine Corner

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Dr Lorraine Corner is currently a Research Fellow in Demography at the National Centre for Development Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra. Her research interests cover health planning and policy, patterns of child care and women's work, qualitative research methods, human resources development and women in development. She has a special interest in Indonesia. The research presented here was the result of field work conducted in 1993.

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Human resources development coordination

Effective coordination of policymaking, planning and program implementation is one of the greatest challenges in any area of public policy. In developing countries the supply of high quality human resources is invariably limited, while the need for human resources development in the form of education, training and improved quality of life for the majority of the population is great. Efficiency and effectiveness in utilising educated and qualified personnel in government to achieve a higher level of human resources development are key objectives in most developing countries. However, lack of coordination in policymaking, planning and implementation has emerged as a major obstacle to attaining these objectives.

Three factors make effective coordination a particularly difficult task. The first is a lack of agreement about the concept of human resources development and the nature of the coordination problem. Competing and sometimes conflicting paradigms of human resources development hinder coordination by creating confusion about the nature of human resources development and its objectives. In this paper three paradigms are identified and discussed—the civil service paradigm, the manpower planning paradigm, and the human resources development paradigm.

A second factor inhibiting coordination is the involvement of multiple agencies and institutions in human resources development. Regardless of the paradigm adopted, human resources development is multidimensional and multisectoral. Effective coordination of large and disparate organisations has so far proved beyond the capacity of most governments. The need to obtain information about the relevant activities of many agencies and sectors, to involve them in decision-making, and to communicate decisions to them creates enormous practical obstacles.

The final factor contributing to the difficulties of coordinating human resources development programs, particularly in more developed economies, is the involvement

of the private sector in key areas such as education, training and health. Although private sector participation is highly desirable from a number of perspectives, the differing bases of private and public sector decision-making greatly complicates coordination.

Three competing paradigms

Although there is general agreement in developing countries about the importance of human resources development, there is much less agreement about its nature and how it should be implemented. The most restrictive concept of human resources development, the civil service paradigm, focuses on manpower planning and personnel management within the public sector, and on the role of the tertiary education sector in meeting public sector needs. It largely encompasses the activities and concerns of civil service commissions or public service boards (for an example of this approach see Pradhan and Reforma 1991: Part V). This concept is similar to that embodied in the terms 'human resource development' and 'human resource management' used in the private sector and referring to the training and utilisation of personnel within a firm or organisation. A number of developing countries in Africa and Asia with very low levels of development seem to consider human resources development largely in these limited terms.

A second concept, the manpower planning paradigm, is similarly focused on manpower planning and human resources management but with a much wider scope. Under this paradigm, human resources development comprises education, training and manpower planning, and development in the economy as a whole rather than just the public sector. Emerging from the human capital literature, this was the dominant paradigm in developing countries until the mid-1980s. Both the civil service and manpower planning paradigms emphasise the supply-side role of people as important productive resources for national development.

The third, most recent and most comprehensive concept, the human resources development (HRD) paradigm, challenges the supply-side view of human resources largely in terms of inputs into development. Instead, the HRD paradigm views people as both productive resources and as the ultimate beneficiaries of development. It therefore regards human resources development as both manpower planning and development on the supply side, and improvements in the quality of life on the demand side (Corner 1992a; 1993). This approach is advocated in the Jakarta Plan of Action (1988a) adopted by the 48 members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in May 1988 and has much in common with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concept of human

development. Coordination is a vital issue for each of these paradigms, but each adopts different approaches to it and emphasises coordination of specific aspects of human resources development.

The civil service paradigm

The civil service paradigm, is based on an implicit macro-level human capital model in which national investment in education, specifically tertiary education, is seen as the key human resources input to national development. The public sector is of critical importance to the achievement of development and educated personnel are vital to the effective functioning of the public sector.

Coordination focuses on administrative decisions about the allocation of tertiary education places to secondary school graduates, and the allocation of tertiary graduates and in-service training opportunities within the public sector. The main objective of coordination is to ensure that the education system produces, and the civil service is able to recruit, sufficient numbers of appropriately trained personnel to meet public sector demand. Where demand is constrained by the numbers of eligible tertiary entrants, the objective is to recruit as many trained personnel as possible. The main coordination task is to match in-service training and the output of secondary and tertiary education to employment opportunities and skill requirements in the civil service. The proper utilisation and continuing development of human resources employed in the public sector is a second focus of coordination under this paradigm. This requires the development of classification and promotion systems and the provision of in-service training and opportunities for upgrading skills.

In countries with limited supplies of tertiary-trained personnel matching the output of the tertiary education system with public sector employment is largely accomplished through scholarship/recruiting schemes administered by the education department or civil service commission. In Botswana, for example, the Bursaries Section in the Training and Development Division of the Ministry of Education administers a scholarship scheme designed to allocate eligible secondary school graduates to appropriate tertiary education places and, subsequently, to jobs in particular government departments and agencies. Until the late 1980s, such schemes in several African countries were largely confined to tertiary education and employment in the public sector. The majority of tertiary training institutions were government funded, and the public sector absorbed almost all tertiary graduates. The domestic private sector was small, weak and employed few graduates. More recently, the growing strength and importance of private sector demand for tertiary educated labour, and the limited financial capacity of the public sector to absorb all graduates, has resulted

in the allocation of a limited number of graduates educated under government scholarship schemes to private sector employers, and the expansion of opportunities for self-funded tertiary study.

