Institutional Aspects of Agricultural Development in Liberia

by Frithjof Kühnen'

1. Selected Characteristics of Liberian Agriculture

1. Geography, climate, son

The Republic of Liberia, which covers an area of 38,000 square miles (98,400 square km), is situated on the west coast of Africa. The country is part of the tropical rain forest of West Africa, but large parts have lost their original forest due to slash and burn agriculture and are now covered with secondary forest. Only in the north-west does one find small areas of savannah and park forest. Most of the country is rolling with hills varying from 400-600 feet (125-185 metres) in height near the coast to over 1000 feet (300 metres) along the northern boundary.

The climate is warm and humid. Near the coast, rainfall is about 150-180 inches (3,800-4,600 millimetres) per year and decreases to about 70 inches (1,800 millimetres) in the interior. Most of the rainfall occurs between April and November.

As is usually the case in humid tropics, laterization has been the predominant soil forming process. The soils are adequate for the cultivation of permanent crops, but less suitable for arable crops because of the rapid soil degradation and high risk of erosion.

The consequence for agricultural development is that the natural conditions favour permanent crops like tree crops, while arable crops and pastures require special and expensive efforts to maintain soil fertility.

2. Pattern of Agricultural Production

Liberian agriculture can be divided into three distinct patterns of production:
- Concessions
- Commercial Farms
- Traditional Farms.

These vary considerably in organization, efficiency and output.

*) The author participated in the ILO Human Resources Development Mission to Liberia, October-November 1971. Views expressed in this paper, however, are the author's and not necessarily those of the ILO.
a. Concessions

Since 1926, 7 foreign firms have obtained concessions on large land areas (of between 2,000 and 100,000 acres each) to start rubber plantations. In recent years, two concessions for oil palm plantations have been granted, but they are not yet productive. Together, the nine concessions cultivate about 150,000 acres.

The concessions employ highly trained staff and, thus, secure modern management and the application of modern production techniques. They use high yielding chomol material, are rather capital-intensive and have low costs per unit of production, which makes the payment of relatively high wages possible. This, in turn, allows them to enforce a relatively strict work discipline which results in high labour productivity.

The 7 rubber concessions are the source of 60 per cent of value added in agriculture, 72 per cent of the country's rubber production, and they employ about 24,000 workers. The gross value of output per worker is about US $ 970 per year.

6. Commercial Farms

The success of the rubber concessions, availability of cheap land, supply of seedlings by the concessions and their guarantee to buy the produce caused Liberian entrepreneurs to start their own rubber farms around the concession areas. With the construction of roads, the number of Liberian commercial farms increased, and some went into other production branches such as fruits, vegetable, coffee, oil palm, poultry, hogs, etc. Today, about 5,000 Liberian commercial farmers cultivate an area of nearly 200,000 acres and have farms of 10-500 acres each. While some of these commercial farms operate very well and use modern production methods, thus achieving high yields, the majority is much less efficient than the concessions.

Often, low yielding varieties which are hardly worth the tapping expenses are planted. Most of the commercial farms are owned by "gentlemen farmers" who live in Monrovia and have other main occupations. In consequence, management and supervision are very weak and limited to weekends. The result is an average yield of 643 lbs. only per acre against 1,261 lb. for the concessions. In spite of considerably lower wages, many commercial farms cannot operate profitably and do not tap the trees at all because of these low yields. The low wage level, in turn, does not suffice for the livelihood of the workers, so that many of them continue their traditional farms and leave the plantation whenever work is required there. The gross value of output per worker is about US $ 470 per year.

Change to high yielding clones and introduction of proper management are the basic requirements for an improvement of these rubber farms. Other commercial farms suffer from the absence of regular guaranteed markets, so that some successful entrepreneurs have recently given up their fruit and vegetable production.
c. Traditional Farms

The bulk of the rural population is engaged in traditional farming which has remained more or less untouched by modern methods. The majority of these peasants is illiterate and unaware of alternative methods of agricultural production. In the absence of any census, the number of farms can be estimated at around 150,000, and the average size might be 5 acres. They concentrate on rice and cassava and often grow some coffee, cocoa, palm kernel, fruits, vegetables and piassava, and keep poultry, goats and sheep as well.

