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Book Reviews


The book is in two parts, with contributors who have had experience and exposure in a wide range of socioeconomic settings. The book looks at the social and economic needs of children in 10 countries, studying child welfare in the context of a deteriorating economic situation. The situation of infants and other vulnerable groups is studied against a background of world depression, depressed commodity prices, the debt crisis of Africa and Latin America, and drought in Africa. All these factors tend to lower per capita incomes and employment opportunities and increase cuts in social expenditure. The study wishes to show how stabilisation and adjustment policies can be successful economic strategies while still protecting vulnerable groups, ie adjustment with a human face.

Part One of the book is concerned with issues arising out of the economic decline of the first half of the 1980's, and the effects of subsequent policy measures on child welfare. Evidence of the effects of this recession on child welfare are detailed in tables and analytical models. These diagrams enable the reader to absorb vast amounts of statistical data easily, in a systematic manner, allowing for comparisons. Basic household needs such as fuel and food are emphasised so that readers can understand the struggle that vulnerable groups have to undergo to survive in a situation where policy issues are beyond their control. The conclusion of Part One is a comprehensive summary of how child welfare has been negatively affected by growing economic imbalances, in particular declining household incomes. Part One deals thoroughly with care issues and vulnerable children, as it covers nutritional, health and social opportunities for such infants.

Part Two of Adjustment with a Human Face is an overview of an alternative approach to the failed policies illustrated in Part One. The crucial consideration in the alternative approach is to combine adjustment with the protection of vulnerable groups and the restoration of economic growth. Policy considerations are also linked to the forces of supply and demand so that the preferred options are seen in the context of both the vulnerable group and economic restoration.

The book illustrates clearly how policy makers should view the needs of local small farmers, while at the same time addressing global factors that threaten vulnerable groups. For this reason students of welfare, economics and development, and those professionals who adopt a systems approach to the analysis of socioeconomic trends affecting vulnerable groups, are fully provided for. The book is a detailed, illustrated analysis of the economic trends in the countries studied. Very few readers could read it for sheer enjoyment, unless they were well read in welfare economics, development and other disciplines in which statistics are appreciated. Adjustment with a Human Face is a valuable resource and reference book, which would suit
postgraduate readers and professionals with a commitment to understanding how economic adjustment policies could be successful while protecting vulnerable groups, such as children.


This is a short publication, and is quite condensed but the few pictures and generous spread of case studies make the book interesting and readable. The cover is probably too light coloured to withstand the tough usage for which the book is destined.

The book is product of almost two years of research into the problems facing women farmers, and various ways of developing agricultural extension services to women, in Africa. The work was financed by the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa and is part of ongoing research into raising the productivity of women farmers in Africa.

The book is jointly authored by Katrine Saito and Jean Weidemann, senior economist and consultant respectively in the Women in Development division of the World Bank's Population and Human Resources Department. The authors acknowledge contributions to the publication by many experts within and outside the World Bank. The book has four chapters, Chapter 1 addresses the question of why women need help, and focuses on the role of women in agriculture in Africa, and the particular constraints they face in access to resources and information. Chapter 2 examines the information needed to modify the extension system to better reach women farmers, and the information needed to modify the focus of research to address women's activities and constraints on these, and to monitor and evaluate programmes.

Ways of collecting such data are suggested. Chapter 3 deals with the transmission of the extension message to women. In this chapter the writers examine the role of extension agents and the importance of gender, the use of home economists and subject matter specialists, the use of contact farmers, and the use of groups. The final chapter examines the formulation of the message to be delivered, and the linkages between extension and agricultural research and technology.

One strength of the book is that it views women as an integral part of a complex socioeconomic setting, and avoids defining extension for women only in terms of 'women's' factors, or shortfalls in women-related information. While acknowledging the need to review such factors and provide women-specific information, the authors have looked at extension as an open ended strategy that takes note of different situations and explores new directions for involving women in their own learning not as objects of extension but as participants.