The second coordination task, determining in-service training needs and allocating staff to in-service training opportunities, has also tended to be carried out by a single umbrella organisation such as a public service commission, often through post-graduate scholarship schemes. In developing countries such schemes are usually funded by bilateral aid providing for overseas training, usually in the donor country. As the capacity and need for domestic training has grown, the activities of specialised public sector training institutions such as administrative staff colleges have also been incorporated into national systems of public service personnel management and training. In Botswana, public sector in-service training is under the control of the Directorate of Public Service Management, while in Kenya it is administered through the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment and Ministerial Training Committees. In both Botswana and Mauritius, the national universities play an important role in providing senior level in-service training for civil servants, although Mauritius is also establishing a civil service college to play a wider training role in the public sector. Papua New Guinea is similarly revamping its existing Administrative College to play a much more active and prominent role in in-service training for public servants.

Coordination of public sector human resources development under the civil service paradigm tends to take place through centralised, bureaucratic institutions. The comparatively small size of the bureaucracies adopting this paradigm facilitates the flow of information, while their social, and often cultural and political homogeneity, seem well-suited to effective coordination. Despite such apparently ideal conditions, personalities, political interests, or administrative history often conspire to frustrate coordination. In Mauritius, for example, coordination within the civil service takes place through three central ministries: the Ministry for Economic Planning and Development, the Ministry for Finance, and the Ministry for Civil Service and Employment. Coordination of the closely related activities of these three key agencies is a difficult task. The creation in 1992 of a new Ministry for Manpower Resources to play a coordinating role for training and manpower has generated additional potential for confusion due to overlapping responsibilities. Thus, even in relatively small countries, coordination may be hindered by duplication and competition among central agencies.

The manpower planning paradigm

The activities covered by the civil service paradigm of human resources development

are only a part of a wider perspective described here as the manpower planning paradigm. This paradigm focuses on the training and education of human resources in the economy as a whole. Like the civil service paradigm, it is based on the human capital model, an individual investment decision model. However, although decisions about schooling, training, willingness to work and demand for labour are made by individuals and private firms, in practice, the manpower planning paradigm tends to emphasise public sector decisions about education and training (Corner 1986:3). The task of coordination is to match demand for and supply of labour in the economy as a whole, but manpower planning focuses on schools and training institutions, endeavouring to ensure that they are able to produce sufficient graduates to meet the demands of both industry and the public sector for skilled and qualified labour.

Under the manpower planning paradigm, two related yet separate approaches to coordination can be identified. The first is a technical solution directed towards long-term planning. Although typically carried out by a national planning or statistical agency or the ministry of manpower, this approach to coordination focuses on education policy. It is characterised by the use of labour force projections based on econometric simulations and models to forecast future demand and the enrolment rates required during the preceding period to ensure that the educational system will produce the required numbers of suitably qualified and trained graduates. Together, these provide the basis for long-term educational planning, particularly at the post-primary levels.

The conventional long-term manpower planning requirements approach is best suited to small economies dominated by the public sector and with low levels of human resources development. It has proved more useful and resilient in Africa than in Asia. Countries such as Botswana, which are still unable to meet their public sector requirements for skilled and tertiary-qualified manpower, continue to find a simple manpower requirements approach useful. By contrast, most Asian economies with labour surpluses at all levels of education have realised the weaknesses and limitations of conventional manpower planning approaches and are searching for alternative human resources planning and management strategies (Amjad 1987:23-34; Godfrey 1992:73; Pitayanon 1987:78).

The second approach to coordination in the manpower planning paradigm is directed towards the shorter term and emphasises management rather than planning. It is characterised by the use of administrative or institutional measures to make the most efficient use of existing educational and training resources. A variety of administrative arrangements and organisations have been used to coordinate the training activities of the numerous and diverse institutions and agencies involved in education and training. The Industrial and Vocational Training Board in Mauritius and the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission of Sri Lanka were established to improve effectiveness and avoid wastage and duplication in training. Their main task is to ensure that the resources currently available in the education and training

system are used efficiently to provide the numbers of appropriately skilled graduates that industry is prepared to employ.

The management approach focuses on the supply-side, and on the interests of government and private employers. Governments, particularly in recent years, have been especially concerned about the efficiency of the education and training system and have viewed the coordination problem in terms of avoiding duplication of functions among training bodies. *Past ad hoc* approaches to perceived problems and deficiencies have tended to rely on the establishment of new institutions, resulting in considerable duplication of effort. In Sri Lanka, for example, more than 15 government departments and ministries were involved in technical and vocational training in 1989 (not including private sector agencies), resulting in duplication of courses, lack of common standards, underutilisation of staff and resources, etc. Mechanisms established to deal with such problems focus their attention largely on coordination within the education and training sector, with limited attention to wider community organisations, especially employers.