Most of the cultivation is done on tribal land under the slash and burn system. One can assume that, out of 10 million acres under shifting cultivation, about 750,000 acres are under cultivation for 1-2 years on a 8-15 years bush fallow rotation. This type of farming produces meagre results and leads to a low level of living for the majority of the rural population. It is difficult to estimate the gross value of output per worker, but this is likely to be around US $100-150 per year. This is the sector which is paid the least attention by government schemes, partly because it is the most difficult to modernize and to render more productive.

These farms are often referred to as subsistence farms, a term which is somewhat misleading. Today, there are hardly any farmers engaged exclusively in subsistence agriculture; almost everyone is, to some extent integrated in the monetary sector. Cash is required for expenditures such as taxes, clothing, medicines and educational expenses to an amount of about US $100 per family per year. It is raised by the sale of some products and by the off-farm work - temporary or permanent - of family members. In a recent survey on traditional farming (21), 168 out of 229 farmers reported that at least one adult member of the household is engaged in non-farm work and is employed on rubber or lumber concessions, in mining, road construction, cutting firewood for sale, etc. One can estimate that, of the total (cash and kind) income of these traditional farmers, 75-80 per cent represents subsistence income while with 25-20 per cent they are integrated in the monetary economy.

If the pattern of farming and the way of life of these people has not been greatly influenced by the modern monetary economy, this is because their integration in the modern economy has been - at least for a certain period - voluntary. If one has earned some money, one can participate in the cash economy and enjoy some products from the rural stores which are extremely well stocked. If for health reasons, because of crop failure, of age, etc. no cash income is available, one can easily go back, for some time, to complete subsistence economy. Even the unavoidable taxes, under the prevailing family system, will be paid by a relative earning cash income. The traditional money-capital free type of farming has no inherent system to enforce participation in the market economy, for instance, to raise funds to pay interest, fuel, maintenance, etc. Because of the peculiar type of farming, the term 'traditional farm' seems to be more appropriate than "subsistence farm".
II. Existing Institutional Support for Agriculture

1. Marketing

Liberian agriculture has four marketing channels for its different products.

a. Concessions

All the rubber product is sold to one of the four factories belonging to three concessions. The concessions fix their buying price monthly according to the New York price of the previous month, so that the price for Liberian farmers follows the world market price with a slight lag.

Liberia has an official rubber price support scheme which fixes a minimum price. If the factory price is lower, the government advances the difference, but this advance must be repaid if a fixed maximum price is exceeded. Transportation costs are an important factor determining the actual proceeds of the farmers. While the road system as such is of minor importance here - rubber farms are usually established only where roads exist - the distance to the factory determines transportation costs. Small producers are at a disadvantage because they have to use taxis to transport their limited quantities and the transport price of taxis is 4-5 times that of trucks.

b. Liberia, Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC)

The LPMC is a marketing board which has the monopoly of all agricultural exports except rubber. The shares of the corporation belong, to equal parts, to the Liberian Government and to the East Asiatic Company which supplies the management and exports the crops on a commission basis. Every month, the LPMC fixes standard buying prices for the whole country. At this price, the six agents appointed by the LPMC buy coffee, cocoa, palm kernel and piassava. For their services, the agents receive a fixed commission from the LPMC which also pays for transport, bags, etc. The LPMC tries to keep the prices at a constant level and has built up a reserve fund which can be used to compensate fluctuations of the world market price.

The peasants usually sell to Lebanese traders who again sell to sub-agents and these deliver the products to the agents. As the traders know the agent's buying price, they have to calculate their prices so as to cover, not only their handling expenses and profits, but also the losses due to drying and deterioration. Peasants may be aware of the agent's buying prices as these are announced on the radio, but not the knowledge is often of little value to them since most of them have a vague notion of the meaning of the various units of weights and measures used. Profiteering on the part of the traders and unawareness of the marketing costs on the part of the peasants cause great distrust in local marketing. LPMC buys upgraded products and does the cleaning and grading on its own premises. It maintains warehouses, coffeemills, palms kernel crackers, etc.

To promote agriculture, the LPMC established a model coffee estate, distributed high yielding planting material from its nurseries, sent 12 agri-
culturists abroad for training in tree crop cultivation and launched a rice project. 4 caterpillars and a low-loader have also been purchased for clearing land for future tree crops. The establishment of a network of rice-purchasing agents and milling facilities at strategic points of production is under way.