Another strength of the book is its guidelines for action. The literature on women in agriculture rarely goes beyond just expressing views on the situation of women. The
usefulness of the writers’ suggestions will however, depend on their compatibility with the trends and traditions set by T and V. Action is unlikely to happen quickly if “extension staff often lack the tools for fully diagnosing the needs and constraints of farmers” (p2), especially women farmers. It is hoped that the guidelines will be accepted and valued, because the authors have outlined the research basis for their suggestions, and provided case studies against which readers can check for themselves the practical implications of the suggestions. A strong point of this publication is its simplicity and the logic of presentation. The right amount of information is given and a busy reader can get through a lot of information very quickly. It is an ‘awareness tool’ with an authoritative base in research.

The major weakness of the book is that it is not reader-specific. An initial impression given is that the most suitable reader is the female subject matter specialist on women’s programmes, who is being informed on the situation of women in agriculture and the views and practices of policy makers, managers, agents and participants in agricultural support services for women. The message seems to be “they are males who are not directly affected by the problems and needs of women farmers and hence are not sufficiently aware of them” (p1). However, when an attempt is made to overlook this unfortunate bias, there is information in Chapters 2 and 3 that is relevant to policy makers, managers, extension agents, etc of whatever sex.

Practical ways to involve women more meaningfully are provided. These chapters are useful for those involved in women’s programmes for the first time, or for those who need to restructure some homebred measure that is not working very well. Researchers and students on the more general topics of women in agriculture and women in rural development will also find useful information and references. The publication is ideal for agricultural extension specialists working with women, especially those who have to draw up working guidelines for others.

Readers must take note of the writers’ own caution that their work is not conclusive, as integrating women into the agricultural extension system is an ongoing process. The writers expect problems to emerge, and suggest alternative approaches to be tested over the next few years. This is a caution worth noting.

The authors have made a significant contribution. I look forward to a revised paper which incorporates not only new lessons and experiences, but also a more authoritative World Bank Extension strategy, either in current T and V messages or another extension strategy that takes note of women as an important and integral part of the rural sector. When this is done it should be signified by a statement of ownership by the World Bank. This final statement is a reaction to the usual World Bank caveat, “The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the authors....” Sadly with such an apology the impact of this valuable book on World Bank established traditions like T and V extension systems and other books which carry positive World Bank acknowledgements is likely to be reduced.

Reviewed by J H Chavarika, MSW student, School of Social Work, Harare.

Literacy in Development. People, Language, Power is the report of a seminar which was part of the British contribution, spearheaded by Education for Development (ED), to the International Literacy Year 90 (ILY 90). Its objective was to "direct the attention of the general public to matters related to literacy in Third World developing countries - to increase their awareness and understanding" (p2).

The publication is the product of the efforts of 118 participants. It contains two valuable as yet unpublished Keynote Addresses by Manzoor Ahmed (on Literacy and Development) and Lalage Brown (on Literacy and Women), and the workshop papers and verbatim renditions of the four plenary sessions. The workshops follow a logical progression: NFE and Development, Definitions and Politics of Literacy, The Setting up and Maintenance of a Literacy Programme, and, finally, Teaching and Learning Methodologies and Materials.

The reader is presented with ten contributions and reflections on the potential role of literacy in (rural) development in the nineties. These contributions are held together by the bonding compound of the organisers' introductory and concluding comments, and the participants' reactions during the plenaries.

The organisers question whether the basic dilemma of "whether literacy has any role at all in rural development" was addressed in any meaningful way in the Conference (Rogers, p4). If it ended, in that respect, on a rather inconclusive note, it may be because the participants were predominantly practitioners whose basic problem "was one of strategies, not principles" (p4), and because the organisers themselves failed to properly set out, because of time constraints, "the theoretical context".

On the one hand there is a remarkable consistency and willingness to stick with the major foci of the Conference: People, Language, Power. These three aspects are well represented in the powerful investigations into literacy and language by Street, Jules and Saraswathi. The wider implications are further emphasised by Ahmed's contextualisation of literacy in the freezing economic climate of the 1990's (he uses the image of a water bucket with a large hole in the bottom when referring to absolute illiteracy figures - North America has 30 million functional illiterates). Brown points to the added problems of women's 'invisibility' within this already dire picture. MacCaffrey (on the student writing movement in Britain) and Saraswathi and Mukhapadyaya, in the context of India, link up with Freirean tradition and an understanding of liberating education and its attendant participatory, empowering methodologies, curricula and materials.