Employers are more concerned about the effectiveness of the education and training system. In a number of countries, bodies such as national training boards have been established to address the failure of the education system, particularly the technical and vocational training system, to provide the skills required by employers. Coordinating mechanisms set up to improve the effectiveness of education and training tend to focus on the interface between education and employment, and employers are more likely to be represented. A focus on effectiveness tends to be especially dominant in African countries, where shortages of skilled labour are a constant problem. The Industrial and Vocational Training Board of Mauritius, for example, has focused largely on accreditation and regulation of existing private sector training courses and the provision of new courses to meet industry training needs. The dominant concern of similar bodies in Asia has been on providing feedback to public sector education or training institutions.

Recently, the combination of high levels of unemployment and shortages of skilled labour has obliged many governments to review their perception of the education-employment mismatch to emphasise the demand-side, the interests of students and the need for education and training to lead to jobs. Large numbers of students in a number of developing countries have been unable to obtain employment, partly because their training does not match the needs of the labour market. For example, a government report found that although 50 per cent of vocational students in Sri Lanka were trained in agriculture, only 10 per cent of youth sought agricultural employment (Sri Lanka 1990).

Students and parents in the densely populated countries of Asia are discovering that technical and vocational education and qualifications do not lead to employment. A 1988 tracer study of vocational and technical graduates in Sri Lanka (De Silva cited

in Corner 1989) found that the majority of recent graduates were unemployed. One reason for this is that, while economic growth that creates new jobs has been modest, the youth cohorts producing new entrants to the labour force are large, mostly born before fertility began to decline. They and their parents have high expectations that investment in education will lead to higher incomes and a good quality of life. Faced with the social and political consequences of failure to meet these expectations, Asian governments are increasingly focusing on a demand-side need to create productive employment for these young people.

Like a supply-side emphasis on the effectiveness of education, a demand-side orientation to coordination between education and employment must focus on the interface between the sectors. In Sri Lanka, the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission has been established to co-ordinate and regulate all vocational and technical education and training activities in the country, including those in the private sector. Its supply-side tasks include a review of tertiary and technical education to facilitate a re-orientation of the curriculum to meet future industry needs. On the demand side, the government hopes to address the failure of technical and vocational graduates to obtain employment. A demand-side orientation tends to be more important in the heavily populated countries of Asia, such as India and Sri Lanka, where high levels of unemployment and a shortage of jobs are pressing priorities.

The future of manpower planning

The importance of the manpower planning paradigm in overall development policy tended to decline in many developing countries during the late 1980s, particularly in the more rapidly growing Asian region. Until the late 1980s, developing countries placed considerable emphasis on long-term manpower planning and educational planning to ensure that the education and training systems produced the skills and levels of manpower required by the economy. However, experience has shown that most manpower planning forecasts were poor indicators of actual demand (Mehmet 1987:94-102; Pitayanon 1987:76-8). As the role of the private sector has increased and conventional approaches to centralised development planning have been questioned, developing countries, particularly in Asia, have begun to move towards the more short-term, labour-information and market-oriented manpower management strategies that are more typical of industrial economies. Many developing countries have stopped using overall long-term (usually five-year) development plans covering all sectors of the economy and focused instead on the preparation of shorter-term (two to three-year) programs covering the public sector, accompanied by a broad indicative outline plan for the guidance of the private sector. Among the countries adopting this approach are Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and most of the Pacific island states.

Industrial countries have always placed much less emphasis on manpower planning. The supply of skilled labour in industrial economies is primarily an issue at the margin, relating only to new entrants to the labour force and to skills upgrading for comparatively well-educated employed workers. In contrast, developing countries are faced with a need to create entire modern labour forces from largely uneducated and illiterate subsistence agrarian populations. The reduced role of manpower planning in industrial economies is also partly due to rapid technological change, and the dominant role of the private sector and market institutions. Volatile market-driven growth and rapid technological change make it difficult to predict labour market trends and changing manpower needs. Fortunately, the comparatively free operation of market forces on a relatively educated population also largely removes the need for governments to undertake detailed manpower planning.

In recent years, however, long-term unemployment has emerged as a major international problem even in industrial economies such as Australia and New Zealand that formerly enjoyed full employment. As a result, governments in industrial countries are now paying growing attention to manpower planning and the need to coordinate education and training with employment. Their approach has typically focused on increasing the quantity and quality of education and on promoting a more active training role for industry. Increasing school retention rates to raise general skill levels, and efforts to make education more relevant to the needs of industry have been major issues in the formal education sector. The increased demand for adult education and a growing recognition that education is a life-long process has had a major impact on all areas of post-secondary education. Governments in more developed market economies have also sought to increase private sector incentives to provide more on-the-job training, often through training levies, and to encourage industry to become more involved in technical and vocational education. While this is partly motivated by a need to reduce the burden of training on government budgets, industry involvement in both formal education and training is seen as a way of improving coordination between education/training and employment. Improved information flows about the supply of job-seekers, the demand for particular skills, and education and training opportunities and the less restricted operation of prices in the labour market are also seen as important means of improving coordination. Industrial economies thus place considerable emphasis on the private sector and on market solutions to this particular (and increasingly important) human resources development coordination problem.