The LPMC was quite successful in reducing the price fluctuations of export crops and in organizing a marketing system within the country. This had undoubtedly a stimulating effect on the production. Unfortunately, besides appointing 6 agents, the LPMC did nothing to create an intensive marketing network and arrange for local grading. The prices paid by the LPMC were attractive for the farmers and even for farmers of neighbouring countries, but still rather low when compared with the selling price of the LPMC. To date, its high profits have not been ploughed back into agriculture but represent a tax on the agricultural producer.

c. Lebanese Traders

To a large extent, the retail market is in the hands of Lebanese traders. They replaced the Liberian traders who often had to give up business because family members did not repay advances. Little is known about quantities marketed and marketing procedures of the Lebanese traders. The main crops are rice, cassava, fruits, oil, sweet potatoes and peppers. The process of price formulation is often disguised because unknown interest rates for credits granted are included - a situation which offers wide scope for cheating the producers.

d. Women “making market”

At the local level, women “making market” play an important role. Numerous markets throughout the country are held either daily or on certain days of the week. These markets are organized and controlled by the government, and the marketing process lies completely in the hands of women. One group consists of the “target marketers”, i.e. women from the families of traditional farmers who occasionally sell surpluses to get cash to purchase certain items they need. Another group is that of the professional traders, women who buy products for resale in order to earn an income. In both cases, the daily turnover and the amount of products in stock are often extremely limited. “Making market” is not only an occupation to earn an income, but also a way of life.

2. Transport

All marketing channels are highly influenced by the availability of roads and transport facilities. In the history of the country’s development, the opening of a new road always induced an increase of marketed production. When there is no access to a road, transport is limited to headloads which is an extremely expensive type of transportation. Profits, after transportation costs have been deducted, shrink to zero after a few miles so that the existence of a road is crucial for a traditional farmer to be able to engage in marketed production. As all peasants need cash for taxes, clothing, etc.,
the existence of roads determine, to a considerable degree, the settlement pattern. The opening of a road causes an increase in the population density of the surrounding area.

Because of the limited number of roads, the producer does not have the possibility of choosing a market place, as there is only one in the vicinity. This, as well as the lack of price information, causes a low degree of market mobility.

Markers for agricultural inputs play a minor role for the time being. Concessions and commercial farmers have their own arrangements while the traditional farmer hardly uses any inputs from the markets. In the few cases where modern inputs are used (improved seed varieties, etc.), they are usually not purchased on the market, but distributed by government institutions.

3. Credit

Little is known about credit in Liberian agriculture. The Development Bank offers credit to commercial farmers at 10 per cent interest. It uses the Rubber Planters Association as its technical agent for an appraisal of all loan applications and requires bank security so that this credit is reserved to "gentlemen farmers". Commercial banks play a very minor role in providing credit to agriculture.

There are no organized credit facilities for peasant farmers. When they need money, they rely on three sources:

- Chiefs may loan money or goods and, thus, increase their authority. In most cases, such credit is granted without interest, but it is customary to offer a "gift" at the time of repayment. The amount of hidden interest in the form of unpaid labour is unknown.

- The extended family system requires each person to share his means with his relatives. Thus, wage earners often have to give considerable amounts of their earnings to members of their family. This is not considered as real credit. There is an understanding that the other has to reciprocate if he is in a position to do so. Taxes and school fees are paid, to quite an extent, in that way.

- Lebanese readers represent an important source of cash needs, usually as advance on future sales of products. Little is known concerning interest rates, influence on prices paid for products, type and quantity of consumer goods panel asod and the total amount of suds credits.

- Some tribes have a kind of savings cooperative. All members pay a small amount, and the sum is given to one person at a time.

Programmes of agricultural development have to take into account that institutions to cater for credit needs in the development process have yet to be built.
Agricultural Extension in Liberia is organized in a two-tier system:

a) The Rubber Extension Service for Liberian commercial farmers organized by the concessions and the Robb Planners Association. It employs about 50 extension officers.

b) The extension service of the Department of Agriculture, which has been operating since 1960, is in charge of the traditional farmers. Beside the Directorate at the Department level, it has a county agent in each of the 9 counties, and a total of 7 assistant county agents and 76 extension aids in the country. Moreover, 10 rural youth aids and 24 home economic aids work in their particular fields.