The conference, on the other hand, avoids paying the same attention to an exploration of possibly empowering meanings of development, particularly rural development, as it does to literacy. A further weakness occurs when it "broadens out" into the field of Non Formal Education (NFE), without going into the historical and ideological foundations of this essentially negative way of describing what are often independent, positive and self directed educational activities. The two case studies of NFE initiated, set up, financed and maintained from the centre (Alexander and Townsend Coles) are not counterbalanced by grassroots-initiated NFE. The 'People, Language and Power' connections of these examples are, at best, tenuous. Would it not have been better, in view of this, to concentrate
on what Jomtien (1990) identifies as the real literacy.

Despite some inconsistencies and a lack of uniformity which, in a report such as this, is not necessarily a weakness, the Conference does succeed in shedding light on ILY90; and the problematic of literacy in the next decade, putting them in the limelight. The report contains a wealth of information and insights, and is highly recommended for "those interested in development, education and literacy in the Third World."

Reviewed by R E Carmen, Centre for Adult and Higher Education, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom.

Reference


Doctoral dissertations rarely succeed in being transposed to readable and informative books. This one manages, though I have some qualifications to make. Its success and its limitations arise from the same cause, the unusual conditions under which the author completed his work. Ken Tout worked fulltime for the UK-based NGO, HelpAge International, and specialised on projects in South America for seven years.

The first six chapters of his work set the scene. The introductory chapter contains definitions of ageing, and points out how the extended family network of support for elderly is disintegrating; then the author discusses demographic data on the greying of populations; analyses the impact of socioeconomic factors (rural decline, lack of social security, migration, "ageism", malnutrition); reviews some surveys of the elderly in South America, Africa, Western Pacific, Malta, and the Caribbean; looks at a selection of individual case studies and themes focusing on those elderly who live in destitution, in isolation and in poor health; and outlines the available information on existing social services (pensions, health care, institutional social services) in different parts of the Third World.

The remaining five chapters discuss policies and projects for enhancing the lives of elderly in developing countries. Experimental projects that provide income generation, substitute support, and emphasise integration into a local community are discussed: a bakery run by elderly, specialising in delicacies of yesteryear; a laundry run on behalf of old peoples’ homes but open to the public; a fast-food outlet; weaving project; farms and cooperatives. Tout also includes a comprehensive analysis of problems and mistakes in pilot care projects for the elderly, but with relevance to other development projects – culturally inappropriate project design, dishonesty, staff shortages, the difficulty of targeting the really needy. The author then proposes a typology of three model programmes, at district, metropolitan and national levels, and in a separate chapter concentrates on national strategies on ageing.
Tout emphasises the importance of proposing and implementing strategies commensurate with the economic abilities of the country, and his comments have particular relevance for Zimbabweans who are witnessing the introduction of a new national pension scheme. European and American pension schemes will no longer be able to be supported in the next decade, but he asks "how does a third world government commence such a scheme?" (p246). In spite of adverse recommendations from the ILO and others, it seems that Zimbabwe will follow the path that so many others now regret, that of introducing a scheme which will be an increasing burden on the nation, but which benefits only a small, already privileged employed class. Other aspects of national strategies discussed by Tout are the transformation of attitudes to the elderly, the promotion of smallscale and cottage industries, appropriate housing and health care services, family support, community action, the involvement of the elderly themselves in programmes, and the impact of international aid upon national ageing strategies. In this field international financial aid from NGOs is much more significant than, say, UN assistance: NGOs gave more in one year to African countries than was pledged for five years by governments to the UN Trust Fund on Ageing. Tout also discusses the various conferences held on ageing in Third World countries, including Dakar, Nairobi and Harare, and concludes that their resolutions leave no excuse for a lack of initiative but do underline how much needs to be done. In a further chapter on special groups Tout singles out the elderly refugee, the older women and what he calls "grandmothers and AIDS" as deserving of preferential treatment. The book ends with a call to society to restore to the elderly the prestige, independence, mobility and challenge which so-called civilised attitudes have destroyed.

