

# University Report

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## UNIVERSITY REPORT

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**GWYNETH HENDERSON:** In this week's edition from Lagos University, news of a new international departure for the Institute of Mass Communication - a course on training for professional broadcasters, but first student participation in national politics.

Well usually when we say something like that you'd expect to hear news of some sort of conflict between students and government. Well this time it's the opposite. Sierra Leone, of course, has had a number of political upheavels and troubles in recent months, and as a result the Sierra Leone Students Union of the United Kingdom recently sent a seven man delegation to Freetown to try and effect some sort of reconciliation between the government, the official and unofficial opposition parties there.

The delegation had meetings with Sierra Leone's President, Dr. Siaka Stevens, the leader of the opposition, Mr. S. Jusu-Shariff, and officials and members of the banned Democratic Party. After these meetings and before the delegation returned to the United Kingdom, Roland Buck asked their leader Mr, M.K. Suma why they had come.

**MR. M.K. SUMA:** The entire student body, United Kingdom and Ireland, and indeed, the nationals of Sierra Leone, resident in Britain, feel that it is high time that we start to talk in terms of peace, that it is high time that we tried to reconcile our differences, because of coups and counter-coups, and because of the present state of affairs. I think this was the main motivation from all our students and nationals

M.K. SUMA: in Britain, that there ought to be peace from now, and this was the main reason why the Student's Union decided that we should take the initiative to talk to our leaders for peace and progress in Sierra Leone.

ROLAND BUCK: Mr. Suma, what was the central theme of the talks you had with the various officials of government and opposition members and groups?

MR. M.K. SUMA: The central theme has been talk and talk again, try to reconcile your differences, try to think of Sierra Leone as a united Sierra Leone, try to think of progress because there is hardly any difference in ideologies between the two parties, and to talk about peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone.

ROLAND BUCK: Now, did you discuss anything about the treason trials and the detainees?

MR. M.K. SUMA: No, this matter is under court jurisdiction and we are not competent at this stage to make any comments on that.

ROLAND BUCK: Mr. Suma, do you as students think you have sufficient authority and influence to positively effect some form of reconciliation?

MR. M.K. SUMA: Really as students we have very little authority, if there's any at all, but we feel that as future leaders of this country, future administrators of this country, that it is high time that we have an atmosphere of peace whereby we can enjoy, disseminate our knowledge we have acquired abroad, and we can work in an atmosphere of peace and this was the reason why we decided to initiate this action, and I believe that the leaders, both in the opposition and government and indeed splinter groups, know this quite well, that we have thought of something which they themselves have been thinking about very seriously, and I hope and trust that they will continue to strive for progress and reconciliation.

ROLAND BUCK: Finally Mr. Suma, can you say you have been successful on this mission and can you give concrete evidence of the mission's success?

MR. M.K. SUMA: Well, it's difficult to define what success is, but I think we are fighting for success. I believe that if we continue and strive, and since there is goodwill on both sides, this talk will succeed.

GWYNETH HENDERSON: Constructive talks towards reconciliation in Sierra Leone - an unusual form of student action. Talking there in Freetown to Roland Buck, Mr. M.K. Suma, leader of the Sierra Leone Students Union of Great Britain and Ireland - and the result now? Well I suppose an exchange of views - information and thus hopefully understanding leading to progress.

And that admittedly rather pompous but nevertheless true summing up would also, I suppose, cover pretty well the aim of people like me - broadcasters. And just finished at the University of Lagos, Institute of Mass Communications, an unusual meeting of professional broadcasters. They were on a nine week seminar on Training for Broadcasting organised and run by UNESCO - "They" being representatives of nine African countries. This is the first seminar of its kind to be held in Africa - who's idea was it?

MR. R. ASPINALL: Well it's really the idea of African broadcasters, and it began several years ago at a meeting sponsored by UNESCO held in Lagos at which the African broadcasters represented, and this covered the entire continent, suggested that there was an urgent need for a regional training centre. Well, training centres take a long time to develop of course, and so as a stop-gap it was considered desirable both by the broadcasters themselves, and particularly by UNESCO, it was considered desirable to run a course representing broadcasters in the region and that course had as its primary purpose the training of people who are concerned in the training of programme staff, broadcasters.

GWYNETH HENDERSON: Mr. Richard Aspinall, UNESCO expert in broadcasting at the Lagos Institute of Mass Communication and Director of the seminar. On the course people from Tanzania, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Zambia, Kenya, Cameroun, Nigeria! All professional experienced broadcasters - all concerned with programmes and with training in their own countries. So why did they go to Lagos? Or as Tunde Aiyegbusi put it to Mr. Aspinall:

TUNDE AIYEGBUSI: What are the ultimate goals of the seminar?

RICHARD ASPINALL: Well we hope first of all to be able to identify the specific areas in the programme side of broadcasting in which there is a need for training. And we hope to develop the participants so that they can become co-ordinators of training, and responsible for training on their stations when they return to their stations. So we have these two aims, you can say one to identify the training need, and the other one to train the trainer.

TUNDE AIYEGBUSI: They are going to be here for nine weeks. Why nine weeks?

