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Unesco: International Institute for Educational Planning



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A report prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

Of great potential at the local level, non-formal training programmes are but a piecemeal response to a much larger problem which requires comprehensive approaches. Nevertheless, a review of the literature in this field of study suggests that this theme has been experiencing a renewed – though non-systematic – valorization. This has occurred as a result of poverty acceleration in many developing countries, rising rates of unemployment worldwide, and revised conceptions of the informal sector, for which non-formal training programmes have been most often tailored.

In the past, several formal vocational training programmes have been set up (publicly or privately financed) to absorb the student clientele which did not wish or was not able to finish general secondary education (Bowman, 1990). The last decade has witnessed a growing awareness on the part of development specialists and funding agencies that these formal vocational training programmes – due to their minimum educational requirements and restricted capacity – had not been designed to cater to the needs of a highly increasing number of ill- and/or uneducated youth in developing countries. Consequently, the acknowledged mismatch between formal programmes and the characteristics of disadvantaged youth, prompted the rapid diffusion of numerous delivery systems whose services were aimed at this specific clientele.

To discuss: 'a framework for analysis and evaluation of non-formal training programmes geared towards disadvantaged youth's insertion into the world of work' implies, in the first place, that disadvantaged youth is already perceived as being on the fringe of productive societies and, secondly, that a positive relationship between training and the world of work has been previously established, thereby justifying the whole enterprise. Whereas numerous emerging initiatives around the issue of insertion of disadvantaged youth into work¹ point to a growing awareness of the gradual 'exclusion' of youth from productive activities, the links between non-formal training and work have not yet been firmly established.²

Generally speaking, education and training are known to increase one's chances to earn a livelihood and join the economically active population, besides assisting one's self-development (Kanaway and Moura Castro, 1990). Consistent with this view is the argument that rising unemployment rates should not justify cuts or reduction in training investments since employment is a function of growth and development, which in turn cannot take place without sustained education and training efforts. Therefore, what seems to be at stake today for advocates of the 'training' potential is not so much whether or not training – be it formal or non-formal – should be provided for, but how the existing training efforts could be adapted to take into account the changing factors (e.g. the demand for new skills and the new profile of labour market entrants, to mention a few).

¹ The seminar "*Jeunes Ville Emploi – Quel avenir pour la jeunesse africaine?*", organized by the *Ministère de la Coopération et du Développement*, 1992, is a recent example of such an effort.

² Hallak and Caillods (1981) *Education, training and the traditional sector* focused basically on the impact of formal education/training on the access and productivity of the traditional sector.

It cannot be forgotten, however, that some authors (e.g. Fluitman, in Wallenborn, 1989b) question the rushed election of 'training' as a potential area of intervention, when it is not so clear whether training is needed, wanted, or even feasible within the scope of the non-structured sector of the labour market.³ Furthermore, it is worth noting that other variables – linked to the so-called 'supportive environment for micro-enterprises' – are currently deemed as important as training in any study considering effective strategies towards self-employment (McLaughlin, in Turnham et al., 1990). In this sense, it can be argued that training represents, perhaps more than ever before, just one strategy in a compounded approach in favour of social development (United Nations, 1995).

The task of extracting lessons from the field in order to identify elements of a possible framework for evaluation and further analysis, entails a larger understanding of the broader literature concerning theories, concepts and empirical data on employment, labour market structure and education and training programmes. The literature selected and reviewed for this study attempted to illustrate these numerous fields of study.

Finally, the construction of a framework for the analysis and evaluation of non-formal training programmes, based on practices considered either effective or of great potential from a social development perspective, is of particular relevance to the work of international organisms engaged in the task of informing, guiding or assisting in the planning of wider educational and training strategies.

Objective

This report was written with the objective of depicting effective strategies and approaches that are being used in relation to the non-formal training and the insertion into work of an increasingly large population of disadvantaged youth that remains unemployed or underemployed in the rural towns or urban centres of the developing world. Concretely, how can disadvantaged youth be best prepared for engaging in self-sustaining work activities? Which agencies seem to be making a difference in this direction? Which approaches and/or strategies stand out as bearing on the steering of 'disadvantaged youth' into the world of work? These are some of the main questions that have guided this study.

Methodology

By focusing on 'non-formal training programmes', and on 'disadvantaged youth in developing countries', this report attempts to inscribe these topics in the larger socio-political and economic context. For this reason, a diverse body of literature – empirical studies and conceptual papers – was selected for review. These publications covered the fields of: (a) disadvantaged youth in developing countries; (b) world employment, demographic growth and youth unemployment; (c) the informal sector in rural and urban areas of developing countries; and (d) the vocational and technical (formal and non-formal) training programmes within the context of larger, comprehensive supporting strategies, most of which are represented by the bibliographical references cited in this document. Therefore, this study also reflects an

³ The author recalls that it often goes unrecognized that many informal sector workers have been able to acquire certain skills without 'external' aid (mostly through on-the-job experiences as apprentices or unpaid family helpers) which would, in turn, suggest that training may need to take many shapes and forms in the real world, such as the provision for skill upgrading (Fluitman, ed. by Wallenborn, 1989:pp.35-36)

attempt to capture the issue of interest from different viewpoints, or perspectives.

It is worth noting that the aim of this report was not to cover and exhaust all the available material but, rather, to assure representativeness of topics consistently raised and discussed in the literature. Furthermore, whereas the publications on the employment problem, population growth and the structure of the informal sector in developing countries are quite abundant and easily located, only a scattered body of literature in which priority is given to the specific contribution of non-formal training programmes to disadvantaged youth could be encountered (e.g. Corvalán, 1984 and Fluitman, in Wallenborn, 1989). Nevertheless, altogether these studies constitute a rich material from which to extract lessons to construct a framework for the analysis and assessment of non-formal vocational training programmes.

Furthermore, the recent literature reviewed for the purpose of this study points to an increasing number of phenomena – e.g. the informalization of the economy and the formalization of the informal sector – which lead to an inevitable relativization of concepts and categories being used. This study has, therefore, attempted to account for these complex changes and adaptations which have taken place in this field.

To sum up, the issue of ‘non-formal training for disadvantaged youth (in developing countries) and their insertion in the world of work’ is herein treated: (i) from an embedded or integrated approach, in which specific themes are contained in comprehensive approaches, and contextualized into a larger global perspective, and (ii) from a dynamic and inter-dependent perspective in which categories are not stable, cannot be discussed in isolation, or much less in opposition to one another.

Definitions

This report deals specifically with the uneducated or the ill-educated population cohort, (roughly) between the ages of 14 and 24, which is either unemployed or underemployed. The terminology ‘disadvantaged youth’, refers to young men and women who suffer from the consequences of an unassisted childhood, have had little or no exposure to education and training opportunities and whose weak social and family connections do not facilitate access to formal or informal business networks.

‘Training’, in this study, acquires the broad meaning of: “any transfer of knowledge, skills or attitudes which is organized to prepare people for productive activities, or to change their working behaviour. Training may therefore concern first-time learners, and people who have worked all their lives (...). It encompasses vocational, technical, managerial, entrepreneurial, societal and other useful skills.” (Fluitman, 1989:p.35).

‘Non-formal training’ refers to any programme or provision that does not comply with the formal or structured organization usually encountered in formal training institutions and in the formal schooling system. Non-formal training programmes may take many forms, one of them being the flexible non-formal structure of business advisory services (Fluitman, 1989).

Scope

The problem of working children is purposely excluded from the present discussions, to the extent that it raises issues of great density such as 'minimum age' conventions, forced labour, the availability of schooling and social support systems for poor families, all of which deserve particular attention and careful examination, far exceeding the objectives of this study⁴. Sure enough, this army of working children is bound to become the ill-educated 'disadvantaged youth' of tomorrow, as the great majority waives attendance at school in order to guarantee, even under precarious conditions, their own or their families' survival. Addressing the needs of this sector of the population should be the high priority of national governments in developing countries and part of any comprehensive long-term strategy of social development.

Furthermore, this study places focus on the urban and rural disadvantaged youth of developing countries. The differences in their social, cultural and political background as well as the particularities of each region within the developing world will also be heeded whenever applicable, as they vary greatly.

Formal vocational training programmes will be discussed only in as far as they may bring evidence to bear on the case of non-formal programmes. As will be discussed later by assuming that there is some degree of education, these vocational training programmes are not addressed to the disadvantaged youth population but rather to the upper-lower and middle-class population cohort of developing countries.

Finally, welfare programmes – much more common in developed than in developing countries – will not be included in this study either. The focus will be placed primarily on supporting strategies and approaches (comprehensive and piecemeal) initiated by non-formal delivery systems (GOs and NGOs) geared towards the training of the disadvantaged youth and their insertion into working life.

Structure

This report has been structured so that it conveys the complexity of the issue - i.e. how it is bound up with larger structural problems and its dynamically changing nature. The first part, *What is the issue?* brings a description of 'disadvantaged youth' followed by a discussion on global tendencies – unemployment trends, demographic growth, failing links between education and work and, finally, the growth and potential of the informal sector –, which attempts to contextualize the issue of 'disadvantaged youth' in developing countries. The second part, *In which ways has the issue evolved?* offers a dynamic view of a constantly changing field of practice, action and research. A discussion of the major structural changes undergone by developing economies in the past decade is delineated, their impact on the working opportunities of the disadvantaged youth is analyzed and a sample of non-formal vocational training programmes from developing countries are described in greater detail. Finally, Part III, *Developing a framework for the study and evaluation of non-formal vocational training programmes* puts forth a debate on programme features that have been identified in the literature as 'successful'; approaches that can be considered 'innovative' and, strategies that seem to lead

⁴ Some of these issues have already been discussed in: Leonardos, A.C. (1995) *Effective strategies and approaches for reaching street and working children through education: reviewing recent developments*, Issues and Methodologies in Educational Development, No. 12, /UNESCO/IIEP, 1995.

to programme 'sustainability', with the ultimate aim of discussing possible parameters for the evaluation of non-formal vocational training programmes in developing countries.

PART I. What is the issue?

1. Disadvantaged youth in developing countries

The category 'disadvantaged youth' refers to a common set of economic, social and cultural aspects and seems to greatly increase in complexity when it intersects other categories such as gender distinctions, ethnic affiliation and the urban v. rural regional specificities.

