

# FOCUS ON RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTES PLEINS FEUX SUR LES INSTITUTS DE RECHERCHE ET DE FORMATION

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## CENTRE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY

### I. — HISTORY

The creation of a Centre (or as then proposed, an Institute) was first conceived in 1967, and legislative provision under the Ahmadu Bello University Law was made at that time. The civil war and the financial and other problems of the time then inhibited action, and the legislative provision was deleted, leaving the matter to be dealt with later. In 1973 the proposal was revived and, the University Senate and Council having approved, a start was made on recruiting the first Director, Professor D.M. Kannagara, and some Research Fellows. Some progress was made but the initial staff left and there was a short hiatus until a fresh start was made in September 1974. The staff at that time consisted of an Acting Director, Mr. K. Lupton and two National Youth Service Corps personnel. A Senior Research Fellow had been appointed but, due to delay in issuing a visa, he was unable to take up the appointment until April 1975. In the early stages the main concentration had to be on recruiting staff, arranging for some basic facilities and establishing the groundwork of an organisation and future research policies.

### II. — ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Initially the Centre was established with a *Steering Committee* to guide its functioning. With the Vice-Chancellor as Chairman, the membership included the Director of the Centre, the Director of the Nigerian Institute for Social & Economic Research, one representative of each Northern State Government, a University Council member from outside the University, and the heads of several departments in the University. For more detailed consideration of Centre activities, the Vice-Chancellor established a *Standing Committee*, the membership of which almost corresponded with the « internal » University membership of the Steering Committee. These were the committees responsible for the running of the Centre in the year 1975-76, together with the internal body called the *Staff Meeting*, which had first met in August 1975.

In 1975 the Federal Military Government took over the full responsibility for Ahmadu Bello University and, following change of status, the constitutions of the Institutes and Centres in the University were reviewed. This happened to be timely for this Centre as various problems had come to light during its early development. At the beginning the Standing Committee tended to be involved in some matters which, as the Centre's staff grew, could be better transferred to the Staff Meeting for internal decision. On the other side, the close similarity in membership between the Steering and Standing Committee tended to blur the distinction of their functions, which is reflected in the fact that the Standing Committee met only once during the year under review, the Steering Committee meeting twice.

A revised constitution was therefore drawn up, based largely on that successfully operated in the longer-established Centre for Nigerian Cultural Studies. This separates more clearly the functions of the *Governing Committee* and the *Executive Committee* (as the Steering Committee and the Standing Committee respectively have been renamed). The Governing Committee is now concerned with the Centre's broad policies, the Executive Committee with detailing these to cover the different aspects of the Centre's work, and formal recognition has been given to the Staff Meeting, which met seven times during the year. The statement of the Centre's objectives has also been revised.

### III. — STAFF OF THE CENTRE

The Acting Director of the Centre, Mr. K. Lupton, was made substantive in the post in May 1976. The other academic staff of the Centre, possessing full qualifications as with staff in the teaching departments, increased during 1975-76 from four to twelve of whom five are Nigerian.

### IV. — RESEARCH POLICIES

As stated in the Centre's Newsletter N° 1, the core of the Centre's work will be research programmes which it will frame in accordance with rigorous social science criteria, aimed at providing knowledge useful to the development process. The main emphasis will be on projects of special concern at State rather than Federal level, although obviously no sharp line can be drawn. The Centre is also prepared to undertake some short-term investigations on a consultancy basis for Governments or others.

The framing of the programmes will take into account the experience and research interests of the staff available, but the nature of the intended programmes will also guide staff recruitment.

The Steering Committee decided that the initial areas of concentration should be :

1. Industrial Development.
2. Transformation of agriculture and rural development.

These are, however, to be regarded as bases from which to broaden out progressively. Within these major areas, certain priorities were agreed by the Steering Committee, which have had an impact in shaping the projects actually initiated, as detailed below. These priorities are now to be subjected to review by the Centre's committees and will be restated as firmer policy guidelines, to be set out in the next Annual Report.

It has all along been the intention to work in close contact with State Governments and other public bodies on one side, and with the teaching departments and other research units on the other side. Progress has been made in these directions. Several projects were being worked out in consultation with State Government by the end of the year, but none had been finalised at that stage. Consultations were also in progress on the possibility of organising a team study of one of these projects, involving staff in several University departments.

It has been found that in such projects the processes of consultation and agreement tend to take much longer than in cases where only the Centre is involved. This presents a problem of timing, especially where newly-arrived staff are to take up a project, and it is to be hoped that it can be overcome in future so that the Centre can operate at full capacity.

## V. — OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

### **Centre Library :**

In spite of the staffing difficulties referred to earlier, considerable progress has been made under Mr. van Apeldoorn's direction in organising the library for research purposes. The book stock, whilst still modest, has been increased and catalogued, orders for periodicals reorganised and a number of useful microfilms ordered, two microfilm readers having been obtained. The Director was able to locate and obtain a number of Government publications which are now out of print, some of which are not available in other nearby libraries. There is a slowly increasing usage of this library for reference purposes.

### **Social Sciences Staff Seminars :**

The Centre took over the organisation of these seminars in January 1975, and continued to organise them through 1975-76. 13 seminars were held during the year on a variety of topics and attended by staff

from a number of departments in the University. One of these was given by Centre staff, Mr. G.J. van Apeldoorn on « The 1972-74 Drought in Nigeria : The last one that led to famine ? ».

#### **Organisation of Seminar :**

A Seminar on Planning and Implementation was organised in Ilorin from 9th to 13th August 1976, at the request of and in conjunction with the Kwara State Government. The Ilorin Centre under Ahmadu Bello University's Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services assisted in the seminar. Mr. A. Fadahunsi arranged the programme and secured the presence of invited lecturers and discussants from the Department of Economics, University of Ibadan, the Central Planning Office of the Federal Ministry of Economic Development, the Nigerian Institute of Management, and the Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University. Nine papers were also presented by staff of the Kwara State Government or parastatals, and five by staff of the Centre itself. The seminar was well attended throughout by staff of the State government, and discussions were lively and constructive. There was some positive media coverage of the Seminar and of a preceding meeting with the State's Military Governor, His Excellency Brigadier G. Innih. The general impression was that the seminar was very successful, and arrangements are in hand to edit the papers for publication in some form.

#### **VI. — COOPERATION WITH OTHERS**

The Centre has become a full member of the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA) based in Dakar. Through this it is hoped to develop exchanges of publications, information and maybe personnel, with research institutions in other parts of Africa.

One University Research Associate has remained in contact with the Centre during the year and will later, it is hoped, present a seminar on her research. Two other applications for Research Associateships have been sponsored by the Centre but have remained pending while the University Board of Research reviews its policies.

Dr. A. Marciniak has cooperated with a group dealing with housing research in the Faculty of Environmental Design, and with Professor N. Balabkins of Lehigh University, U.S.A., who visited the Centre in January 1976, and who is studying the Indigenisation of Industry.

Arrangements were commenced for a further visit to be made in January 1977.

Other useful contacts have also been made with researchers both inside and outside Nigeria.

**VII. — PUBLICATION OF « NEWSLETTER »**

The C.S.E.R. Newsletter N° 1 of April 1976 was published and it was circulated widely both within and outside the University, including Universities and research institutes all over Africa, and some elsewhere.

Printed with an attractive cover design from the Department of Fine Art, the contents described the objectives of the Centre and its progress in that period.

**Contact address :**

The Centre For Social & Economic Research  
Ahmadu Bello University  
P.O. Box 1013  
Zaria  
NIGERIA