RICHARD ASPINALL: Well, it sounds like a rather odd figure I agree, with you. Eight weeks would have been too short a time, twelve weeks would have been too long a time for the people to have been away from their own broadcasting organizations. It's a compromise time, and because it is only nine weeks it means that we are having to cram an awful lot of work into the available time.

TUNDE AIYEGBUSI: Now, can you tell us the form the course is taking at the moment?

RICHARD ASPINALL: Yes, well we began first of all by considering the role of broadcasting and national development. We did this by spending a week of heavy lectures on the problems of development. People from the university and from the government in Nigeria came along to talk to the participants about the areas, particularly areas, in social areas, economic, political areas, in which there were definite problems. Then we had senior broadcasting people from the Nigerian broadcasting organisations, examining with the participants on the course the role that broadcasting can play in helping to solve these problems. Because broadcasting can play a very substantial role in this where you have populations which are between 75 per cent and 85 per cent illiterate. Broadcasting represents the only form of national publications. Now having then looked at the way in which broadcasting can contribute towards a solution of development problems we then turn to an examination of the techniques, the modern techniques for fast instruction, so we spent two weeks on instructional techniques, in which the participants learnt how you can get the message across to people whom you are trying to train how



RICHARD ASPINALL:

you can get it across to them most effectively and most speedily and also techniques for checking whether or not you have got the message across. Then we turned, as we are now, to examining the general area of communication theory. Of course on our university course, this is a one course, but we've taken the highlights out of it to introduce the participants on the course into the ideas of communication theory and the psychology of attitude formation and change. Then for the final four weeks of the course we are moving into workshop area in which we analyse the jobs people have to perform in the whole business of broadcasting then trying to measure people in these jobs against what is required to do the job and thus being able to isolate the training needs, so we hope then to be able to say "alright now when you return to your stations you'll have to look at this in detail with your own staff, but you will see that the gap, the difference between what a man knows and can do in relation to what he should know and can do, that represents a training need". And we will examine some of these needs and develop outline lesson plans for those needs during this workshop period.

TUNDE AIYEGBUSI:

I found most of the people on your course are from areas of varying development or development of radio in Tanzania is definitely different from development of radio in the Gambia. Has this difference been reflected in the responses you got during the seminar?

RICHARD ASPINALL:

No not really, I think you can say that broadcasters are alike the world over, they have similar type of problems. Of course you mention Gambia and Tanzania. In the Gambia the broadcasting organisation is very small, whereas in Tanzania it's considerably larger. Of course in Nigeria it's larger still. There are some 4,000 people involved in broadcasting in Nigeria, at all levels, and in all areas. But we are concerned of course only with the programme people, but normally the broadcasters problems are common. One of the problems that they all have and they are all concerned about is trying to convince governments of the importance of broadcasting and the role that it can play in national development. This is a whole new area of thinking of course, that in the past I think that broadcasting has been regarded here, as it has been elsewhere in the world, as something for information, educational entertainment as we say. But in Africa, of course, the emphasis must be on information and education. Programmes

- RICHARD ASPINALL: can still be interesting and entertaining but at least the emphasis should lie on these two areas - education and information.
- TUNDE AIYEBUSI: If you were going to plan this seminar again in a year or two years time what sort of things would you wish to include which you didn't include now?
- RICHARD ASPINALL: Wee first of all as far as holding another seminar, that is if it is to be UNESCO assisted seminar, that is really up to the nations themselves to say look we would like to repeat this. As far as the second part of your question, yes, we have learnt a lot. I think that instead of saying nine weeks as a compromise between eight and twelve it probably would be better if we did insist upon twelve weeks, because there is a tremendous amount of ground to be covered. We might spend more time on the instructional technique sections of the course and apply those instructional techniques actually to operational studio equipment and to the process of making radio and television programmes
- TUNDE AIYEBUSI: This seminar is centred at the Institute of Mass Communications at the University of Lagos. How do you foresee the relationship between universities in Africa and the media!
- RICHARD ASPINALL: Well, I foresee a very close relationship in fact this has already begun on the regular courses of the Institute. Here at Lagos there are many people who are already practitioners in broadcasting and with the newspapers, and who work as Information Officers with the government information service. All these people are very keen to send students, because at the university they gain they broad experience of university life, a broad background because the course includes work in many disciplines and they also gain heavy professional work in information and in newspaper journalism and in broadcasting. I think undoubtedly the relationship will grow stronger over the years because when this Institute was founded the purpose was to upgrade standards in journalism and broadcasting, and it's doing that because it is well accepted by the media and media are looking more and more to the Institute for the staff to be employed in the future.

GWYNETH HENDERSON:

Mr. Richard Aspinall of the Lagos University Institute of Mass Communication echoing the same thought for his Institute as Mr. Jorgen Petersen of the Nairobi University School of Journalism expressed a few weeks back, Mr. Aspinall was talking there to Tunde Aiyegbusi. And that's about it for this week. Next week we have that much discussed topic of Mature Age entry to University, from the point of view of a student who entered Zambia University under the Mature Age Entry Scheme. Kabwe Kasoma will be talking about the problems and the advantages of going, so to speak, back to school when you're in your thirties, have a wife and a family.