According to Corvalán (1984), the category 'disadvantaged youth' in developing countries refers to:

"...socially and economically disadvantaged young persons, who have either never entered school or have dropped out early in their lives, do not possess a qualified and relatively permanent occupation and have not had access to educational and training opportunities." (p.3)

Corvalán (1984) adds to this definition a more detailed description of the social and cultural situation of youth in developing countries. Thus, he points to the fact that besides being greatly determined by economic and demographic factors, the behaviour of socially disadvantaged youth is also a function of cultural values and attitudes instilled by their families, or developed as a result of negative experiences they have had, such as dropping out of school or recurrent unemployment. Altogether, these experiences bring them to adopt negative attitudes towards life, lower their expectations and self-esteem besides triggering in them a feeling of powerlessness.

Family working patterns also have an impact on disadvantaged youth to the extent that they provide them with a model of people who have been relatively unsuccessful themselves. Nevertheless, according to Corvalán (1984) "work continues to be a sort of passport for young people to obtain community recognition, to become independent from the family and to finance their material survival and eventually raise a family."(p.8) .

Gender and ethnic issues

The 'disadvantaged youth' category in developing countries reveals some sharp distinctions when one analyzes some of the concrete training and working opportunities by gender. It can be argued that disadvantaged young women, besides corresponding to the general characteristics of disadvantaged youth previously laid out, also carry with them a culturally determined stigma which tends to hinder their social development.

Goodale (1989) points out differences between men and women in relation to the patterns of their working lives and shows how the type of training available has helped reproduce and reinforce the male-dominant structure encountered in the informal sectors of the labour market. According to the author:

"while certain problems may be experienced mutually, the solutions for improving the situation of women require quite different strategies. Consideration must be given to their specific position in the labour force and the

barriers which inhibit them from gaining, on an equal basis with men, participation in, and benefits from, training and employment opportunities.” (p. 49).

The existing barriers can be translated into culturally rooted notions which circumscribe the social role of women to the household – marrying and having children. Consistent with this view is the one that education is less important or even desirable for girls. As women “are not expected to secure high-level employment, there is little need to provide them with higher education” (p.52). The major problem with this vicious circle is that women remain unable to qualify for many jobs, and families are unwilling to invest in the education of their daughters.

When exposed to education and training – be it formal or non-formal – young women face pre-conceived ideas of their career prospects on the part of teachers (Goodale, 1989) and are often ‘streamed’ into “courses which are essentially an extension of women's household and reproductive tasks – sewing, food processing, nutrition and home economics...” (p.52). Consequently, women have been consistently channelled into potentially less productive activities, which lead them to the restricted world of ‘income-generating activities’. Men, on the contrary, often due to higher-status technical, managerial and entrepreneurial skills acquired during training, have been able to guarantee wage- or self-employment for themselves. Is there any evidence that this vicious circle will ever be broken?

On the one hand, Fluitman (1989b), based on the experience of Lomé, Togo, claims that it is not so clear that increasing access to education and training, or widening the possibilities of acquiring a greater number of skills, will cause women in large numbers to take up activities believed to be in the ‘male domain’. On the other hand, The World Bank (1991) reports on several successful programmes which trained women in non-traditional skills, and argues that deeply held social attitudes change slowly. Evidence from Grameen Bank's supportive intervention in Bangladesh – consisting in the provision of loans to finance women's micro-enterprises – provides another example of how culturally rooted male-female roles and attitudes in the family may be altered⁵ as a result of placing women in a privileged position (Yunus, 1991 and 1995). Furthermore, according to Fluitman (1989b), technical and managerial skills would not only improve women's economic activities, but also enhance their decision-making power at both the household and community level.

Nevertheless, the literature seems to indicate that there is still quite a lot of improvement to be achieved in the provision of equal training opportunities for young women (Goodale, 1989; World Bank, 1991; ILO, 1991; McGraph et al., 1995).

Finally, although women's access to equal training opportunities has been more discussed in the literature, in many countries, ethnic minorities are similarly discriminated against and prevented from taking on higher-paid activities (World Bank, 1991). Gender and ethnic issues should, therefore, be constantly brought to the front stage of discussions to the extent that they directly intersect with the disadvantaged youth training and work opportunities.

⁵ With immediate benefits to the household – i.e. higher living standards for the children and overall better living conditions.

Urban and rural issues

Precarious living conditions in the rural areas and the low valorization of agricultural products have been pushing rural youth to urban centres during the past decades (Dirven, 1995; Corvalán, 1984).

Life in rural areas is not so much characterized by unemployment as it is by underemployment in agriculture and other rural, non-farm activities which provide inhabitants with "a very meagre income and no possibilities for social and economic advancement." (Corvalán, 1984:p.6). Young people are usually the first to migrate to towns, as they face problems of access to land and credit. They are attracted by the possibility of higher salaries, better education and training opportunities in urban areas and often led by an illusion of better housing, health and transport services. In reality, newcomers are, usually:

"forced to settle in shanty-town areas of urban agglomerations where they eventually find some income-generating activity in the urban informal sector, by creating their own employment in trade and service activities that require relatively little capital or skills. Others have to accept wage employment which often means a wage below the legal minimum, job insecurity and poor social security." (p.7)

Furthermore, the move to towns and cities on the part of the rural youth population has been followed by a change in their social and family patterns, and in some countries they suffer the effects of the disintegration of the extended family organization they used to enjoy in rural areas. This lack of support, added to the difficulties they usually encounter in the cities, often accounts for high rates of delinquency among adolescents in urban areas (Corvalán, 1984; Blanc, 1994).

Turnham and Eröcal (1990) and Goodale (1989) have also underlined the importance of social and family networks as facilitators in the process of finding wage-employment in small enterprises of the informal sector or engaging in a family business. It seems that disadvantaged youth, and specifically those coming from rural areas, find themselves more often deprived of this powerful resource.⁶

Finally, rural exodus has been held responsible for massive urban underemployment and associated with increasing poverty in urban areas besides resulting in a mere displacement, rather than improvement, of youth's living and working conditions.

2. Disadvantaged youth in a global context

The situation of disadvantaged youth can be better understood when approached from a global contextual perspective which takes into account: (1) unemployment trends and population growth, (2) the failing links between formal education, training and work; and (3) the expansion of the informal sector in most developing countries. We will now turn, briefly, to these macro issues.

⁶ According to Turnham (1993) recent studies have attested that the influence of uncertainty about getting a job in the urban areas is so powerful that rural people "usually do not move unless they have the promise of a job, even though that job is more than likely to be in the informal sector, probably at low earning" (p.132).

2.1 *Unemployment trends, demographic growth and approaches to tackle unemployment*

It is difficult to provide accurate data on youth unemployment in developing countries during the 1970s and early 1980s, as available estimates of world unemployment faced the conceptual and design limitations imposed by the surveys. Urban unemployment has affected young people from a broad spectrum of socio-economic groups, both the well- and the less-well educated, though it has particularly stricken a substantial fraction of youth from low-income backgrounds and limited education. Turnham and Eröcal (1990) explain that because "... the poor, ill-educated young person will often lack the connections, qualifications and /or cash for entry even into the small workshop or market stall as trainee or apprentice (...)" (p.26) this *stratum* of the population, unlike the better-off and educated youth, has had to scramble for work and to settle for casual employment with intermittent unemployment.

Other considerations by Turnham and Eröcal (1990) include an estimate that urban unemployment, for the same examined period, has been substantially higher than rural unemployment.⁷ According to the authors, the labour force grew at 2.0 per cent per annum in developing countries over the period 1955-1985 and at a more rapid rate in the urban areas due to migration – a growth pattern expected to continue in the future. By way of contrast, the labour force growth in developed countries is expected to be at a rate of 0.4 per cent per annum only – a fifth of that in developing countries.

Over 20 years ago Marc Blaug (1973:p.89) anticipated that unemployment would be heavily concentrated among those aged 15-25 as a result of population growth rates. In the early 1980s, Corvalán (1984) – providing data from ILO – claims that there were approximately 50 million youth unemployed, of which 37 million lived in developing countries. Since then, the sluggish economic development of the 1980s has only aggravated the problem of unemployment in developing countries, reducing even further young people's opportunities.

After analyzing the "mixed success and modest outreach" (Turnham, 1993:p.232) of piecemeal approaches to tackling unemployment in the previous decades – lending for rural development; public works programmes; micro-enterprise development; and human resources development – the author concludes that "there is no substitute for self-help efforts – spurred through a well functioning set of economic incentives – that are, or ought to be, a principal benefit of a well-considered employment strategy." (p.232). Among a complex and integrated set of the comprehensive solutions to the employment problem, Turnham (1993) suggests: (i) population policy; (ii) macro-economic policies to promote labour-intensive growth⁸; (iii) a special role for agriculture; and (iv) sector strategy and piecemeal reforms. In his view, piecemeal programmes "are especially relevant in helping to secure a broad spread of

⁷Turnham and Eröcal (1990) argue that "Even allowing for measurement problems, for example, by taking into account only the unemployment rates for men, urban unemployment is usually substantially higher than rural unemployment" (p.25).

⁸The author cites the example of certain East-Asian countries whose labour-intensive growth strategy involved trade, especially exports of manufactures, plus high savings, large investments in education, and a strong emphasis on competition and the use of market instruments. Nevertheless, the author cautions the transfer of the East-Asian growth model to other low-income countries as they might lack some of the favourable conditions that were present in these countries (Turnham, 1993:pp.192-193).

developmental benefits through what are, in effect, forms of asset redistribution.” (p.248). In this perspective, effective primary education – especially to a larger proportion of children in rural areas – is perceived as the most effective way of building up the assets of the poor.

Consistent with these views, educational and training considerations also appear intimately linked to labour policies in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (United Nations, 1995:pp.81-87). In this document, human resource development is associated with the facilitation of people’s access to productive employment in today’s rapidly changing global environment. Finally, some of the major guidelines for action in this area are particularly relevant to the training of disadvantaged youth, which should be conceived in a scenario of intersectoral co-operation and partnerships between governmental/non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups and families.

2.2 The failing links between formal education, training and work in developing countries.

Formal Education

Despite their different empirical and contextual perspectives, the topic of ‘youth work insertion’ acquired a renewed focus for both developed and developing countries in the late 1980s. Whereas in the developed world it is still possible to speak of ‘school-to-work’ transition, in the developing world the issue seems to have escaped the realm and scope of formal schools, being better characterized as an ‘out-of-school to work’ concern.