While the county agents have a bachelor degree in agriculture and sometimes foreign training, the training of the buds is of a rather low standard. Some are graduates of the Booker Washington Institute, while others just completed primary school, and some are even illiterate. The average duration of schooling of the aids is 8.7 years.

A county agent has a pick up at his disposal, while the aids have to travel by bicycle or on foot to reach the farmers. Equipment to help the extension staff is almost nonexistent and, of the whole budget of the extension service, 84 per cent is used for salaries, while only 16 per cent remains for support.

The rather low average density of one county agent for 16,700 and one aid for 2,000 farmers makes intensive work impossible. A low work discipline and the absence of a well defined extension programme make the operations rather diffuse. In the counties visited, the activities so far were limited to service for 60-100 usually larger farmers who requested such assistance like provision of planting material and mechanical land levelling. The bulk of the traditional farmers receive no assistance at all from the extension service.

In order to concentrate its efforts, the department recently set up a scheme to specialize extension work and use the aids for one subject only, like rice, tree crops, livestock, etc. This will make in-service training easier and help to overcome the training deficiencies of the lower extension staff. A serious hindrance for extension work is the lack of feedback from agricultural research.

If an attempt is to be made at developing agriculture, a complete change in the extension service seems to be necessary. It would include change in the quality of personnel, development of a sound extension programme and a change from work with single peasants to mass extension work with organized groups of farmers.

Training Facilities in Agriculture

Schools: Primary schools sometimes maintain a vegetable garden or a rice field and support 4-H club activities in connection with the extension service. Some secondary schools teach vocational agriculture. The impact is negligible and the current effort is a waste of resources.
Booker Washington Institute: This is a vocational upper secondary school for grades 9-12 offering 4-year courses in several crafts including agriculture. Most of the extension aids are graduates from this institution. The training is rather theoretical and suffers badly from the lack of reach,... Many subjects of the curriculum cannot be offered because of shortage of staff. Teaching is based on American College textbooks which are not at all suitable. Currently, 56 students have enrolled in agriculture. After graduation, their pay is about $ 50-60 per month, 7/9 or 7/3 of that of graduates in other crafts, and this causes frustration among the students. An early re-appraisal of the curriculum against requirements of jobs available is necessary and would probably include a reduction of the training period.

Extension Training Center: Attached to the College of Agriculture, this Center has been set up in 1969 at the University farm and is currently being expanded. New buildings are being constructed. It offers pre- and in-service training, lasting from 2 weeks to 6 months, to the aids as well as to other persons, like peace-corps volunteers. For the future, the training of farmers is also planned.

College of Agriculture and Forestry: The Agricultural College was founded in 1962 and merged, in 1967, with the older College of Forestry. Four-year programmes lead to a B.Sc. in agriculture and forestry. In 1971, 75 students were enrolled for agriculture and 54 for forestry.

6. Local Administration

Development of agriculture requires that local government units contribute to planning, coordination and execution of schemes at the local level. Currently, the administration of the country is highly centralized in the person of the President who is, for local administration, assisted by the Department of Internal Affairs. Planning is done completely at government level, i.e. from above, and communication is almost exclusively of the up-down type. The late President's habit of touring the country and of holding palavers was probably the most important means of a down up communication.

As regards administration, the country is divided into 9 counties with a Superintendent as administrative chief. He is the personal representative of the President in the county and is always a man on whom the President can rely. The Superintendent is responsible for the application of law and the maintenance of peace and order. He supervises the collection of taxes. The county level staff of the different departments sends copies of all their reports to him. He seems to be little involved in the direct decision-making process of these departments in matters concerning his county. Coordination between the different technical services exists only on a personal basis, while there are no institutional provisions. Counties are divided into Districts under a Commissioner who is responsible to the Superintendent.

At the lower level, local administration is in the hands of the traditional tribal authorities. The highest rank is that of Paramount Chief who is elected by the chiefs and elders but who serves at the discretion of the President who
may veto the election. He is supported by the council of elders which he has to consult on all important matters. The Paramount Chief is responsible for the maintenance of law and order and has to enforce the tribal customs. He has to assist in the tax assessment and supervises the collection of taxes by the lower rank chiefs. The law also requests him to promote agriculture, industries, trade and welfare, but, when discussing with chiefs, one gets the impression that this is limited to control that the activities do not coincide with the law, the tribal customs or the interest, of other people. The Clan Chiefs', Town Chiefs' and Quarter Chiefs' responsibilities are about the same in their respective units. Chiefs are apparently still influenced by the existing secret societies insofar as observance of tribal customs is concerned.