Despite widespread dissatisfaction and disillusionment with traditional manpower planning techniques, a recent review reported little evidence of a shift towards alternative approaches to coordination of education and employment in developing countries (ESCAP-Hewavitharana 1992:31). New strategies for manpower planning have been advocated, particularly by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and,

in Asia, the Asian Regional Training and Education Program (ARTEP) (Amjad 1987; ILO-ARTEP 1992), emphasising the role of the market as a coordinating mechanism, and focusing on short-term adjustments through the provision of skills re-training and upgrading for workers and improved information to both workers and employers. However, such efforts are seriously handicapped by lack of technical expertise, lack of appropriate information, and the continuing lack of coordination between ministries of education and ministries of planning and production (Amjad 1987:30). In most developing (and many industrial) countries there is little prospect that such measures will be capable of dealing with major manpower allocation problems and successfully coordinating education and training activities with employment. Coordination of education and employment thus remains the single most pressing and most intractable problem for almost all governments in both industrial and developing countries.

The HRD paradigm

The HRD paradigm, developed within the Asia and Pacific region since the mid-1980s, represents a different approach. While it embraces both the civil service and manpower planning paradigms, it significantly extends the concept of human resources development. Three key characteristics distinguish the HRD paradigm from preceding views of human resources development. The first is an explicit focus on the central role of human resources in the development process. The second is a balanced and integrated treatment of supply and demand factors placing equal emphasis on human capital and quality of life. The third distinguishing feature is an emphasis on paid employment providing an incentive for human capital investments and the means of attaining quality of life.

The HRD paradigm focuses on human resources development as an individual process in which the key decisions are made by households and families. The role of incentives for individuals and households in the decision-making process is therefore emphasised. In particular, participation in paid work is highlighted as the critical positive incentive in developing countries. In the case of investment in children's human capital through health and education, the evaluation by parents of a child's future employment/earning prospects (and returns) is the critical incentive. Institutional factors, particularly social and cultural norms, are identified as important barriers or disincentives to individual human resources development. Behaviours such as attending school, travelling in public, or dealing with government personnel may generate strong social disapproval or psychological stress for certain groups. The negative impact of cultural and social norms typically affects women (and girls) much more than men (and boys), although minority groups of both sexes may be affected.

In modern monetised economies, paid work links the demand and supply sides of human resources development in two ways. On the one hand, it furnishes the incentive for individuals or households to undertake human resources development investments while, on the other, it yields an income providing individuals with access to the consumption benefits of development, an improved quality of life. Particularly at lower levels of development, there is a high degree of overlap between factors leading to an improved quality of life and factors enhancing individual productivity. Participation in the consumption benefits of development through education, health and nutrition enhances the quality of human capital, reflecting quality of life from a consumption perspective, but constituting human capital from a production perspective. At the individual level, this increases productivity and earnings and therefore provides an incentive for human capital investments. At the national level, it increases the overall productivity of the economy and the level of national development. Thus, at both the individual and national levels, a human resources development strategy leads to positive cycles of growth and development.

The HRD paradigm is conceptually integrated: the supply of human resources through health, education, training and other human capital investments is linked to the demand for human resources at two levels. At an individual level, wages are determined by the workers' human capital endowment in the form of health, education and training. At an aggregate level, the HRD paradigm is also integrated, emphasising the importance of the interaction between economic and social development.

The concept of human resources development presented under the HRD paradigm is extremely broad. To the conventional supply-side human capital characteristics embodied in the health, education and skill levels of the individual, it adds the whole range of consumption components that represent an individual's quality of life. Achievement of the concept of human resources development advocated under the HRD paradigm requires not just a sectoral or even multi-sectoral HRD program, but an HRD focus to the entire development program. It is thus more accurate to talk of implementing a human resources development-oriented development strategy. Since this is a rather inelegant term, the paper will refer to it as an 'HRD development strategy'.

Issues in coordination

The remainder of this paper examines coordination in relation to policymaking, planning and implementation of human resources development under an HRD development strategy. The conceptual integration of the HRD paradigm and the scope of human resources development it advocates explains the increased attention to

coordination by governments seeking to implement an HRD development strategy. Not all countries have adopted the HRD paradigm of human resources development, but the 48 members of ESCAP formally adopted it in the Jakarta Plan of Action. The close congruence between it and the concept of human development widely advocated by the UNDP suggests that it is a goal many other countries may strive for. Moreover, the problems of coordination embodied in the implementation of this concept include those faced by less comprehensive models of human resources development.

Integration versus coordination

In the early literature on the HRD paradigm, there is confusion and tension about whether human resources development requires an integrated or a coordinated approach. The Expert Group Meeting convened in Tokyo in 1987 to consider guidelines for a plan of action on human resources development for Asia and the Pacific specifically mentioned an 'integrated plan of action' (ESCAP 1988b:11), following on resolution 260 (XLIII) of the 43rd session of the Commission (ESCAP 1988a:v). However, the subsequent Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region (1988a) omitted reference to integration and included an entire section on coordination (ESCAP 1988a:41-3). The Jakarta Plan recognised that the complexity, interdependence and multidimensional nature of the emerging concept of human resources development demanded coordination rather than integration. The general lack of success of other integrated programs, particularly integrated rural development programs, probably also had some influence on the shift.

The term 'integration' implies the consolidation and concentration of activities under a single authority. An integrated program therefore requires centralised decision-making and administration through institutions which are typically rigid and hierarchical. It is associated with the concentration of power and decision-making authority in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons located in a central agency with strong top-down chains of command and vertical flows of information. Integrated rural development activities, for example, have often been administered through specially established regional authorities whose broad powers tend to resemble those of local government.