It is unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable, that much of this work is descriptive and derivative, for where the author charts his way through unknown waters he seems confident, insightful and relevant. For example, the fact that Ken Tout's study almost exclusively records NGO involvement in situations of need in the Third World means that we hear too little of indigenous and successful ageing. Programmes are proposed in response to the needs of elderly in difficult socioeconomic conditions, but we do not hear of the methods of adaptation and innovation by which communities at local and national level have achieved success in dealing with problems of ageing. Such methods need investigation: methods of support found in traditional cultures that can be adapted to modern society, methods of enhancing support from the extended family where it exists, factors of success in support networks that substitute for the extended family, and so on.

A second shortcoming to this work is that the discussion on the role of the elderly in an AIDS-devastated economy and society is limited to four pages, in the section entitled "grandmothers and AIDS". I would have thought the demographic, economic and social crises affecting the Third World, and particularly African societies, merit a much more thorough treatment. Tout does compare the visible effects of AIDS on a population with the more insidious effects of its greying, arguing that the latter effect needs to be given greater attention (p114), but it would also have been helpful to examine in greater depth the serious and insidious effects of one upon the other.
My third hesitation about the book concerns its concentration on South American examples, sometimes to the neglect of Africa. For example, the Dakar Conference, Africa's first, and to date only, meeting on gerontology and ageing, is mentioned in one page.

Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations, I found this study very valuable because it is a pioneering work in a field that has until now had little by way of comprehensive analyses. It summarises in a readable way much of the work already done, and addresses the main issues, charting the way forward for Third World elderly to live in dignity and independence, an ideal which many societies embrace but do little to realise.

Reviewed by Joe Hampson SJ, Jesuit Provincial, Harare, Zimbabwe.

(Simultaneously published as Social Work with Groups, Vol 13, No 1).

This book is one of the volumes in the series “Social Work with Groups”. The collection of papers in this volume covers a number of theoretical and practical issues of groupwork in psychiatric and clinical settings and is a useful resource for workers in this field.

Part I by Levine deals with the history, problems and issues of groupwork. Part II comprises a short paper by Konopka who stresses that, despite the burgeoning of group treatment for various clinical groups, therapy groups are not necessarily therapeutic.

Part III contains a number of papers describing the formation and running of therapeutic groups for a variety of clinical populations in a number of different settings. Bond and de Graaf-Kaser present a typology of group approaches, such as unstructured approaches in sheltered settings, structured approaches in sheltered settings, including education, skills training, etc; experimental ‘in vivo’ formats which can be implemented in rehabilitation, and drop-in centres. The comprehensive list of references following this paper should prove most helpful to anyone wishing to select and run a therapy group.

Sheldon Rose’s paper on the group treatment of agoraphobia, using the traditional approach of ‘in vivo’ exposure, covers the steps to be followed in the building, maintenance and treatment of such a group.

A thought provoking and innovative approach to the group treatment of children is set out in Schamess’ paper. Two types of participants are dealt with. Firstly, there is group treatment of latency age children from families disrupted by separation and divorce. The aim of treatment is to reduce confusion regarding family composition and to help these children deal more constructively with the roles they are allocated in their families. A combination of intrapsychic and family therapy is used with the genogram being the main medium of instruction and intervention. The second type of group discussed by Schamess comprises teenage mothers and their toddlers and young children under the age of six years. The children interact with one another under the guidance of a trained worker while the mothers are given psychoeducation on child development with more constructive mother/child relationships being promoted.
The remainder of the papers in the volume include discharge issues for psychiatric patients, eg concerns about leaving hospital, future plans and resource issues, shortterm group therapy for fathers incarcerated in maximum security psychiatric hospitals, focusing on their relationships with their children; and, finally, an interesting and useful article on educational and occupational issues concerning chronic psychiatric patients, which uses a systematic approach to familiarise participants with a number of aspects of employer organisations.

This book discusses a number of workable approaches to group therapy which could be implemented in a variety of Zimbabwean clinical settings.

Reviewed by Angela Davies, Family Counselling Unit, Harare


(Monograph was published simultaneously as Child and Youth Services, Vol 5, No 1.)

The author uses the word internat as a label for any residential institution “in which persons, for some period of their lives, do not live in the culturally familiar and normatively preferred familial arrangement”. He includes boarding schools, homes for children and the aged, hospitals, prisons, monasteries and others, and makes the point that all internats are agents for change (whether this is explicitly defined or not).