It is very difficult to judge the power of the chiefs. They are not government employees, but retain part of the taxes for their services and part of the levies for local projects. Traditionally, their power is largely determined by their control (not ownership) of land. The notion of the State as supreme owner of land and the fact that Government took possession of the land without the chiefs being able to hinder this, has weakened their position which, today, seems, to quite an extent, to depend on the individual personality.

The current organization of the local administration shows all the characteristics of a tax-law-order administration, and the administrative body, from the President's personal representative to the elders' councils, seems to be well suited for this purpose. It lacks, however, the necessary factors for rural development: involvement of the population, planning and coordination at the local level influence of technicians and up-down as well as down-up communication channels.

7. **Agricultural Policy and Programmes**

For the time being, quite a number of programmes of the Department of Agriculture are under discussion or are being implemented:
- Expansion of Rice Production
- Expansion of Tree Crop Production
- Expansion of Livestock Production
- Forestry Development Project
- Special Projects for Rice Production in Development Areas
- Inland Fisheries
- Federal Agricultural Protection Corps
- National Agricultural Development Commission
- Development of Agricultural Training Institutions
- Cooperative, Credit and Marketing Division for the Department of Agriculture
- Soil Survey
- Agricultural Engineering Corporation.
The value of each of these programmes will not be discussed here. From a development policy standpoint, one gets the impression that there is:
- a lack in defining overall goals and strategies
- a lack of a sound basis for planning in the form of land use planning
- a subject matter approach of "something for everything" projects instead of policies
- an emphasis on production rather than on development
- a tendency to assist larger farmers.

111. Basic Considerations in Developing a Strategy for Rural Development

_Before an attempt is made to outline a strategy for the development of the rural sector, it is useful to summarize the more important considerations which determine the type of strategy suitable for Liberia:_

- Climate and soil conditions make the country especially suitable for tree crops which, in order to be profitable, require high investments and top level management.
- Because of the existing conditions of climate and soil and because of the hilly topography, the cultivation of non-tree crops requires a high level of intensity and a high level of management, including such measures as contour-farming, terracing, alternation of tree crops and arable crops, etc.
- The development of commercial agriculture is essential to the development of agriculture-related industries which will probably be required of the employment creation potential in the modern sector is to be increased significantly.
- There are limitations as to the extent to which traditional agriculture can be developed without changing the shifting cultivation into a modern permanent agriculture. The technical know-how concerning this process is scarce. Social and cultural constraints as well as limited resources have a disadvantageous influence on this process.
- With the given development of the overall economy and the available stock and supply of manpower, the traditional farming sector is bound to shrink.
- In the long run, increases in the income levels outside traditional agriculture will cause more and more migration away from traditional agriculture.
- While all the points mentioned so far speak for a concentration of efforts on modern agriculture, equity and justice considerations and the Liberian policy of total involvement require a strategy promoting the traditional sector now, and not only in the long run development. Such measures should include a welfare component in a short run perspective, which, however, might turn into a productive investment in the long run.
- The above considerations imply a two-way strategy:
  - one concentrating immediately on the productive sector in agriculture with the aim to increase production where the prospects are good, and thus increase income, private as well as public. This, at the same time, will provide funds for the second way:
  - the development of the traditional agricultural sector.

- The traditional sector in agriculture should be developed in such a way that the institutional structure to be established serves its purpose when the traditional farming sector will have been developed into a modern smallholder agriculture. The following chapter gives an outline of such a strategy.

IV. Outline of Institutional Aspects of a Rural Development Strategy

1. Explanation of the Rural Development Approach

Within the traditional sector, agriculture is more a way of life than a sector of the economy. Meaningful measures for the improvement of traditional agriculture, therefore, do not tackle agriculture as a production sector but try to improve the life of the people. Instead of speaking of agricultural development, it is more proper to speak of "Rural Development". Rural Development is an approach to increase the degree of participation of the rural population in the development process and to improve the level of living of the rural population. Increase in agricultural production might be the means to reach this aim, but is not the aim itself. Men and not farms are the centre of interest and the object of rural development.