In the United States, for instance, the focus remains on those who drop out before high school graduation. These are the young people more likely to have limited job and career prospects. Developed countries such as the USA are concerned about the economic future of their youth as they worry about higher productivity and a more competitive workforce. Subsequently, the school reforms aim at accommodating young people in an increasingly demanding formal (modern) sector, and provide for “a wider range of services that encompass academic skills, career guidance, work experience, job preparedness, and job placement assistance” (p.1).⁹

Available data for developing countries indicate that the path being followed by the majority of the disadvantaged youth population in these countries is far removed from the school-to-work transition previously described. As early as the mid 1970s, with the incapacity of the modern sector to absorb more entrants, the concern with the preparation of disadvantaged young people for the informal sector began to emerge in the literature (ILO and UNDP, 1972; Blaug, 1973). Assigning formal schools with this type of responsibility has been, from the very start, a controversial topic. It meant, on the one hand, their total restructuring to address different ‘client’ needs and, on the other hand, the provision of unequal educational opportunities. Thus, Hallak and Caillods (1981) claim that the links between formal education and the traditional urban sector were determined by a process of negative selection, in which precisely “the failures and

⁹ In parallel ways, many European countries are also examining the ‘education-employment interface’ and the problems faced by youth as a result of external economic forces (Fraser et al., 1993; Schwartz, 1994; Hastoy, 1989; OECD, 1985; OIT, 1979; CEDEFOP, 1979).

rejects of the former (would) wind up in the latter” (p.120).

A little over ten years ago, around one-third of youth in developing countries had no access to primary school and another one-third had dropped out without completing it (Corvalán, 1984).¹⁰ Taking into account of the economic crisis and the population growth of the last decade in developing countries, earlier reported, these data suggest that developing countries face an urgent challenge: the insertion of their disadvantaged youth population – who lacks, or has received below-literacy levels of education – into the world of work. This complex situation is further aggravated by the fact that employers in the formal sector of developing countries offer resistance to training illiterate or semi-literate young people – perceived as lacking discipline, among other highly valued attitudes – and tend to recruit the skilled labour force from formal training systems whose clientele is required to have completed primary education¹¹. Primary-school dropouts – the bulk of disadvantaged youth – would, thus, remain in need of alternative training modalities.

Formal training systems

In developing countries, formal vocational and technical training efforts have been associated with meeting the manpower needs of the formal sector, or the modern sector of the economy.

In some countries, training aims at fictitious jobs, whereas in other countries, where there is a demand for skilled workers, employers complain about the relevance and the quality of the training provided. Therefore, formal training systems have been considered inefficient on several counts and, to the extent that the attained outcomes have been unsatisfactory, they have often also been perceived as far from cost-effective (Hallak and Caillods, 1981; Fluitman, 1989b; Corvalán, 1984). Besides being costly, Middleton (1991) claims that formal systems are elitist. The author points out that since access to secondary education is low, a large proportion of the students in vocational programmes are not poor.

“Formal training institutions usually suffer from relevance and quality problems; in any case, they reach few people in relation to the numbers entering the labour market, and an even smaller proportion of those already working; access of women to such training is extremely limited” (ILO, 1988:31).

Nevertheless, the ever-increasing reduction in wage-employment opportunities in the formal sector has led young people – including school-leavers – to “create their own employment as subsistence farmers or informal sector workers” (Fluitman, 1989b:31). In this sense, existing training systems have been unable to contribute to either informal work-insertion, or skill upgrading of those already placed in the informal sector.

Although agreeing upon the inadequacies of the formal training systems in preparing informal sector workers, some authors have doubted their capacity to change orientation to fit the new requirements of the labour market. Hallak and Caillods’ (1981) claim illustrates this

¹⁰ By the mid-1980s, Corvalán (1984) reports on official statistics that estimate approximately 200 million 12-17-year olds out of school – 137 million in South Asia; 41 million in Africa and 19 million in Latin America.

¹¹ According to Middleton (1991), these formal systems have attained low levels of placement of trained workers in jobs that use their skills, which leads him to conclude that “scarce resources have been wasted” (p.85).

point of view:

“The institutes operate with curricula, facilities, conditions and a work atmosphere very remote from the requirements of the traditional sector. Costs are generally high. It is improbable that it will be possible to completely change these institutes’ orientation” (p.119).

Other authors have put forth suggestions for improvement of these formal training systems. Corvalán (1984) argues that it would be inadvisable to create new institutions, and that the existing ones should be reformed to develop new functions. This author advocates that formal vocational programmes should set up different strategies for the illiterate and for those who have completed basic education. The aim would be to train the former group for current and new income-generating activities in the rural and urban informal sectors and not for the inexistent jobs in the modern sector. He adds that: “Training programmes for disadvantaged youth should also be oriented to making their access to a job easier. The specific sector of the economy in which the disadvantaged youth will normally work has to be clearly defined from the outset of the programme” (p.34). Fluitman (1989b) agrees that formal training systems need to be reoriented “to better reflect economic opportunities and respond more precisely to the training needs of people” (p.43). The author adds that priority should be given to training youth for self-employment in the informal sector and training people already working there. Similarly, ILO’s report on the informal sector (1991) suggests both a lowering of entry requirements of the formal training systems and the addition of specialized courses for the non-structured sector. The ILO’s viewpoint is conveyed in the following quote:

“It may be asking too much of formal training institutions to review their courses and their training methods so radically. However, they could be encouraged to introduce additional courses focused specially on workers and entrepreneurs in the informal sector” (p.31).

All these suggestions seem to be pointing to the need for a gradual ‘democratization’ of formal training systems through an adaptation of curriculum contents and methods to the requirements of the informal sector so as to target disadvantaged youth’s needs.

However, as long as the issue of the ‘reorientation’ of formal training systems is not settled, solutions have had to be sought elsewhere. As will be discussed later (Part II), non-formal training programmes have been increasing in numbers as an alternative response to the need for inserting the ill-educated disadvantaged youth into the world of work, and most likely in the informal sector.¹² A discussion on this sector in terms of its concepts, characteristics, and regulatory and comprehensive frameworks follows:

2.3 *The informal sector*

As disadvantaged young people increasingly undertake activities as self-employed in the informal sector, training seems more relevant when tuned to the requirements of this sector.

¹² Many authors (e.g. King, 1990) have also reported on a number of private profit-making – backstreet – training institutions that have been created in an attempt to attract school-leavers interested in informal-sector activities.

Concept and features

The term 'informal sector' was first applied in the 1972 Kenya Report, prepared by ILO (ILO and UNDP,1972) referring to the non-structured sector that had emerged in the urban centres as a result of the incapacity of the modern sector to absorb new entrants. Engaging in activities that provided some means of a living represented, during the 1970s, the alternative to high open unemployment (Charmes, 1990). In 1990, it was estimated that the informal sector accounted for about 30 per cent of non-agricultural employment in Latin America and 30-60 per cent in some other countries, the higher figures being located mostly in Africa (p.30).¹³

During past decades, the concept of the informal sector was widely employed in the specialized literature and its changing and controversial nature has been analysed ever since. Hallak and Caillods (1981) described it as the 'traditional', 'non-formal' or 'unstructured' sector, "the residual sector in the towns, which absorbs surplus labour that is employed in neither the modern nor the intermediate sectors" (p. 17). These authors acknowledge the complexity of the concept 'traditional or informal sector' and underline its links with the formal sector in as far as it: "only acquires its meaning from the modern sector, and far from there being two very distinct sectors, there is a continuum of situations ranging from subsistence jobs to the highest-paid jobs in the modern sector, and opportunities of moving back and forth from one situation to another should remain open, if not be encouraged" (p.125).¹⁴

Wallenborn (1989) shares the view that the informal sector has strong ties with the modern sectors of the economy, and claims that every measure intended for the informal sector "must be embedded within a global employment and development policy if it is to acquire a meaningful purpose and prospects of a future" (p.230). Yet, the author argues that the conventional economic theories have been largely confined to explaining the modern sector and prove to be of little or no utility to the informal sector. In his view, the lack of a theoretical framework to explain the informal sector, would leave the term 'informal sector' restricted to a 'communication metaphor', standing for "an increasingly problematic question which has so far attracted only unsatisfactory answers" (p.230).

Finally, Charmes (1990) draws attention to the fact that, for the sake of analysis, a dualist or dichotomized treatment of the informal sector is often necessary. This, however, would not mean that the interrelations which characterize an economy are to be ignored or misunderstood. Adopting this view, McLaughlin (1990), claims that informal-sector enterprises are usually characterized by:

- (a) the use of family and unpaid labour (apprentices) and reliance on manual labour rather than on sophisticated machinery and equipment;
 - (b) flexibility, allowing people to enter and exit economic activities in response to market demand;
 - (c) simple and sometimes precarious facilities;
 - (d) the ability to improvise products from scrap materials;
 - (e) a willingness to operate businesses at times and locations convenient to customers;
- and

¹³ Data obtained from Charmes, J. (1990). "A critical review of concepts, definitions and studies in the informal sector", ed. by Turnham et al.

¹⁴ The authors also point to the difficulty in studying an object whose nature is so heterogeneous and mobile.

(f) a tendency to locate smaller markets, out of the reach of the larger firms.¹⁵

Furthermore, the author argues that, although not a distinguishing feature, firm size can be a predictor of owner income and ability to expand. Whereas mini- or micro-enterprises usually only yield a means of survival for their operators through the production and commerce of goods and services of lower quality and prices, small and medium-sized enterprises are usually associated with higher income and higher educational levels of owner as well as with longer length of time in business (McLaughlin, 1990). The author also brings a distinction between 'pre-entrepreneurs', whose economic activities are so marginal as to hardly guarantee subsistence and 'entrepreneurs', whose activities yield profits and bear potential for expansion. Therefore, it can be observed that even though the activities of the poorest can be characterized as part of the informal sector, they do not make up the bulk of the informal sector (Charmes, 1990:p.15).