He presents a schema by which certain dimensions of internat life and function can be evaluated and planned interventions made to ensure that change is goal-directed and purposeful rather than random. This analysis is multi-level.

The axes of autocracy/democracy and total/partial internats are then placed in relation to these axes. They are then placed also in terms of whether they are instrument or container internats. This axis refers to whether the internat is organised primarily to address the developmental needs of the internees, in which case interpersonal relationships “constitute an important and sometimes major factor in the internat’s work” (eg a commune) or whether it is a grouping of people and appliances collected “to perform a task which could just as well be performed elsewhere except for logistical expediency” (eg a hospital).

The communication feedback loop which connects motivation, participation and attention is discussed, as is the ecosystemic mapping of the internee, staff and environment sets. Most of the book, however, is concerned with a problem-solving approach applied to an analysis of quality of internat life, showing how specific issues related to the internat’s fundamental goals or principles can be addressed in a very practical way, and solutions can be generated and then evaluated and checked.

I found the approach stimulating. The book does just what the title suggests: it presents a schema whereby those running residential institutions can analyse exactly what is happening and why, and make corrections to ensure that change is in a positive direction. I would recommend this as essential reading for all institutional staff, and useful even for those whose care of people is in a non-residential context.

Reviewed by Margaret Hemling, Family Counselling Unit, Harare, Zimbabwe.

The six papers which make up this book are all written by community practitioners in the northern United States who work on various programmes aimed at prevention in the field of mental health. Arguing for the necessity of addressing prevention issues, one of the authors compares traditional mental health approaches (ie those with a curative focus only) with "an ambulance service laboriously operating at the bottom of a cliff. People are continuously falling from the top of the cliff above to receive triage and treatment below". The bag of papers is mixed. There are two very different accounts of educational programmes, one designed to increase the social competency of school children, the other a series of workshops for divorcees. Three papers deal with the management of prevention programmes, and one describes a "clearing house" approach to encourage the formation of selfhelp groups.

How relevant are the ideas to a Third World context? Is prevention even a useful concept here, or are we still too busy dealing with treatment? A primary emphasis on treatment approaches is world wide. The editors point out that prevention programmes were popular in the United States during the late 1960’s and the 70’s, but that functioning then became comparatively difficult. Possibly for this reason most of the authors strongly advocate built-in research and evaluation. Funders like to know that they are getting value for money. The Ministry of Health in Zimbabwe does have a philosophical commitment to prevention, but a situation of scarcity of resources means that, since prevention programmes are usually low-profile, unless they can be shown to be cost effective they will not be prioritised. Those who are committed to the concept of keeping the people from falling off the cliff must therefore take seriously the necessity of proving effectiveness, and of achieving the greatest possible effects with the least cost. This means we need as many ideas as possible from anyone who has been involved in the same struggle elsewhere.

The quality of the articles is variable, and the reader’s own interest areas will naturally influence which seem important and which simply dull. Of least interest to me were two long articles about the historical development of prevention programmes in particular centres. My involvement in training made the two accounts of educational programmes interesting, although the divorce workshops (one particularly) were definitely designed for a specific first world and middle class population, and could only ‘travel’ in modified form. My greatest enthusiasm was for the paper presenting the clearing house approach to the formation of selfhelp groups. These are valuable everywhere, but more so where resources are scarce. The issue of whether professionals empower or disempower such groups is discussed, and the connection made with the principle of member ownership of programmes. All in all this collection of papers is not earthmoving, but there are some interesting ideas in some of them.

Reviewed by Margaret Henning, Family Counselling Unit, Harare, Zimbabwe.

This book presents the results of an innovative research study which explores conceptions of intelligence. The book is one in the series "European Monographs in Social Psychology".

Gabriel Mugney is from the Department of Psychology at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, and Felice Carugati is from the Institute of Psychology at the University of Parma, Italy.

Chapter 1 presents a review of theories and approaches to the concept of intelligence, while Chapter 2 outlines the research methodology used in the study. The research results, which are subject to very sophisticated statistical analyses, are presented in Chapters 3 through 8 and are discussed in Chapter 9.