In order to reach its goal, rural development tries to improve the situation in rural areas from all possible angles. It includes measures to modernize agricultural techniques, but also the creation of supply and marketing institutions and credit facilities. In order to make the best possible use of these facilities, it includes training and extension service. Transportation plays a role as stimulus of economic activity. Communication, health, community development and rural industries are important aspects. Last, but not least, a proper local administration to plan, coordinate, implement and supervise all measures is one of the most important aspects. Rural Development is a comprehensive integrated approach to the development of the rural areas and their inhabitants. Rural development has to be planned according to given natural, economic and sociological conditions. These tend to vary from area to area, and, therefore, detailed planning for rural development cannot be done at a national level. It has rather to be done on a regional basis, after careful surveys of the local conditions and possibilities. Rural Development should always incorporate a regional approach, even through the actual planning is carried out by the central government.
2. A "County Training and Development Center" for the Regional Implementation of Rural Development

For its implementation, rural development requires a suitable institutional basis. The existing institutions, as described above, do not suffice for this purpose because they have been set up for other purposes than to facilitate rural development. Rural development, in this context, requires, basically, institutions to satisfy
1) the political needs of the people = rural administration
2) the economic needs of the people = organization of peasants' cooperatives
3) the training needs of people = training center.

These three basic institutions for rural development have to operate in close collaboration as they affect each other and need each other's assistance to fulfill their purposes. They should, therefore, be located in a 'Training and Development Center'.

The regional approach makes it necessary to define the region according to its size. It has to be large enough to provide sufficient economic potential and human resources, small enough to assure closeness to the grassroots and to the population. Taking into account the existing administrative setup, a county seems to be the proper unit on the understanding that the entire county area should not be included immediately in the activities, but rather the economically more naive, more densely populated and easily accessible parts only.

Transport and communication difficulties might make it necessary to concentrate, in the first instance, on an area which resembles more a district. As there is no full-fledged administration at district level, the county, in spite of its large area, seen, to be the more proper unit. The whole institutional setup as described definitely needs time to be fully implemented. The scheme should be understood as a long term plan whirl, might be realized in a county within 6-10 years. At the beginning, concentration on one county only seem, to be advisable in order to gain experience, train people and make the necessary adjustment.

a. The Political Aspect: A New Type of Rural Administration

The existing rural administration has been designed to maintain law and order, to ensure tax collection and to preserve existing customs and habits. It has not been designed for development and is not suitable for developmental purposes. The first requirement for the implementation of rural development is, therefore, to design a new type of local administration which is suitable for that purpose. The following changes in the present administration seem to be necessary:
- The County Superintendent has to be upgraded from a personal representative of the President to the head of the local administration, with the duty to plan, coordinate and implement, in coordination with the appropriate bodies, all development activities in his county.
- A County Development Council has to be created. It should consist of the representatives of the population (chiefs, elders, leaders of the secret
societies, etc.) according to the local customs, and of the local officers of the technical departments of the government. The council should be under the chairmanship of the Superintendent and, in principle, decide on all matters of development within the county. Naturally, the work of this council will improve in time as more experience is gained. Therefore its activities might start as a discussion forum, later on take the form of an advisory body and, finally, come to the stage of decision making. Care has to be taken to have not only aged persons among the representatives, but also active and young persons. This would be possible by reserving special seats for the younger generation, by appointments on merits one. Similar councils could be set up at the district level. Wherever District Development Committees exist, they could probably be used for that purpose.

- A County Development Office should be created as a sort of secretariat for the Superintendent and the Council to execute the decisions of the Council and grant administrative support. The officers of the technical departments should be integrated to that office where they could, at the same time, exchange information on their special activities, coordinate these and assist ends other in order to obtain the optimal ...It.

The purpose of this new type of administration would be to involve local authorities (and, through them, the local population) in the planning and execution of projects for the development of the county and its population. Projects of minor scope should be executed by this administration on its own competence - especially projects of self-help type - and the county should have a budget to that effect as well as the right of imposing limited taxation for development purposes. Major projects should be submitted to the government for approval, but whenever possible, be returned to the county level for execution.