Often perceived as an exclusively urban phenomenon, a non-farm informal sector can also be observed in medium and small-sized towns and villages in the rural areas of developing countries. The entrepreneurs in the urban and rural environments operate businesses that reflect the consumer needs and tastes of their respective markets. Some of the urban informal-sector activities identified are: vehicle, radio, watch and refrigerator repairing, manufacturing of bricks and other construction materials and money-changing; whereas in the rural economy, the most common activities are blacksmithing, leather craft, water pump manufacture, and herbal medicine, to mention a few. It has been pointed out by McLaughlin (1990), however, that the incomes in the rural areas tend to trail behind those of their urban counterparts of similar size which, as previously mentioned, partly justifies migration to the urban centres.

Greater income inequalities due to variation in government benefits, treatment or subsidies along ethnic or regional lines have also been observed in the rural informal sector. Finally, the conventional training for the informal sector is the traditional apprenticeship system. According to McLaughlin (1990), apprenticeships¹⁶ "represent an effective and culturally appropriate system both for operating a viable business and for training young workers in a trade at the same time" (p.158). Through this system, apprentices become fully qualified in a trade in exchange for a fee. At its completion, some are offered the possibility of wage-employment in the same workshop as a journeyman, whereas others will become self-employed. As will be discussed in Part II, some non-formal vocational interventions have successfully coordinated their training programmes with traditional apprenticeship systems.

Regulatory and comprehensive framework

Another aspect of the informal sector which has greatly contributed to the lack of support encountered on the part of national governments, and of a significant slice of public opinion, is the fact that it stays at the threshold of illegality. A regulatory framework for the informal sector should consist of a crucial protective measure for the growing numbers of disadvantaged youth who earn their living as street vendors of goods and services.

As synthesized by Wallenborn (1989), the informal sector encompasses numerous types

¹⁵ Charmes (ed. by Turnham, et al., 1990) also mentions seven criteria for the informal sector set out by ILO (ILO; UNDP, 1972) and the conditions for membership of the informal sector, established by Sethuraman (1976).

¹⁶ First established for training in the trades related to the farm economy, this system was later expanded to urban trades, where new opportunities for small-scale repairers and producers emerged.

of occupations, from survival income-generating activities to relatively profitable small and medium-sized enterprises, thus consisting of a very heterogeneous phenomenon at times including ventures “endeavouring to use illegal means to pursue legal goals” (p.229). At times, workers do find difficulty in abiding by the local laws, which contributes to the association between informal-sector activities and illegal practices. On the one hand, it has been argued that were they to comply with certain legalization requirements many of the micro-enterprises that assure their operator's livelihood would never survive. On the other hand, pre-entrepreneurs are aware of the fact that legalized operations enable them “to have access to some institutional support, such as credit, or to the protection of the law in such matters as enforcement of contract” (ILO, 1991:p.35). Therefore, the ‘regulatory’ dilemma can be summarized in the following quote:

“The progressive ‘legalization’ of the informal sector is clearly an essential requirement for its integration into society. But it is more likely to take place in a positive environment where the obstacles to entering legality are reduced to a minimum, where the costs of being legal are not prohibitive, and where there are clear benefits to becoming legal – i.e. where the public authorities are known to be (and seen to be) supporting rather than harassing the informal sector” (ILO, 1991:pp.35-36).

The report on the International Labour Conference of 1991 (ILO, 1991) proposes a strategy for creating the conditions for the development of a more dynamic and better protected informal sector, which would contribute to its progressive integration into society. *Comprehensive* measures to be simultaneously pursued would consist of:

- (1) improving the productive potential, and therefore of the employment- and income-generating capacity, of the informal sector;
- (2) improving the welfare of the poorest groups;
- (3) establishing an appropriate regulatory framework, including appropriate forms of social protection and regulation; and
- (4) organizing informal sector producers and workers (ILO, 1991:p.25).

These comprehensive measures advocated by ILO (1991) can in turn be broken down into other piecemeal strategies. As can be noticed below, training is listed among the four *piecemeal* strategies, considered to be key aspects for the “improvement of the productive potential of the informal sector”. The four strategies are:

- (a) market expansion through the enhancement of the demand for informal-sector products; which, in turn, can only be achieved through the qualitative improvement of goods and services;
- (b) facilitating producers within the informal sector to obtain credit on the same terms as modern enterprises;
- (c) access to training for improvement of skills and upgrading of technologies used in the informal sector; and, finally,
- (d) improvement in the basic facilities and amenities of informal-sector premises.

What stands out from these listings is, first of all, the strong interdependence between comprehensive and piecemeal measures and, secondly, the intertwining nature of all piecemeal

measures allowing training, alone, to have a direct or an indirect effect on all other three key objectives previously laid out.

The idea of the relative and interdependent power of training so far stressed by many authors is briefly summarized by Fluitman (1989b) in the following quote:

“Training does not create jobs other than for trainers and support staff. It is not the missing piece in the development puzzle. Interventions which address access to credit, technology, markets, etc., are often more crucial, at least in the opinion of informal sector operators. Training is to a large extent an instrument which causes other inputs to come to fruition” (p.37).

Finally, the perception of the interdependent role of training in the process of social development suggests, in turn, that a framework for the analysis and evaluation of non-formal training programmes should consider both the interrelationships between strategies and their insertion into broader comprehensive approaches.

Part II. In which ways has the issue evolved?

As previously discussed, the issue of unemployment of ill-educated youth is not new, though it has acquired visibility as a result of evolving concepts and perspectives which surround the issue.

Turnham and Eröcal (1990) report, for instance, that youth unemployment worsened in the 1980s following larger trends of unemployment in both developed and developing countries. Furthermore, based on a new set of data, Turnham (1993) reports that an average unemployment rate taken among 36 developing countries is 9.8 per cent, with youth unemployment being usually the most severe manifestation of the unemployment problem – close to four times higher than rates for adult workers. As will be analyzed next, these recent unemployment trends have had an undeniable impact on the structure of the labour market and simultaneously shaken former conceptions of education and training.

1. The economic crisis and the relativization of issues

The severe economic crisis of the 1980s was responsible for the limited growth and restricted job creation witnessed in many developing countries. The impact of the crisis was observed in the high levels of open unemployment and under-employment among individuals with post-primary education or training (Middleton, 1991). These structural changes have led to changes in the view taken of the role of the informal sector in solving the unemployment and the underemployment problem, besides creating a complex arena for planning and policy considerations.

Charmes (1990) synthesizes the changes undergone by developing countries in the following excerpt:

“Whereas job creation in industry is stagnating or falling and there is even a trend towards de-industrialization, government administrations and semi-public undertakings, which for a time were required to provide the new jobs needed to

absorb young graduates and to offset the job losses in other sectors, are drastically revising their recruitment policies in the light of the cutback in budget revenue, the burden of indebtedness and the flood of workers, which is accompanied by a marked drop in the level of real earnings and productivity”(p.10).

The author claims that an important consequence of the economic crisis in developing countries was that an increasingly greater number of educated people had to start seeking work within the informal-sector activities in order to guarantee a source of income, or complement their salaries. In relation to this point, King (1990) reports that “the most likely differences between entrants to the informal economy in the 1970s and those in the later 1980s will be the length of exposure to schooling” (p.189). This phenomenon, also referred to in the literature as ‘the informalization of the economy’ is explained by King (1990) in the following quote;

“The consequent informalization of the economy has underlined the fact that increasingly the informal sector is the *ordinary economy*, and that in some countries, most families even in the small formal sector require a second or third job in the informal sector, in order to survive” (p.200).

The early views that this sector needed to be gradually reduced in size despite its “role in cushioning the effects of rural depopulation” (p.10) were replaced by a perception of the informal sector as “a cure to be applied as often and as widely as possible” (p.11). Furthermore, the belief that “progress could be achieved only by the reduction of this pocket of underemployment” (p.10) has been substituted by incentive measures towards the strengthening of the informal sector, within a larger social development framework (United Nations, 1995). In this sense, it can be argued that the image of a ‘continuum’ in the formal and informal sectors of the labour market, employed by Hallak and Caillods in the early 1980s, is still of relevance in the 1990s, and the possibilities of moving back and forth have remained open, if not out of encouragement, as of necessity.

In a nutshell, changes in the informal sector's worker profiles, now reaching higher levels of education, resulted in changes in the types and nature of the informal sector's activities, which have become increasingly more heterogeneous. Though, as previously discussed, the slices of the informal sector to be taken by formal school (and vocational programme) graduates and by non-formal vocational training leavers may still be different and sometimes a world apart – self-employment as an entrepreneur in a small- (to medium-) sized firm in the first case, and self-employment as a pre-entrepreneur in an income-generating activity in the second one – the structural overlap is there and raises questions concerning the role and functions of training in each type of programme as well as their relative power in employment creation.

This split in the informal sector leads King (1990:p.199) to argue that, independent of the shape of future government support to the informal sector, externally-funded initiatives will be tempted to target “those poised to make the transition to something more recognizable in the formal small industry/small enterprise sector” (p.199). By contrast, NGOs will tend, according to the same author, “to approach the informal sector with more of a poverty focus, seeking ways in which certain groups amongst the subsistence self-employed may secure more of their basic needs” (p.199). The author suggests that “it may then be possible to dichotomize informal sector

interventions into those more like poverty programmes and those more akin to small enterprise programmes, the latter targeting the larger and more successful informal sector businessmen” (p.199).

It is worth noting that the ‘dichotomized v. continuum’ debate, once restricted to the formal and informal sectors of the labour market, is now being reproduced within the informal sector itself. This seems to be another important aspect of the structural adjustment little explored in the literature. The dichotomization of the informal sector itself acquires relevance to the extent that it bears on future education and training policies. If equal opportunities are to be pursued as part of broader efforts towards democratization, then national provisions for the strengthening of the new ‘ordinary economy’ should account for all ranges of activities within the informal sector. Finally, if they are to take place in an effective way, the actions planned will have to take into account existing interventions at both ends of the informal sector, so as to be able to compensate for inequalities, concentrate on unattended areas and result in the co-ordination of efforts.

2. Formal education and training: emerging trends

Specifically, these structural adjustments have had different impacts on the role of schooling, vocational training and other alternative, non-formal training provisions.

First of all, it seems clear that since the economic crisis of the 1980s, the relationship between education and work has been severely shaken. In King’s (1988) words, “the greater the degree of universalization of schooling, the more obvious it becomes that the state cannot even begin to deliver what was so recently regarded as a reward to schooling – a secure job in the modern sector” (p.158). Nevertheless, the same author argues (King, 1990b) that contrary to what one would suspect, the impact of the economic crisis has produced some positive effects in the education and training area besides challenging conventional approaches to training. It may be worth reviewing some of the emerging trends amongst formal education and training systems, before discussing non-formal alternatives in greater depth.