'Coordination' refers to the timeliness, harmony and complementarity of activities of autonomous agencies. Coordination is participatory, requiring decision-making to be shared, and therefore compatible with decentralisation and the devolution of authority and responsibility to lower levels of administration. It requires institutional structures that are more horizontally oriented, allowing information and responsibility to be shared among several agencies at various levels.

An integrated approach to HRD

Integrated planning strategies are attractive to less developed countries because centralised methods of organisation and management inherent in integrated approaches make maximum use of limited high-quality human resources. A small number of competent individuals located in a central institution such as a central planning agency can effectively direct a national human resources development effort. These top-down methods make minimal demands on less competent regional and sectoral staff, who are merely required to follow central office directives. An integrated approach is therefore comparatively efficient where low levels of human resources act as major constraints to broader human resources development.

However, as countries develop, both the potential for and the advantages of an integrated approach diminish. All aspects of human resources development become more complex, and the level of expertise required begins to exceed the capacity of central agency staff. At higher levels of economic and human resources development, variation in local situations and divergent needs within the population make the uniformity of centralised programs dysfunctional. The growth of information that accompanies development tends to exceed the capacity of central units to utilise data effectively. Recent moves in many developing countries toward more market-oriented development strategies and a greater role for the private sector also reduce the importance of and capacity for centralised planning.

An integrated approach to policymaking and planning in human resources development may, however, continue to be practical in many developing countries. Policy formulation is centralised in most countries because most policies are national in scope, and usually carried out by central institutions of government such as a cabinet or cabinet committee. Such institutions provide an appropriate framework for the integration of human resources development policy. Macro-level planning is similarly intended to affect the country as a whole and takes place in central ministries or departments of finance and in national planning agencies, which can facilitate the integration of human resources development planning. Policymaking and macro-level planning thus remain areas where a more integrated approach to human resources development is both feasible and useful.

A coordinated approach to HRD

It is increasingly recognised that a coordinated approach is both more practical and more appropriate for the implementation of human resources development programs. Coordination is most appropriate partly because the approach itself contributes to

human resources development. Top-down, non-participatory approaches to planning and programming contribute little to human resources development, particularly within government and the administration, precisely because they make few demands on lower level staff. Centralised integrated approaches encourage dependence and inhibit initiative and creativity. They also tend to make inefficient use of information because the flow of communication is from the top, which lacks information on grassroots situations, to the bottom, which has access to the information but no power to act on it. By contrast, coordination can encourage individual initiative and creativity, and facilitate more effective use of information at the various levels of government. Coordinated and participatory approaches to human resources development implementation are also more appropriate because they allow for different (compatible) solutions to the same problem, increasing effectiveness by meeting a range of individual needs. Whereas integrated approaches tend to emphasise uniformity and rigidity, coordinated approaches can cater to diversity. Given the necessary minimum levels of human resources development, a coordinated approach to human resources development is more effective than an integrated approach.

Coordination between HRD policymaking and planning

Coordination of policymaking and planning for human resources development is particularly difficult because of conflict between short-term and long-term planning goals. Long-term planning for human resources development focuses on broad objectives and priorities and is associated in developing countries with the preparation of long-term national development plans. However, the process of allocating the resources necessary for programs to achieve these objectives takes place in the context of annual budgeting and tends to respond to short-term financial imperatives. Budgets may be determined in comparative isolation from policy formulation and planning, by different personnel, motivated by different concerns, and consequently, not reflecting stated priorities.

Human resources development is a long-term process requiring substantial investment that absorbs a significant share of the national budget. Returns to these investments are indirect, difficult to attribute to particular programs, and realised only in the very long run. Because it is almost impossible to demonstrate the short-term impact of human resources development programs, allocations for these programs are especially vulnerable during budget reviews.

In times of serious resource constraint, human resources development policies and their implementation may be obstructed by the heavy burden of the routine budget inherited from past policies and programs. In the key human resources development

areas of health and education, it is difficult to reduce the routine budgets required to sustain large workforces and maintain the infrastructure. It is therefore difficult to obtain additional resources from the national budget to implement the changes desired by policymakers. For example, despite the fact that health policy has emphasised preventive and primary health care in many developing countries for at least a decade, the major share of health budgets continues to be expended on the maintenance of modern curative medical staff and facilities inherited from previous policy decisions.

Coordination of sectoral programming with national human resources development policy objectives presents other difficulties. Human resources development, particularly under the HRD paradigm, involves the activities of a large number of sectoral agencies. Because broad sectoral policies and plans are often set by central rather than sectoral agencies, they are likely to be reasonably consistent with national policy objectives. However, these plans may not be effective or feasible. Even with sectoral inputs, usually from the most senior levels (which may not be well-informed), the central agency is likely to have poor information about particular problem and the resources available to address it. Moreover, lower levels of sectoral agencies are unlikely to feel a strong commitment to the implementation of a sectoral planning process in which they did not actively participate. They are likely to be, at best, unresponsive to calls from the centre to coordinate their activities with those of rival sectoral agencies.

A number of developing countries have instituted a bottom-up, participatory planning processes to facilitate local input into national planning. Although this represents a positive step towards implementation of an HRD strategy, the combination of approaches creates potential difficulties for coordination. In most developing countries, national planning has tended to produce uniform policies and plans for the entire nation. In contrast, local planning initiatives are most likely to request specific policies and plans to meet particular local needs. This potential contradiction is typically resolved by restricting the local planning process to the identification of local projects falling within national policy guidelines.