Thus, planning is done at the regional level where people know their own and their region's needs and possibilities. For instance, it is only at this level that it is known where feeder roads are needed. The planning process should start with an inventory of the local assets and needs. A county development plan should be elaborated on that basis and take into account all aspects like agriculture, roads, health, education, marketing, etc. This plan, after extensive discussion with the local population at meetings of the different tribes and towns, in order to involve fully the people and mobilise local resources, should be sent to the government for approval. Thus, it is assumed that the plan will concur with the goals of the national development planning. The combination of local planning and government approval will assure a steady communication process between the central government and the local population. The government has to make the people aware of its intentions and is informed, in turn, about the felt needs and the plans of the people.

b. The Economic Aspect: Organization of Peasants' Cooperatives

The main needs of the rural population which economic institutions have to satisfy are the supply of requirements for rural life, the marketing of agricultural products, the supply of credit - always including advice as to
how to use these necessities properly. Today, these needs have either not been met or are handled in a way which is disadvantageous to the peasants.

These economic needs should be satisfied on a cooperative, i.e. a non-profit basis. In view of the fact that the majority of peasants are illiterate, that the personnel available has received no intensive training, and that the turnover is very limited because of the low production, village operatives along the Raiffeisen-Rochdale principles do not appear suitable.

Because of the existing conditions, a two-tier cooperative system is suggested: a cooperative should be formed at the county level and employ trained staff for the execution of the activities, while the representatives of the member associations engage only in planning, advice and control. Thus, supervision and execution are separate and each lies in the hands of persons who are capable of performing the job. This County Cooperative carries out all business activities of the cooperative structure: marketing, warehousing, supply of inputs, credits, etc. Needless to say that such a cooperative has to have an initial capital stock to be able to function. At a certain stage saving - perhaps compulsory saving of small amounts, but on a regular basis - could be introduced and could improve the financial situation of the cooperatives.

At the local (town, clan) level, the peasants who are members of the County Cooperative, should join in peasants' associations. These local peasants' associations do not engage in business activities, but are outposts of the County Cooperative and serve as organization for local collection and distribution on behalf of the County Cooperative. Besides, they are of the utmost importance for credit, extension activities and soil conservation. To a certain extent, they constitute a gathering of the clan for development purposes.

Credit, in principle, is a dangerous tool for peasants whose integration in the market economy is limited. It easily leads to higher consumption and inability to repay. Most Liberian traditional farmers have not reached the stage of development at which credit can be used advantageously. A strict control of credit wherever it is used for productive purposes is of great importance. Here, local peasants' associations with their intimate knowledge of persons and conditions can be of great value. They are in a position to supervise whether credit is granted only in cases where it is justified and whether it is used for the proper purpose. If the local peasants' association is required to assume part of the financial responsibility for the credit, the risk involved for the cooperative is considerably reduced.

Extension service should be completely integrated into the cooperative system. Thus, the impact of the extension service could be increased, whereas its current organization is completely unsuitable for traditional farmers. Masses of small peasants cannot be offered individual extension service - as is the case now for a few larger farmers - unless they are organized and methods of mass extension work are used. The extension aids should be on the staff of the county cooperative. Thus, a close relation between extension work, supply of inputs, marketing and credit is possible. Normally, the extension aids of the cooperatives should not work with individual peasants,
but with the peasants' association and organize demonstration, experiments, etc. for the members. This extension work is also closely related to the County Training Center.

Wherever shifting cultivation is phased out and arable crops are cultivated on a permanent basis, proper soil conservation becomes of the utmost importance. If peasants neglect this, they ruin their land and the basis of their tribes' livelihood. Control of proper soil conservation should, therefore, not be left to the individual but vested with the peasants' association. As many activities require joint effort, like terracing, etc., peasants' associations are the appropriate institutions to organize such activities and make proper use of traditional customs like work cooperatives.

c. The Training Aspect: A County Training Center

The main training needs for traditional farmers tie in agriculture: they must learn how to improve cultivation. As in traditional societies, agricultural change must be thought of in terms of social change; the training should also be designed to help people in making this change. It has to incorporate aspects of adult education. There is also a need for training in such subjects as health, nutrition, rural crafts, etc.

In order to satisfy these needs, it seems necessary to establish a County Training Center. This should be done in connection with one of the new "Community Schools". (The whole scheme outlined here is an extensive broadening of the approach of the Community School). Transportation difficulties might make it advisable to undertake the activities at several of these schools. Thus, distances would be reduced and communication made easier.