At the level of formal schooling, King (1990b) suggests that “the older motivation for being in school – to get a modern-sector job – will increasingly need to be replaced by an alternative. In many countries, that alternative is now quite explicitly being commended as work in the informal or small enterprise economy” (p.3). The intention is to gradually alter some of the orientations in schools, so as to develop a culture of independent and successful business. In the view of Kanawaty and Moura Castro (1990), the enhancement of self-reliance attitudes would also counteract traditional reliance on the state or on the formal sector, though, so far, “very little has been done to introduce simple notions of small enterprise management and entrepreneurship in regular vocational and commercial school curricula, even as an option” (p.12).

In parallel ways, the role of schools in imparting cultural values and attitudes has also been underlined in the valorization of rural-related (farm or non-farm) occupations. In the same way that activities within the informal sector can be valued and enhanced by school curricula, so can activities in the rural areas.

Dirven (1995) argues, for instance, that the image of the indigenous rural worker is increasingly undervalued in Latin America. According to the author, the low status enjoyed by

rural occupations, is mainly due to the messages of 'urbanism' and 'modernism' conveyed by the means of communication and the schools. The author contends that the youth population represents a great potential for rural development in Latin America and that, in the long run, they should have their self-image reinforced. Furthermore, in order for their energy to be channelled they should be given space to participate more actively in the local community life besides being given the means for becoming productive – e.g. access to markets, technological training, land (ownership/exploration) rights, other means of production and credit.¹⁷

While imparting students with positive messages related to informal-sector activities and rural (farm or non-farm) life seems to be a starting point in the process of change, there seem to be limits to what schools could do. First of all, informal-sector training is usually integrated into the work process, as in the case of traditional apprenticeship systems and though, on the one hand, schools may have a role in the heightening of students' interest in self-employment as well as in the encouragement of positive attitudes towards working in the informal economy, on the other hand, the verification of whether this type of non-cognitive knowledge has yielded results outside school contexts seems out of their reach (King, 1988). Furthermore, a school curriculum could be devised to heighten youth's interest in informal-sector activities or in rural life, but these culture-specific valoriations can at best build a critical mass and create a demand for a supportive environment for the development of either one. In other words, curriculum cultures could hardly replace macro social and economic policies.

Concerning vocational training systems, King (1990b) points to a main 'democratization' trend, similar to the one that has been influencing school curricula in some countries. Ishumi (1988), for instance, provides the example of the Leguruki Vocational Training School in Arumeru, Tanzania. According to the author, in order to rectify a curriculum evaluated as being essentially urban and modern sector-oriented, in which indigenous knowledge systems, resources and talents were ignored, the school staff had to engage in an 'unlearning process' with respect to the conventionalized pre-existing curriculum. In order to turn the curriculum programme into a more flexible one which would allow for "small business applications, co-operative production and marketing techniques, farm implement fabrication, etc." (p.172), a broad survey was conducted among the local population and a debate was initiated with the school's staff. A tracer study which followed up on about half of all graduates in 1980 found more than 90 per cent employed, of which more than half were self-employed in rural villages and urban areas (World Bank, 1991). Ishumi (1988) contends, however, that in order to conform to the general principle of annual trade testing, such curriculum innovations would also require "a creative adaptation of the examinations to the unique features and contents of the curriculum that is by design aimed at flexibly responding to those changing needs" (p.172).

Thus, according to King (1990b) "training is increasingly being regarded as a right to which many more young school-leavers should have access"(p.8). The democratization move observed in the scope of training takes on a twofold aspect: (a) public vocational training centres tend to have their programme re-oriented by introducing more 'practice-based' courses and by enhancing training towards self-employment; and (b) training institutions tend to be decentralized, by being distributed in every district (while before they were only available in a

¹⁷ Dirven (1995) provides the example of the European Community supportive programme for the settlement of young people in the rural area through activities in agriculture.

few of the largest towns). Programme re-orientation and decentralization would summarize the 'newer vision' described below by King (1990b):

"The newer vision is of institutes serving the needs of their communities at the district level, but no longer having the special relationship with the modern sector of the economy. That is to say that they must develop for themselves a new *raison d'être*, and carry communities with them, even to the extent of encouraging a degree of community financing" (p.9).

This 'decentralization' movement reveals, in King's (1990b) viewpoint, that governments seem determined to innovate and expand, even in the midst of economic crisis. Yet, two observations seem of relevance to the decentralization issue. The first point is that governments should be aware that meaningful decentralization means shifting both resources and the decision-making power to the communities – and that includes their participation in the management of human, material and financial resources – rather than just building training facilities in a greater number of districts. The second one is that the re-orientation of training programmes should be left flexible enough to respond to local needs – being defined by community members where possible.

Another interesting aspect of these innovative responses to the structural adjustments undergone by the informal sector, is that none of the above-mentioned trends seems viable outside a larger framework that will provide small enterprise development an 'enabling and supportive environment'. In this sense, King (1990b) underlines that this new re-orientation of school and training programmes would, besides supporting the culture of self-employment within the wider economy, "imply a much greater readiness by government to intervene to encourage a supportive environment for enterprises" (p.9). The author sums up this view by saying that:

"The new strategies are therefore both school-based and economy-based, targeting both the attitudes of the young people and also seeking to alter the economic environment in which new skills may be practised" (p.9).

King (1990b:p.10) provides the example of Kenya, where the enterprise initiative has not started with educational actions but with the need to alter government's macro-economic policy and resource allocation as well as the need to alter the investment and financial mechanisms relating to small enterprise development. Kanawaty and Moura Castro (1990) agree with this comprehensive view of training and add that:

"Training has to be combined with credit facilities, with advice and consultancy on the feasibility and management of the intended venture and with preparing the infrastructure such as the development of industrial estates, availability of power, water, transportation facilities and adequate channels of distribution, particularly in rural areas. These are roles that government can usually perform" (p.12).

3. Non-formal vocational training: alternative responses

So far, the types of impact described have been restricted to the provision of services for the youth population that has obtained minimum school requirements. However, the 'out-of-school' youth population, marginalized both by most employers in the formal sector and by formal educational and training structures, cannot afford to wait for school curriculum reform, training re-orientation and decentralization, let alone for a revision of government's macro-economic policy and resource allocation – they have already been rejected by the formal systems and remain semi-literate, unskilled and under- or unemployed. Disadvantaged youth in developing countries constitute thereby the potential candidates for numerous types of non-formal training programmes devised to provide them with some rudimentary literacy skills, vocational skills and a means of survival.

In this section, studies¹⁸ on non-formal vocational training programmes for disadvantaged youth's insertion into the world of work will be analyzed. First, the concept and the goals of non-formal vocational training will be discussed. Second, the institutional, management and financing structures as well as training modalities of non-formal training centres will be described. Third, a discussion of the 'pros' and 'cons' of non-formal vocational training, with the intent of assessing the relative power of such structures in preparing disadvantaged youth for entry into the world of work, will conclude this section.

3.1 Concept and goals

The terms 'informal' and 'non-formal', according to Goodale (1989), were introduced by educational planners to distinguish types of learning which took place outside the institutional context of the ministry of education. While 'informal' training would basically refer to apprenticeship systems and other on-the-job learning modalities, 'non-formal' training usually referred to the easily accessible and flexible training-cum-production structures set up to cater to the needs of the non- or ill-educated youth (or young adult) population. In Ishumi's (1988) words, non-formal centres can be characterized as:

"(...) usually low cost, out-of-school pre-employment-entry institutions designed to offer post-primary vocational training, trade training and/or work experiences to youths, especially to primary school leavers who have, with the years, been growing in absolute numbers and in proportion to youths in upper levels of education" (p. 167).

As previously argued, even if not often stated amongst programme goals, non-formal vocational training will most likely prepare disadvantaged youth for entry within the informal sector of the economy as wage- or self-employed.¹⁹ Concerning rural programmes' goals, Ishumi

¹⁸ Some authors (e.g. Corvalán 1984, 1985; Goodale, ed. by Fluitman, 1989; Ishumi, 1988; McLaughlin, ed. by Turnham, et al., 1990) have reported on evaluation studies conducted on vocational training centres for disadvantaged youth, which are usually set up within a non-formal structure.

¹⁹ Although it is true that non-formal training programmes most often offer disadvantaged youth, from urban and rural areas of developing countries, opportunities to engage in informal-sector activities which will assure their livelihood, there may be cases in which they lead to wage-employment within the formal sector. As King (1988) argues, official vocational training systems are sometimes viewed by employers as overtraining young people for the ordinariness of work in industrial and commercial firms. This is why employers may regard youth trained in backstreet or NGO training schemes as having lower aspirations and attitudes, more consonant to occupations at the middle or low levels.

(1988) claims that the Brigades in Botswana, the Youth Polytechnic in Kenya²⁰ and the Philippines barrio high school are fairly similar to one another. Their main goals are:

- “(i) to establish an alternative to the existing formal system of education that would provide vocational training for young people unable to find places in secondary or trade schools;
- (ii) to combine education and training with production which would help to cover costs and make the programme less expensive to run;
- (iii) to provide young people with skills needed to employ themselves or find employment in their own rural communities;
- (iv) to cultivate values, attitudes and skills in the youths that would form a positive resource towards development of their own communities and society in general” (p. 167).

In fact, rural non-formal vocational training programmes' goals do not differ a great deal from the objectives stated by CIDE – an urban, private (non-profit) programme for training urban disadvantaged youth in Chile. They are:

- (i) to offer poor youth, inhabiting the periphery of the large cities of Chile, access to training;
- (ii) to develop a flexible system of innovative training, which builds on available local resources and reaches sectors unassisted by the existing institutions;
- (iii) to promote the development of craft workshops and of small local enterprises through the training and organization of the persons involved, thus strengthening local economic activities and grass-roots organizations.