Administrative coordination

The approach to coordination of human resources development in developing countries has focused on the administrative efficiency with which programs are formulation and implemented. This restrictive concept of 'administrative coordination' focuses on the supply side, on management issues, on the internal consistency of program objectives, and on the elimination of administrative duplication and waste. Administrative coordination has attracted attention in developing countries because

of the heavy demands coordination imposes on organisation and human resources development within governments and administrations. The main factors determining administrative coordination of human resources development are largely internal to the administration and subject to government influence.

Administrative culture

Effective coordination requires cooperative behaviour, collaboration, and the sharing of information, decision-making, responsibility, authority and resources. Such characteristics are often quite foreign to the 'culture' or conventional patterns of behaviour of the bureaucracies administering government HRD programs in developing countries. Bureaucracies tend to be rigid, hierarchical, and dominated by small numbers of senior personnel. Even though the functions of the organisations require sharing and dispersal of resources, individual performance indicators tend to encourage accumulation of power, decision-making authority and control over resources. Non-cooperative behaviour by leaders thus tends to be rewarded, while the large numbers of lower level personnel destined to remain at the base of the bureaucratic pyramid are encouraged to be passive, dependent and cautious. This cultural environment was described by a recent observer as

characterised by extreme departmentalism...continuing power struggles among ministries, frequent changes at the senior policy maker and administrator levels, and overlapping duties (Hewavitharana 1992:144).

Such an environment encourages behaviour that is directly contrary to that required for effective coordination.

Although often ascribed to the characteristics of the broader cultures of which they are part, these attributes of administrative culture are partially a consequence of low levels of human resources development. Rigid and hierarchical patterns of decision-making are likely to emerge where the supply of educated and qualified personnel is limited. In such circumstances, young staff tend to be promoted before they have acquired sufficient experience to carry out their duties with confidence. At higher levels, this leads to rigid adherence to regulations and precedents and excessive dependence on instructions from superiors. Consequently, communications tend to flow from the top to the bottom, discouraging initiative and restricting the access of the few top decision-makers to the information needed to make appropriate decisions. Lower-level staff tend to avoid making independent decisions, and the resultant pattern of dependence and subservience becomes institutionalised. It may be reinforced by rigid and hierarchical social systems, such as colonial or feudal regimes, but its origins lie in low levels of human resources development.

The lack of support for cooperative behaviour and coordinated effort is not an

immutable feature of non-Western administrative cultures. Since these characteristics of bureaucratic culture are partly a consequence of low levels of human resources development, they can be modified by human resources development. Over time, education, management training, and personnel development can make bureaucratic cultures more compatible with coordination. As the quality of human resources rises, procedures and administrative practices should be reviewed to take advantage of the higher levels of expertise and to facilitate further human resources development and coordination.

Decentralisation versus centralisation

While coordination in the administration of human resources development requires cooperation and sharing of decision-making at all levels, the ultimate authority and responsibility for coordination of specific activities rests at a particular level of a particular agency. In rigidly hierarchical administrative cultures, authority almost always rests at the highest levels of central agencies, while responsibility may often fall on lower levels and sectoral agencies. However, effective coordination requires both authority and responsibility to rest in the same hands.

Because the administration of developing countries has typically been highly centralised and characterised by strong vertically oriented sectoral ministries, power and authority have been retained at the higher levels of the sectoral agencies. The multi-sectoral nature of human resources development has led to responsibility for coordination of human resources development programs being held by central agencies at the national level.

However, recent analyses of development policy have advocated decentralisation as a means of improving efficiency and effectiveness. Local authorities are considered to be better informed about and thus more effective at identifying and meeting local needs. It is now also recognised that the effectiveness of development programs is increased by popular participation in decision-making, and that the local level is the most important level for successful implementation of programs. This suggests that responsibility for multi-sectoral coordination of human resources development should be located at a sub-national level.

While local participation and access to information are important, it is also essential that the coordinating agency have the power and authority to take decisions and ensure implementation. Because coordination involves adaptation and modification of individual plans in order to bring them into line with those of others, it requires those involved in coordination to be flexible and able to modify policies, plans and programs. This capacity is determined, first, by the possession of authority and control over the respective activities to be coordinated and, second, by the technical ability to make appropriate decisions. Organisations are typically most flexible where decision-makers

have the greatest authority and control over policy and resources, and least flexible where officials are most dependent on initiatives and authorisation from others, usually those at higher levels.

Mechanisms for multi-sectoral coordination

The multi-sectoral nature of human resources development, particularly under the HRD paradigm, creates serious difficulties for coordination. Administrations in most developing countries are dominated by entrenched sectoral interests that are reluctant to give up the power and resources they hold. The inherent difficulty of achieving horizontal coordination among vertically oriented and extremely hierarchical organisations also impedes multi-sectoral coordination.