Teachers at the County Training Center would be, besides the teachers of the Community School, the county level government officers, the extension workers and other cooperative personnel. Much of the training could be done in short courses covering specific subjects. The main activity, however, should be the continuous training of a cadre of local leaders. The large number of people makes it impossible to extend everybody in a permanent training process at the center. Therefore, 2-3 members should be selected, perhaps one of the traditional leaders, and - in order to get younger persons as well - a model farmer appointed on merits. The representatives of the peasants' association should assemble once a week at the County Training Center to receive instruction in agriculture and related fields. Training should be very practical, consist, as often as possible, of field work and concentrate on subjects which are related to the crops actually being grown during that season. In order to make participation attractive, a travelling allowance should be paid. Persons who do not attend regularly should be replaced.

On the day following that assembly, the peasants' associations should organize their weekly meeting, at which the participants of the Training Center course should explain to the other members what they have learned the day before. Thus, a certain snowball effect will be achieved. Once in a while, a member of the cooperative extension staff should be present to assist in the explanations and to check the degree of comprehension of the course.
participants in order to make early adjustments in the training course possible. This system has the advantage of multiplying the effectiveness of the limited extension staff.

3. Coordination at Local and National Level

The different activities just described should, as far as possible, be performed in the closest coordination so that, if, for example, the local administration plans and executes the construction of a local feeder road, the training team starts, at the same time, to inform peasants on possible crops, their methods of cultivation and the cooperative prepares the supply of seeds and makes marketing arrangements.

In order to secure such a close cooperation and integration, the County Training and Development Center should, as far as possible, be under one roof. Frequent staff meetings should keep everybody informed and integrated under the guidance of the Superintendent as “Development Manager”.

The same persons will be in charge of all three institutions. The Superintendent and some of his staff will, of course, be on the board of all the institutions as well as some of the local leaders. This alone provides for a good deal of coordination.

V. Training Requirements for the Implementation of Rural Development

The successful implementation of such a strategy for rural development requires trained manpower at all levels. But it seems that training is particularly required in three fields:

- In-service-training for officers of the local administration, from Superintendent to department officers, at county level. This training should primarily cause a change in the officers’ attitude and understanding of their duty. They should consider themselves not so much as government authorities, but as teachers of the public and organizers of developmental activities. In addition, training should include such subjects as planning methods, budgeting, supervision of plan execution, etc.

- Pre- and in-service-training of extension personnel in agriculture. Here, a new institution or at least a thorough revision of the Booker Washington Institute is necessary to supply personnel of the necessary quality. Training should be much more practical than at present. To obtain the necessary results, an upward revision of pay scales for extension appears to be necessary.

- All developmental activities (local councils, cooperatives, etc.) require persons trained as secretary-managers. These persons should have a basic understanding of government organization and procedures, reporting, administration, business management, book-keeping, budgeting, etc. For the time being, there are no facilities to train such personnel. The planned
Public Administration Training Institute does not intend to offer such courses according to the present projects. For all development activities, the establishment of such training courses is of the utmost importance.

Summary

The first part of the paper describes the three main past.... of agricultural production, i.e. concessions, commercial farms and traditional farms, and analyses the institutional support available for agricultural development. It is concluded that the institutions do not meet the requirements.

The second part outlines the possible development of institutions to support agricultural and rural development under Liberian conditions. The proposed strategy includes administrative, economic and training aspects. The training requirements for implementation are also outlined.

Zusammenfassung

Im ersten Teil des Aufsatzes werden zunächst die drei Organisationsformen der Agrarproduktion in Liberia (Konzessionen, kommerzielle Farmen und traditionelle Betriebe) dargestellt. Daran schließt sich eine Analyse der vorhandenen Institutionen zur Förderung der Agrarentwicklung an, bei der sich ergibt, daß diese nach Art and Umfang den Erfordernissen nicht gerecht werden.

Im zweiten Teil wird ein Vorschlag entwickelt, wie für die Verhältnisse Liberias die institutionelle Basis einer Agrarentwicklung aussehen könnte. Dabei werden sowohl die politischen als die wirtschaftlichen und Ausbildungsinstitutionen berücksichtigt. Zum Schluss wird das zur Implementierung erforderliche Ausbildungsprogramm dargestellt.

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