Therefore, it seems that, besides the development of practical sets of knowledge related to the mastery of useful skills, these non-formal structures also aim at developing non-cognitive social values and attitudes, revealing their concern with trainees' multi-sided development. Corvalán (1985) provides evidence from a programme, CMT-Quito/Ecuador – which besides providing professional training to disadvantaged youth, also attempts to promote basic values, such as responsibility, punctuality, order and cleanliness. Nevertheless, King (1988b) also draws attention to the more socio-political self-awareness dimension of training which aims at greater community organization and participation in the developmental process.

Finally, it has been pointed out by McLaughlin (1990) that NGOs have devoted a more specific focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged, “which many government-sponsored and foreign-assisted development programmes fail to reach” (p.164). Thus, some NGO programmes have been assisting special populations such as “women, religiously-affiliated groups, disadvantaged ethnic or handicapped groups”, while others have served “anyone who expresses an interest in taking advantage of their programme” (p.164). If in their initial efforts NGOs have been mostly identified as undertaking remedial action, this is no longer the rule as they are increasingly adopting strategies and methodologies which aim at the social, economic and

²⁰ This African rural training programme is particularly active in creating non-farm employment for rural youth (McLaughlin, ed. by Turnham et al., 1990; Ishumi, 1988).

political development of marginalized groups (Corvalán, 1985).

In India, for instance, four NGOs – the Behavioural Science Centre (BSC), the Utthan Mahiti, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the Shroffs Foundation Trust (SFT) – have been targeting their efforts at the marginalized, socio-economically deprived sections of the community. According to D'Souza and Thomas (1995):

“All the four NGOs follow a long-term approach to self-employment, stressing the importance of sustainable development through people's participation and responsibility sharing in the process of development.” (p.138)

The success of all four NGOs is attributed by the authors to a large extent to their being contextually relevant to the clientele – derived from the lower rungs of the social ladder who did not have adequate access to basic education. By building people's competence in traditional or traditionally-related economic activities – agriculture and forestry in the case of BSC and Mahiti, and the cottage or home-industry in the case of SEWA and SFT – these NGOs preferred to develop activities which would improve the subsistence employment of the communities but did not promote employment that would bring in substantial economic gains for either the individuals or the communities.

3.2 Institutional nature, management structure and financing schemes

Corvalán's (1985) in-depth study of 10 programmes, directed at the training of informal sector workers in Latin America, reveal that they could be grouped into four main types of institutional structures: (1) those dependent on the formal education structure of the country, which are supported by fiscal municipal funds and managed by formal system employees and technicians who deliver training in other specialized establishments (e.g.: CCP de Cali/Colombia); (2) those sponsored by national institutions of professional training, which benefit from facilities and personnel of national institutions (e.g. INA/Costa Rica; SENA/Colombia; and INCE/Venezuela); (3) autonomous public organisms which have access to local resources, services and productive sectors (e.g. PETRA - Mobral/Brazil); and, finally, (4) non-governmental organizations usually started by religious groups, which have financial limitations²¹ due to lack of governmental support as they usually develop at the margin of official training programmes. Thus, there seems to exist basically two types of non-formal vocational training programmes available for the disadvantaged youth of developing countries – those that are publicly (GOs)²² or privately sponsored (NGOs, usually confessional non-profit programmes).

In another study based on a sample of 100 programmes collected in the developing countries²³, Corvalán (1984) reports on a much larger number of non-formal GOs than NGOs

²¹ Corvalán (1985) provides more detailed information on some NGO financing schemes, and gives the example of the CMT in Quito (Equador), which had approximately 74 per cent of its funds obtained from international donations; 13 per cent from national donations, and the remaining 13 per cent was self-financed.

²² Ducci (1988) describes in detail the recent changes undergone in the financing schemes of the major Latin-American vocational training systems.

²³ This study also showed the proportion of urban- and rural-oriented training programmes in different developing regions. Whereas 31 out of 42 programmes examined in Africa were for rural youth, 22 out of 29 programmes studied in Latin America were located in urban areas. Finally, in Asia, a balance was found among programmes for rural and urban youth.

providing training to disadvantaged youth. However, the author adds that this does not necessarily imply that there are no privately sponsored programmes, but rather that there was scarcely no mention of them in the literature. As McLaughlin (1990) argues, it is known that while some NGO programmes may become prominent, national organizations which maintain a system of centres throughout a region or even a country, there are a number of them which have been serving "such geographically small areas as to be virtually unknown outside their immediate communities" (p.163).

Goodale (1989) brings further information on the institutional nature, management structures and financing schemes of NGOs. The author reports on findings from a study which included 21 centres in Lusaka, Zambia, most of them initiated by voluntary, non-governmental agencies, generally having a religious affiliation. In terms of management they were run by a governing board or a special committee, though a few have included local members in their decision-making structures and could be thereby considered 'genuinely' community-based. Financially, centres tended to depend on donations from voluntary organizations or government and encountered problems in meeting the cost of instructors' salaries. Close to half of the centres' staff was composed of volunteers. Therefore, these studies seem to suggest that non-governmental programmes suffer from a much greater vulnerability, financially speaking, than publicly sponsored structures, although they seem to allow for greater local representativeness in their managerial structures.

3.3 Programme types

As can be observed, a variety of programme types can be listed under the concept of 'non-formal vocational training programmes'. Models vary in function of the innovations that permeate the area of non-formal training. Not many authors have mapped and classified major types of programmes available in this area. A CINTERFOR/OIT report, by Ducci (1989) – *La Formación Profesional en el umbral de los 90* – brings a useful classification of programmes geared towards disadvantaged youth restricted to Latin America:

- (1) Programmes of occupational skill, aimed at complementing formal schooling and geared at offering better alternatives for work insertion of marginal populations (e.g.: PIPMO del SENAI; PHO del INCE).
- (2) Programmes which target youths in their final stages of the professional training process, providing complementary activities and support to the formation of micro enterprises, with the expectation that through this experience trainees will acquire a better perception of the real productive world, develop an interest in and stimulate initiative with regard to business, besides increasing chances of eventual job offers from the firms with which they enter into contact (e.g. SENATI).
- (3) Programmes geared at promoting the creation of micro-enterprises or associations of leavers from various types of professional training. These programmes, increasingly more popular due to the youth work insertion difficulties, are usually complemented by pedagogical components, which include topics such as initiative and entrepreneurship and with inter-institutional schemes for credit and technical assistance.

- (4) Programmes which train youths from communities or groups of population in disadvantaged positions, in order for them to act as triggers of organization and development processes as well as assistant trainers or trainers, multiplying the staff of vocational training programmes. This type of programme, of high participation content, was applied by SENA (Programmes CAPACA y CIPACU), and geared to the rural traditional and urban informal sectors, through the mobile units strategy.

3.4 Training modalities

Many designs, methods and pedagogical models can be found within the training component of non-formal programmes. However, two major strategies are usually applied in the design of such programmes – ‘learning by doing’ or ‘learning by producing’ (Corvalán, 1985). Thus, for instance, nearly half of the 100 programmes for disadvantaged youth in developing countries reviewed by Corvalán (1984) had as a stated goal “developing the production of several kinds of farm products, rural handicrafts, goods and services” (p.32). When literacy skills are provided for, they aim at imparting a rudimentary knowledge of the three ‘r’s so as to at least enable trainees to follow skill training courses. Depending on the programme’s goals and principles (or the extent to which they aim at the trainee’s social, economical and political development), they may adopt a ‘critical pedagogy’ approach usually encountered in adult education programmes. Finally, regardless of the types of courses offered, non-formal vocational training programmes tend to include parallel courses on basic business notions, considered essential in preparing disadvantaged youth for self-employment.

The heterogeneity of non-formal training designs can be illustrated by Goodale’s (1989) evidence from the study of 21 centres in Lusaka, Zambia. The author claims that:

“The delivery of training in (most of) these centres was similar to that of formal systems: teacher-centred, lecture methods, trainees following timetables and standardized courses. Production was secondary and mostly a ‘token’ component in the training programmes, conducted in separate units, or as field practice within enterprises.

(By contrast) There were only a few centres which offered programmes primarily geared towards production, rather than developing semi-skilled or skilled crafts-persons. Courses were of a shorter duration (six months, rather than 18 months). There were no tests or certificates at the end, although some type of testimonial was often provided. Single technical subjects were taught, with less attention given to theory, and far more to the acquisition of business skills. The curricula were flexible, with learning more individualized and centred around groups or individual tasks. Training resembled apprenticeship in a workshop more than the programmes in the ‘formalized’ training centres described above.

Both types of centres had, in principle, a dual objective of preparing trainees either for wage- or self-employment” (p.62).

Furthermore, Goodale (1989) also reports that in what relates to curriculum content, there was a great deal of gender differentiation. Thus, in these centres, carpentry, agriculture, electrical repair and maintenance, upholstery and tin-smithing were exclusively for boys, whereas

sewing/homecraft, shop assistance and nursery school assistance were basically for girls. The author also points out that there was a marked absence of courses in simple business skills provided to girls, with the exception of costing and bookkeeping given in some dressmaking courses. In only one centre did girls learn about marketing.

Finally, training in many of the non-formal centres is approached from a 'whole-person' perspective, which includes the development of values and attitudes highly valued in the workplace. An example of a programme with such a type of focus is the Don Bosco training programme (McGraph et al., 1995).

3.5 The relative power of non-formal structures

Despite the fact that available evaluation studies vary a great deal in their goals (focus), methodologies and/or scope, it is still possible to extract from them the basic merits and shortcomings of non-formal vocational training programmes for disadvantaged youth.

A first debatable point refers to the inherent constraints encountered in the training-cum-production model, adopted in different degrees by most non-formal vocational training programmes. Ishumi (1988), on the one hand, argues that the education-cum-production model represents a step towards the democratization of educational provisions to the extent that they emphasize multiple aspects of human resource development. McLaughlin (1990), on the other hand, points out that training-cum-production models often overemphasize the practical side of production over the academic side of training. In the experience of the Brigades, for example, the author contends that, for financial reasons, some Brigades have had to "sacrifice the quality of training in order to maximize production" (p.166). Furthermore, there is also the fact that non-formal vocational training products, due to outdated technology, are usually viewed as lagging behind in quality to those commercialized within the formal sector. This puts another serious constraint on non-formal programmes, which are unable to survive in the absence of a market demand for the skills and the goods they produce.