The book begins with the question "Is there such a thing as intelligence? Intelligence, with a capital 'I', is a cultural creation which is central to modern society but which varies according to the historical period, latitude and social circumstances" (pl). The authors then go on to review various approaches and definitions of intelligence and higher cognitive processes, and they point out that most theories of intelligence define it as adaptation to the physical environment. Mugby and Carugati view intelligence as adaptation to the social environment.

In the model proposed by Mugney and Carugati cognitive development is mediated by symbolic and actual social interactions which result in mental constructions of logical operations and social awareness of self, the social world, values, etc. The research was based on a questionnaire, 1000 32 page questionnaires were mailed to trainee teachers, teachers, parents, non-parents, and adults of varied occupations. The statistical analyses were completed on 728 questionnaires. Subjects were asked about their definitions of intelligence, concepts of the development of intelligence, image of an intelligent child, ideas about difficult children, and what school subjects could be used to assess intelligence.

The data analysis showed that different groups of subjects perceived intelligence differently. Comparisons between non-parents and parents, teacher trainees and teachers, and teachers without children and teachers with children, showed that an evolution took place in definitions of intelligence. The first view was that some children were inherently gifted. This view obviously removed responsibility for the child's performance away from parents and teachers. The second view was that intelligence is engaging in socially acceptable behaviour, and the final view was that intelligence is high achievement in certain specific subjects in school.

The results, taken as a whole, show that concepts of intelligence evolve and become structured in accordance with everyday events. On the one hand, people construct a social universe which is mentally intelligible, and on the other hand they construct a social and personal identity which is compatible with the requirements and norms of their social group.

This book will be of interest to social, cognitive and developmental psychologists, as well as educators and sociologists. A background in theories of cognitive development is necessary in order to fully appreciate the book, and an understanding of sophisticated statistical techniques is desirable but not a prerequisite.

Reviewed by Kathleen Myambo, Department of Psychology, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

This publication highlights the writer's experience as a detained Trade Unionist in South African prisons. As the first black woman Trade Union leader Mashinini showed great courage in the defiance of the apartheid regime.

Part One of the book discusses the writer's early life, before her detention. Part Two discusses her detention and life after detention. Part One Chapter One highlights the writer's upbringing. It depicts the typical life of black married women who are housewives and factory workers, who face dehumanisation and all forms of insults and abuse at the work place. These women are frustrated at home and at work, and this is clearly shown in the writer's life story. She became conscious of the political situation in South Africa while still a child.

In Chapter Four the writer describes the birth of the Trade Union, CCAWUSA, which became one of the most powerful unions in South Africa, and of which she was secretary. Mashinini tells how CCAWUSA was able to control the strikes and boycotts, even those organised outside the union. As a result of tremendous support from the black workers CCAWUSA became a force to be reckoned with. The authorities became concerned about the tremendous influence and power the movement had over black workers. In Chapter Six Mashinini describes her detention under Sections 6 and 22 of the General Laws Amendment Act. This nationwide clampdown on trade unions and political activity was obviously a show of strength by the apartheid regime.

Chapter Seven depicts the author's deep emotions as she describes the inhuman treatment she received at Pretoria Central Prison, a frightening prison known for the detention of condemned prisoners, ready to be hanged. It was at Pretoria Central Prison that she almost broke down because of solitary confinement, and interrogation - an nerve breaking exercise which left her with hypertension and amnesia. In Chapter Eight Mashinini describes how she forgot the name of her youngest daughter (Dudu) because of the psychological trauma caused by continuous detention.

Part Two Chapter Ten describes the freedom felt when the author and other detainees were released. This chapter confirms the results of the inhuman treatment received by the detainees, as another detainee and colleague was so disoriented that she could not remember her home address in Soweto. The author's psychological trauma was illustrated by a fear of cars and gates, which she associated with the police coming to take her away, and so she felt like running away. As a result of memory lapses and these fears she was sent to Geneva for medical and rehabilitation services. It was in Geneva that she began to write this book.

The author's approach and presentation is commendable, though some of the language used as the author's tolerance reached its limit is not palatable. Some of the language is abusive, but the reader can understand under what circumstances they were used. The book is easy to read and is free from academic jargon.

The author displayed great endurance and courage during her detention, a good lesson for political activists. The authorities could not break her, although psychologically she was not the same person after detention.