

ON THE CREATION AND USES OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES FOR MEANINGFUL APPLICATIONS OF VEE PROGRAMMES IN TROPICAL AFRICA

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The approaches of Veterinary Epidemiology and Economics (VEE) often have been found to be useful in designing and operating development programmes in Africa. Many of such programmes have however recorded unmitigated failure in the past two decades. In some instances, gigantic infrastructural facilities were installed but subsequently abandoned quite soon and without achieving the objectives for which they were put up. Transfer of technology is often incomplete. Yet technological strides are occurring daily. Also available resources are not being properly utilized. The problems may be solved by the proper allocation of roles in the uses of human resources and their development in the affected countries. Collaboration between human resources in developing countries and those from the donor agencies may provide much of the answer.

One of the greatest academic events within the last three decades is the invention, founding, and institutionalization of the composite discipline of Veterinary Epidemiology and Economics. In some veterinary schools however, the equivalent discipline that was approved by the University Senate for teaching is Epizootiology^{1,2,3}, - which by definition^{1, 2, 3} is in fact more embracing. It embraces systematic studies of the social and human factors (including the role of LAGAV3) and their implications on the likelihood of successful implementation of particular relationships and projects and without which many otherwise economically and even biomedically sound development programmes, the projects under them and the relationships founded on and through them manifest poor prognosis from the very onset. Simply, commonsensibly and honestly they often turn out to be unsuccessful - often only obvious to some at the implementation stage. The main reason for such failure is the lack of concern for the social infrastructure and the substance of both the chosen collaborators and the would-be operators vis-a-vis those of the expert advisers on the programme.

In some instances, gigantic physical infrastructural facilities were installed, but subsequently abandoned quite soon and without achieving an iota of the objectives for which they were put up. Colossal wastage of resources is therefore a common-place result. The source of the problem is often the wrong choices of the human resource components on both sides of the aid donor-recipient country systems and the inequitable expert-dummy relationship in the conception.. One of the solutions should lie in the equal partnership system - at the level of expertise in the donor and recipient countries.- so that whatever is sorted out at that level will be relevant to the problems and solution options of the recipient nations. These are key statements, and the further we delay in grabbing the lessons therein, the longer the self-deception in these matters will persist. A basic knowledge of the components of Epidemiology, ought to have made it clear to us that if the data from the field are considered to be of any value at all, those who collect them could not be regarded as dummies on slave labour. But if the data are not good, it is the height of immorality to use them at all.

Transfer of technology is often incomplete. Yet technological strides are occurring daily. Also available resources are not being properly utilized. There is obviously no one to blame for the failures. Except that some wise guys have found that nobodys problem is everyones problem. All must search their conscience and accept their contribution to the so many unmitigated failures and colossal wastes - resulting in equally colossal debts - which should never be re-scheduled - by sane considerations. The wrong choice of human resources and of the related social infrastructure and the substance of many of the operators have combined to create and sustain the phenomenon of backwardness and lack of development in some parts of the continent. Veterinary Epidemiologists and Economists must continue to play their noble role by paying greater attention to the social (physical, mental, moral, educational and spiritual) infrastructure of the system they are working for, as well as the substance and merits of the individuals they are collaborating with.

A word should be enough - as says the Epizootiologists.

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