A variety of administrative mechanisms have been devised to overcome such difficulties, including lead agencies, national planning processes and inter-departmental committees (ESCAP 1991:85-6). Papua New Guinea is adopting a new approach based on the concept of 'lead' and 'support' agencies. At the macro level, one department of government will be designated as the lead agency for each national development objective, with primary responsibility for designing and implementing programs and projects to address that objective. Support agencies will also participate in design, implementation and monitoring of programs, by contributing their particular skills and expertise. At the micro level, the basic unit of coordination, planning and budgeting, are individual programs implemented by the department acting as lead agency, with other departments or agencies involved as support agencies.

National development plans and planning processes are another approach to coordination. In Vanuatu, for example, the Third Year Development Plan 1992-96 identifies intersectoral cooperation as the major development issue, specifies the format and planning procedures to be adopted by sectoral agencies in developing individual sectoral plans, and identifies three cross-sectoral development issues that all sectors and agencies must address in their plans. Two of these issues, the role of women and the role of youth in development, are universally recognised as human resources development issues, while the third, the role of the environment, would be regarded as a human resources development issue under the HRD paradigm. It is anticipated that this approach will assist all agencies to formulate and implement a coordinated approach to these common goals.

A number of countries have assigned a special responsibility for intersectoral coordination to special coordinating commissions or ministries. These have usually been established to coordinate activities in particular areas, utilising inter-sectoral or inter-departmental committees as mechanisms for coordinating the activities of the independent agencies under their authority. In China, for example, various coordinating commissions and ministries often utilise inter-departmental meetings

and joint documents as instruments of coordination.

The effectiveness of all horizontally oriented institutional arrangements established to achieve coordination has been seriously impaired by the almost universal failure of governments to adapt existing administrative procedures to support coordination. The vertical orientation of administrations in most developing countries has created strong and well-defined vertical lines of communication within sectoral agencies. The routine reporting and decision-making procedures within these agencies are usually unaffected by new institutional arrangements for coordination. Thus, efforts to coordinate the human resources development decisions of a number of sectors are often frustrated by the need for the sectoral representatives to seek approval for decisions via vertically oriented sectoral chains of command. Rather than improving administrative efficiency, coordination may actually create new delays and obstacles to the implementation of programs.

Potential of administrative coordination

In many developing countries, government interest in administrative coordination has been motivated by a desire to achieve efficiency in the face of severe budgetary pressures. Although budgetary pressure is probably the strongest force for administrative coordination of human resources development programs, its power is comparatively limited. In most cases, it is probably not sufficient to overcome the stronger incentives for 'empire-building' and the accumulation of power and resources that tend to obstruct coordination.

Substantive coordination

In terms of national development goals, the important issue is not whether coordination ensures that human resources development programs are administered in an efficient manner, but whether it improves their effectiveness. 'Substantive coordination' refers to the extent to which program activities meet the needs and are compatible with the capacities of target groups. The most effective forces for substantive coordination tend to be external to government.

Role of demand

The main pressures for substantive coordination of human resources development arise from the demands of those who should benefit from programs. Demand pressures may arise during policy formulation and planning, or during the implementation of programs. Demand can only influence policies and planning where avenues exist for

popular, local participation in policy formulation, usually through democratic political processes, or in planning through bottom-up planning processes. More typically in developing countries, where popular participation in decision-making is limited, demand pressures emerge reactively, expressing client dissatisfaction with an ongoing program, and their impact is largely confined to implementation. Demand-driven coordination is likely to encourage a diversity of implementation strategies to meet the different needs and situations of clients.

Demand pressures for substantive coordination of human resources development may arise from interest groups or individuals. In developing countries the role of pressure groups is likely to be more important than that of individual citizens. For example, one important source of demand for substantive coordination between education and employment has been employers' concerns about the failure of education and training systems to provide appropriately trained labour for industry. Middle-class concern about the inability of educated youth to find employment has been another important influence.

Individuals can only be effective in exerting demand pressures where appropriate channels of influence have been institutionalised. Such channels include democratic political processes, freedom of expression (particularly through active and independent mass media) freedom of information and individual empowerment. In many developing countries, the capacity of individual citizens to influence coordination is restricted, particularly by limited access to information and political channels.

In industrialised and some of the more democratic developing countries, individual citizens can be quite effective in pressuring bureaucracies to undertake both administrative and substantive coordination. Despite formally undemocratic regimes, the balance of political forces in several African countries requires central government administrations to respond to influential local interests and pressure groups. Individual citizens in other more egalitarian African societies also expect governments and administrations to perform. When these expectations are not met, they may channel complaints through the political system which, in turn, will pressure the administration to redress deficiencies. By contrast, in Asian countries with long histories of feudalism and feudalistic colonial regimes, individuals seem to expect little from governments and feel powerless to act in response to administrative or program failure.

Role of market forces

Market forces are another important external mechanism for effecting substantive coordination in human resources development. They are probably the most important factor in the relative efficiency of human resources development programs in industrial countries. For example, where labour markets are relatively free and populations have comparatively high levels of education, market forces have been generally more

effective than administrative approaches at coordinating the output of the education system with the demands of industry. Because of the importance of information in facilitating independent decision-making, general education levels tend to be positively associated with the efficiency of labour markets. Recent approaches to manpower planning in developing countries, particularly in Asia, have emphasised measures to improve the efficiency of the labour market to ensure that the education and training sector produces the kinds of human resources that employers are willing to employ (Amjad 1987; Godfrey 1992; Muqtada 1992; Richter 1984).