A second point concerns the greater flexibility that most non-formal vocational training programmes are believed to enjoy if compared to formal training programmes. There is consensus in the literature that such non-formal structures possess a much needed flexibility allowing them to respond "to situational needs and demands as compared to conventional school systems" (Ishumi, 1988:p.167). In this specific area, Corvalán (1985) claims that the advantage of non-formal NGOs over GOs lies in the former's longer tradition of work closely linked to local communities which help build more efficiently on local resources and better articulate programmes according to the specific needs of the target groups. Goodale (1989) argues, however, that despite their closeness to local needs, non-governmental programmes surveyed in Lusaka (Zambia) were not necessarily in a better position to respond to community needs when it entailed networking at broader levels. The author claims that the leadership of most centres lacked "both the kind of connections with national bureaucracies which would lead to meaningful support and the necessary experience to deal with foreign assistance agencies" (p.61).

Thirdly, according to Ishumi (1988), non-formal centres have contributed in addressing the problem of youth unemployment by preparing them for entry into some gainful occupation. However, while efficient at imparting useful skills to youth, only a few non-formal vocational training centres seem committed to inserting disadvantaged youth in an income-generating

activity (Corvalán, 1985). McLaughlin (1990), for instance, provides the example of the Brigades (Botswana) which do not “provide assistance in placing their leavers in positions nor in preparing them to set up business for themselves” (p.166) and cites the case of the Youth Polytechnics which have failed to create employment opportunities in the surrounding communities, leading many leavers to migrate to urban centres. In such cases, it is argued that unemployment is not tackled but only postponed. Though self-employment is officially promoted by the Youth Polytechnics, only superficial business management notions have been included in the programmes' curriculum and leavers should form support groups in order to qualify for a start-up loan from the programme's revolving fund. Among those few programmes which follow trainers all the way from entry into the programme through entry into the labour market, Corvalán (1985) provides the example of INCE-Iglesia/Venezuela, which breaks up its programme into three phases – (i) promotion, consisting in motivating and attracting the support of the grass-roots organizations and interesting persons in occupational training; (ii) occupational training, or the action of preparing semi-skilled workers; and (iii) consolidation, aiming at guiding those who have concluded training and are about to join the labour market as wage-employed, self-employed or through an association. Another full-fledged model would be represented by the Undugu Society of Kenya, which assists youngsters in joining local apprenticeship systems at the same time as they attend workshops for skill upgrading (King, 1988b; Easton, et al., 1994). Nevertheless, the latter two programmes are considered to be unusually effective among the non-formal centres evaluated.

Finally, Corvalán (1984) shows that a restricted number of programmes have been geared towards disadvantaged youth who are already working in income-generating activities. This may be an area in need of further support from governmental and non-governmental non-formal vocational training programmes. McLaughlin (1990) claims that in Pakistan, for instance, some ‘after-hour’ schemes have been set up within formal training structures – taking advantage of established facilities and personnel – mostly geared towards ill-educated and unskilled young workers. Nevertheless, according to the author, except in being adapted to the particular literacy and arithmetic levels of the lower-qualified group, “pedagogy largely matches the instructional process of the regular courses” (p.162). Furthermore, these “programmes are also limited by the location of the institution, often on the edge of a city far from the major concentration of the population” (p.162). Mobile units would be another way of resolving the problem of semi- and unskilled youth already engaged in income-generating activities. Corvalán (1985) provides the example of three programmes in Latin America which provide such services – SENA; CEDEP/SENAC; and INCE/IGLESIA – but is not able to draw conclusions from these experiences for further generalizations. McLaughlin (1990) also brings evidence from an ‘advisory service’ experimented in Ghana. First set up by a volunteer and later turned over to the Ghanaian Government, the programme consisted of short but regular visits to the workshops of interested owners by a team of skilled instructors – in this specific case, itinerant mechanical advisers. Their intervention seems to have resulted in some improvement in productivity and profitability to workers, which in turn suggests that the mobile unit mode of skill delivery may be a fairly efficient one. Yet, the same author doubts whether such highly expensive technical extension programmes should be the focus of any broad commitment of resources.

If in terms of their reach, non-formal vocational training programmes in developing

countries tend to be very limited²⁴, from the previous discussion it can be observed that they may be of great impact at the local community level, where it operates. Yet, even the more successful programmes – those perceived as more effective in introducing disadvantaged youth to gainful employment – are vulnerable to the limitations imposed by a fragile supportive environment and the lack of a strong local and national networking in order to better co-ordinate efforts. In addition, Ishumi (1988) draws attention to the fact that non-formal vocational training approaches suffer from a persistent and pervading low social stigma, perceived in their own students' (and student families') views, which not even the most successful programmes seem capable of counteracting.

PART III. Developing a framework for the study and evaluation of non-formal vocational training programmes

It becomes clear from a review of the relevant literature that elements usually considered as contributing to a programme's 'success' also coincide with those usually cited as being particularly 'efficient' or 'effective'. Furthermore, when 'innovations' are discussed in the context of budget-stringent training provisions for disadvantaged youth, they inevitably acquire a 'cost-effective' dimension. In addition, the concept of 'sustainability' seems only to acquire meaning when discussed in the context of successful and innovative strategies. Thus, in this section, 'success', 'innovation' and 'sustainability' will be discussed as possible parameters for the study and evaluation of non-formal vocational training programmes for disadvantaged youth. Even though intimately interconnected, these three elements – success, innovation, sustainability – are discussed separately for the sake of clarity.

1. Features of 'successful' programmes

McLaughlin (1990) believes that the ultimate question one has to ask in order to evaluate the extent to which a programme is successful or not is: "How relevant are these skills to the conditions in real workplaces and how can individuals actually use the skills they have acquired in economically productive ways?" (p.176). Thus, success in the context of non-formal vocational training means to a great extent matching programme services to market demands. Successful programmes can in turn be considered to be those internally efficient (i.e. structured to impart useful skills) and externally effective (i.e. leavers manage to make a living out of skills acquired).

Some authors have already put forth a list of features associated with successful training interventions within the informal sector. King (1988b); Fluitman (1989b), Corvalán (1989) as well as McLaughlin (1990) suggest a complementary set of successful elements which, when put together, make up an ideal-typical set of parameters for assessing the relative success of interventions. The suggested elements have been classified here into analytical categories which range from the macro to the micro level, so as to facilitate the forthcoming analysis.

These elements of 'success', as Fluitman (1989b) states, should not be viewed as adding

²⁴ In 1984, Corvalán (1984) argued that altogether programmes benefited less than 1 per cent of the total number of disadvantaged youth in developing countries.

up to 'standard recipes'. There seems to be some leeway for combining different effective elements and still obtaining a successful outcome. Success would thus depend, to a great extent, on the cohesion of the answers provided to specific questions at different levels.

Macro-Level

1. Preconditions

- a favourable environment, meaning that the net impact of political, economic, social, cultural and other external factors is positive.

Intermediate Level

2. Organizing principles and measures:

- a clear purpose, meaning that interventions address specific needs and problems of a target group;
- market studies of skill demands;
- a long-term perspective of development/'whole-person' approach;
- sensitivity to socio-cultural factors;
- substantial participation (and negotiation) of the intended beneficiaries at all stages of the effort;
- attention given to complementary inputs and possible integration with other interventions; assessing local resources to build upon them.
- Micro-Level

3. Training features

3.1 Design

- flexible design allowing permanent adaptation of training contents and methods of delivery to labour market needs and trainees' needs and interest.

3.2 Instructional aspects: staff, programme and pedagogy

- sound management and delivery by staff who are committed and competent;
- ability of the instructor to conduct a special type of course adapted to the trainees' background and employment prospects;
- relevant curriculum content and teaching methods which are highly participative and combine teaching with production activities;
- parallel inclusion of business notions;
- programme broken down into self-contained units;
- creation of a learning environment in the form of production units typical of the informal sector of the economy.

3.3 Evaluation component

- self-evaluation and group evaluation (to judge trainees personal, professional and social developments to mention a few aspects);
- in-built programme evaluation;
- impact evaluations (assessment of early results and follow-up studies).

3.4 Extension

- follow-up services such as post-training extension services to leavers and 'attachments' or contracted apprenticeships with outside firms;
- programmes replicability and scope for economies of scale.

At the macro level, while anticipating 'the critical role of external constraints', and their potential impact on the outcomes of any intervention, seems to be the first step to be taken in order to avoid later excuses for ineffectiveness, it is also important to ensure that a relatively favourable environment is in place, previous to the setting up of an intervention. Where the basic conditions – which may range from favourable national incentives to the strategic support of local/grass-roots organizations – for setting up training interventions for disadvantaged youth are not in place, these should be previously sought for wherever possible.

At the intermediate level, McLaughlin (1990) pointed out already the importance of limiting the target population to whom training and other services and inputs will be delivered for programme effectiveness. Thus, it seems that it would not be sufficient to devise a programme for 'disadvantaged youth' or 'school drop-outs roaming the city streets', as Fluitman

contends (1989b). The field has to be further narrowed and information should be obtained such as: location, type of economic activity (if any), age, sex, level of education completed, level and type of skills (if any), etc. Adapting interventions to the specific needs and problems of this target group – disadvantaged youth – would entail listening to them so as to have them identify their specific needs, assessing real market opportunities, identifying available resources and analyzing the possibilities of expanding or improving existing training modes (e.g. traditional apprenticeship systems), as well as negotiating priorities.

In fact, awareness of the inherent limitations within training interventions should lead to a promptness in co-ordinating efforts with other macro-structures and diversified services. Fluitman (in Wallenborn, 1989), for instance, contends that training, while often essential, is hardly ever sufficient in dealing with typical informal sector constraints such as, for example, responding to the need for credit programmes (pp.39-40). Thus, networking with other related services and interventions seems of crucial importance in the enhancement of training provisions.

At the micro level, successful training interventions have been said to be those which are flexible and inventive in order to adapt to clients' needs (by providing or upgrading skills, for instance) and demands within the local informal sector. This is usually the task of training managers. According to Fluitman (1989b) they "are directly responsible for the selection of instructors. They motivate staff. They monitor progress. They correct problems" (p.52). Effective trainers should, in turn, be sensitive to social and cultural factors; establish a relationship of trust with trainees; and devote them personal attention. Fluitman (1989b) claims that in this sense, "trainers from within a community possess several advantages over 'outsiders'" (p.51). The author also adds that trainers should preferably be practising what they teach.