Participation and individual choice as a mechanism of coordination

High quality human resources characteristics include initiative, innovative behaviour, self-reliance, a high level of responsibility, and flexibility. Active participation in decision-making and choice helps to develop these characteristics, and is therefore essential. It is also an important aid to effective coordination of human resources development programs because, in general, individuals are best able to judge their own needs and capacities. They will choose to participate in human resources development programs that provide appropriate benefits and, in choosing not to participate in ineffective programs, will encourage administrators to improve substantive coordination.

Information and communications

Information and communications are particularly vital to effective coordination, both administrative and substantive. Coordination requires consensus about the goals to be achieved: agencies involved in coordinated activities must share common or at least mutually compatible goals. Agreement about objectives requires that all have access to a common information base about the problems to be addressed.

Information flows between the coordinating agency and the local implementation level are particularly important. In general, information about the needs and conditions of target groups will be greatest at the local level. However, in countries with low levels of human resources development, the capacity to process, analyse and utilise information may be limited at this level. Therefore, communication channels must be developed to promote timely flow of information from local to central officials. In this way, multi-sectoral coordination at the centre can be firmly based on comprehensive and accurate information about relevant local conditions.

The information requirements for administrative and substantive coordination differ. Administrative coordination involves adapting and modifying planned activities in order to coordinate them with those of other agencies and therefore requires information about the relevant activities of other agencies, and their timing. Substantive

coordination involves modifying programs to improve effectiveness in meeting client needs, and requires information about both clients and human resources development programs.

On the demand side, information enables individuals to make informed and efficient decisions about their human resources development. More free-market approaches toward general economic policy are being adopted in many developing countries. Market forces are effective at achieving substantive coordination only if individuals have access to information and personal and political freedom to make appropriate and efficient social and economic choices. Choice and access to information also empower clients and target groups to demand improved administrative and substantive coordination.

Information about client needs and the successes and failure of projects and programs is essential to improve all aspects of coordination of human resources development policymaking, planning and programming. However, information in general, especially negative information about program weaknesses and failures, is often difficult to obtain in developing countries. The secrecy arising from individual lack of confidence or associated with agency rivalry may not be balanced by monitoring and review procedures or norms about freedom of information or public accountability. Effective coordination requires the development of mechanisms to monitor and review human resources development programs and to encourage agencies to share information.

The future of HRD coordination in developing countries

In addressing the need for improved coordination of human resources development, developing countries need to focus more on the type of coordination required. Most recent government attention has been devoted to improving administrative coordination, that is, ensuring that programs are administered efficiently with a minimum of waste and duplication. This view of coordination is motivated largely by budgetary pressures and focuses on arrangements and processes that relate primarily to the public sector. While administrative coordination will remain important, substantive coordination must become a more explicit focus if national human resources development objectives are to be attained. Substantive coordination, which refers to the effectiveness with which programs actually achieve human resources development of target groups, increasingly depends on parties and factors outside the public sector. Improving substantive coordination will require recognition the role of individual demand and participation, and accommodation of the influence of markets and the private sector.

The focus of administrative coordination depends first, on the type of human resources development activity to be coordinated and, second, on the level of human resources development within the agency in which coordination takes place. Centralised and top-down approaches that are integrated within a single umbrella institution work most effectively for policy formulation and planning activities, which in many developing countries, are integrated within a national political or planning institution. Such approaches are also most suitable, indeed difficult to avoid, in developing countries with very low levels of human resources development and extreme shortages of high-level human resources. However, these highly centralised, autocratic, directive methods of coordination are essentially antagonistic to human resources development. Where the human resources development situation permits, coordination should be a participatory process that takes place among equals, where decision-making, information and resources are shared in the pursuit of common goals.

Administrative coordination in developing countries involves a constant tension between the drive for efficient use of limited resources, and the desire to utilise methods that enhance the human resources development of those engaged in coordination. This tension must be recognised if appropriate approaches to coordination are to be devised. Failures of administrative coordination in developing countries are often attributed to the prevailing culture within which coordination is sought. However, the characteristics that obstruct coordination, such as autocratic behaviours and power-seeking on the one hand, and dependence on authority, reluctance to take decisions, and apathy on the other, are themselves partly a consequence of low levels of human resources development. They are not inevitable and can and should be addressed directly through personnel development and human resources management programs. The task is to ensure that the rewards and incentives for individual and group behaviour within the public service promote and reflect efficient use of resources. Personnel development and human resources management within the public sector offer the most important avenue through which efficient administrative coordination can be attained.

Effectiveness which depends on substantive coordination is more important than administrative efficiency. Programs in which administrative arrangements are well-coordinated to make efficient use of resources are not necessarily effective. Substantive coordination depends largely on factors that are external to government and the administration, particularly pressures from client groups and market forces. In order to achieve substantive coordination human resources development, policymaking, planning and programming must become responsive to these external forces.

Strategies for substantive coordination tend to be both novel and potentially threatening to governments and administrations in developing countries. Achievement of substantive coordination through the influence of clients and markets requires

freedom of information and freedom of individual choice, neither of which currently exist in many developing countries. It also requires the development of appropriate channels of communication between client groups and the government. For most developing countries, the establishment of mechanisms for effective substantive coordination will be the most significant human resources development challenge in the coming decade.

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