Training seems to be usually more effective when it involves 'learning by doing' and 'learning while producing' (Corvalán, 1989:p.26). In the case of disadvantaged young people, Corvalán (1989) argues, however, that the emphasis should not be only "on increasing labour productivity but also on adjusting to a precarious insertion into the labour market; to prepare them for continuous changes in the labour distribution functions, to instill in them the possibility of starting some income-generation activity and to better understand socio-political reality" (p.26). The author underlines that relating learning to labour processes seems to facilitate these goals.

Another area of consensus in the literature is that a meaningful curriculum programme should also include a set of basic business notions besides the specific occupational skill contents. As Fluitman (1989b) claims:

"Training institutions ready to reach out to the informal sector may have to modify such curricula so that 'their' carpenters, for example, learn enough about stock control, costing, marketing and bookkeeping to stay in business" (p.48).

Goodale (1989:60) argues, however, that due to the more critical situation of working women (access to and control of productive resources, role in production processes and participation in decision making is quite different from that of men), training for women should also include skills related to leadership, assertiveness, managing stress and discrimination as well as self-confidence building.

Furthermore, the curriculum programme, according to Fluitman (1989b), should be broken down into smaller, self-contained units. This particular type of programme design has been proved capable of meeting the individual training needs besides saving time and training costs. In relation to training methods, these should contain, the same author emphasizes, visual and oral presentations, with 'hands-on' demonstrations. Ready-made methods should be avoided and only used after the necessary adaptations and translations to the local needs. The author cautions against the use of instructional technologies (computers, video and TVS) in as far as they are still too costly and the results obtained have not been good within the area of training for the informal sector. Finally, it seems that the learning environment should be the closest possible to the real-life conditions trainees are likely to encounter.

In sum, it is likely that, provided the basic conditions are in place, if training responds to trainees' needs and interests as well as to market opportunities, besides being delivered in a 'hands-on' learning environment, which might include a 'production' aspect, non-formal vocational training interventions will be successful in inserting young people into the world of work. Nevertheless, successful programmes usually undergo periodical internal evaluation so as to assess the available provisions, staff performance and trainees' development. Evaluating their own practice seems to be essential for the continuous updating and adaptation of courses. These evaluations may also be useful for devising supportive follow-up services for leavers besides consisting of important material for programme knowledge dissemination.

2. Innovative strategies and approaches

To innovate does not necessarily mean creating new programmes from scratch to serve the needs of disadvantaged youth. Innovating in the area of vocational training, at a time of severe disadvantaged youth unemployment and restricted budgets, may simply mean (i) rethinking existing programmes (as in the case of the vocationalization of school curricula or re-orientation of the training programmes previously discussed); (ii) building creatively on local resources, or (iii) joining forces by combining/co-ordinating complementary services. Below are a few examples of programmes which innovate to the extent that they set up different cost-effective solutions.

An example of innovation within formal structures is the case of the Leguruki schools earlier described (Ishumi, 1988). These parallel vocationalized systems were opened to the more practical and more flexible aspects of non-formal systems that enable youth training-cum-production to respond to the changing needs of the larger socio-economic system. As already discussed, by becoming more flexible to perceived needs, the programme also became internally efficient and externally effective.

The establishment of 'after-hours' non-formal structures within the premises of formal vocational systems and existing training staff, such as the experience in Pakistan previously discussed (McLaughlin, 1990), provides an example of innovating by building upon local – material and human – resources. However, as previously discussed, this concept would need to be better adapted to the needs and interests of disadvantaged youth.

The Undugu School system of placing and guiding trainees through the traditional apprenticeship system would also consist of an innovative approach to the extent that it builds

upon and improves the traditional system of the master and the apprentice in the informal sector. Furthermore, according to King (1988b), when adapted to NGO schemes, the traditional master-apprentice relationship serves a twofold task. It functions both as an arrangement for the transfer of technical knowledge and as a means through which positive attitudes and values are developed in youngsters who usually lack them.

The potential for innovating through networking and co-ordinating efforts seems however to be very large and not sufficiently explored to date. Thus, Goodale (1989:58-59) reports on a study which investigated the extent to which 'marginal workers' within the informal sector had access to training, what measures facilitated entry and whether training was even desirable at all. While the general findings of the study pointed to a mismatch between training provided by national vocational training systems and the needs of informal-sector workers, one specific institution – INACAP in Chile – stood out from the others. According to the author, INACAP courses have shown that it is possible to reach the most disadvantaged workers "provided this goal is explicitly and systematically pursued and that the necessary financial support is forthcoming" (p.59). Among the determining factors the author mentions that:

- Courses were conducted in collaboration with those organizations specifically concerned with 'marginal groups'. These intermediaries provided the organizational structure to reach individual informal-sector workers who were otherwise not easily accessible for training.
- Many trainees received some incentive, usually financial, during the course to compensate for their absence from their enterprise or income-earning activities.
- Training in the technical aspects of the trade was complemented with instruction and counselling in the organizational and managerial aspects of business operation" (p.59).

The author adds that the most striking characteristics of these trades, was the opportunity they offered to set up a business of one's own. This case illustrates the co-ordination of actions between formal and non-formal organizations with the aim of targeting 'marginal workers' within the informal sector. In fact, King (1988b) argues that one way of expanding provision of services is when a national training body develops a collaborative arrangement with one of the NGO programmes. According to this author:

"The attraction of such a relationship is that the national body can find its scarce funding going further than if it was to spend it directly on programmes in the informal sector. The costs can be dramatically reduced because the NGO already has its premises located in the slums, and can call on voluntary contributions and on the commitment of its trainers and grass-roots workers to an extent that would be impossible in the public sector" (pp.274-275).

Therefore, positive results may come about from alliances that attempt to bring together and co-ordinate resources and efforts such as the one illustrated by INACAP. Nevertheless, effective and efficient co-ordination at supra-institutional levels calls for the support of a global, or regional, link organization. These organizations would capture and disseminate insights

obtained at the grass-roots level and could thereby facilitate networking among programmes. King (1988b) claims, however, that there is a lack of umbrella organizations within regions of the developing world which currently play this role. Although he acknowledges the important role played by CINTERFOR in Latin America and CIADFOR and JASPA in Africa, the author argues that these centres are not sufficient to cover the field and to respond to the identified needs. In addition, only a few of these organisms have directed their focus to the area of vocational training of marginal groups.

3. What does 'sustainability' mean in this context?

Considering that non-formal vocational training structures are often fragile, perceived to be second or third choices (Ishumi, 1988) once they offer training to a large sector of the population which has 'failed' public formal education and training opportunities, and that – especially in the case of the NGOs – needs to juggle to make ends meet due to financing constraints, sustainability means becoming more visible and stronger.

Strength in the case of non-formal vocational training programmes could, in turn, be attained through information dissemination and knowledge sharing which would facilitate networking with other complementary programmes, besides assisting programmes in obtaining other private and/or public support as well as national incentives at the macro levels. If on the one hand, over-reliance on governmental assistance does not seem to be the solution in periods when services are being privatized and decentralized; on the other hand, it seems clear that as long as non-formal training programmes are viewed as independent or isolated interventions rather than as powerful elements of a comprehensive approach towards social development, their structures are not being used to their full advantage and their services cannot be expanded to serve a greater number of disadvantaged youth.

Finally, as has been previously discussed, training is but one side of a multi-faceted problem, and sometimes not the ideal solution. Obtaining support and incentives for small-enterprise initiatives of programme leavers through the forms of credit and loans – the so-called 'enabling environment for micro-enterprises' – are as important as acquiring or upgrading skills. And, here again, it could be argued that networking with other programmes and interventions which provide such services seems of crucial importance.

In Box 1, a recent experience with non-formal education in the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is reported to illustrate a successful and innovative programme which is creatively seeking networking strategies to solve the problem of short and mid-term sustainability.

Box I
CEI - Quintino

In the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a previously reforming centre for 600 'delinquent' youths known as FUNABEM, was transformed (in 1½ years) into a professional skill centre – CEI/Centro de Educação Integral – hosting more than 10,300 students in August 1996.

The CEI attracts youths (mostly teenagers) of low-income families (more than 80 per cent of its clientele) from the suburbs which surround the city of Rio de Janeiro. An offering of 62 courses includes training for typists, seamstresses, receptionists, drivers, musicians, mechanics, physical education teachers, to mention a few.

In order to minimize the dependency on the bureaucratic procedures of state-financing (often difficult if not impossible to obtain), the CEI director uses a variety of techniques ranging from private and public-sector donations – e.g. restaurants, hotels, banks, and utility firms – all the way to a percentage of the incomes generated by the students' activities and crafts. Creative solutions were put to work to provide new sources of income for the CEI: an artificial lake was built around a source of water integrating resources from state organizations as well as surrounding private firms, and later transformed into a 'fish and pay' park.

The CEI has been organized in various co-operatives offering their services to other public- or private-sector institutions, besides fulfilling the role of internally supplying the needs of the CEI. It is through such co-operatives that students from the laundry course provide their services to SUDERJ and to a large chain of hotels, the woodcrafting course supplies other state schools with furniture, and the bakery classes provide bread for the 12 cafeterias and restaurants of the CEI as well as for cafeterias of other educational centres in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Objects produced in the crafts, sewing and ceramics classes are sold in the local bazaar.

The CEI has also been successful at creating jobs for its students, helping in their introduction to the job market through an increasing number of training programmes in public and private companies. The immediate success obtained by the CEI-Quintino motivated the creation of other such centres in the State of Rio de Janeiro.

(Source: VEJA Rio, 28 August, 1996)

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to discuss parameters for assessing vocational training provisions for the disadvantaged youth population of developing countries, placing special focus on non-formal – governmental and non-governmental – structures. The suggested parameters for the evaluation of non-formal vocational training programmes have been inferred from a wider discussion on the available training provisions for disadvantaged youth in the developing world and its integration into a more comprehensive approach to social development.

In the first section of this report, the problem of disadvantaged youth's insertion into the world of work has been analyzed within a broader perspective, which takes into account unemployment trends and demographic growth; the limitations of formal educational and parallel vocational training systems as well as the rise and expansion of the informal sector. As has been argued, the problem of disadvantaged youth's unemployment has, in fact, become much more acute in developing countries over the past two decades. The disadvantaged youth unemployment phenomenon in developing countries seems to result from the combined effect of population growth and the incapacity of the formal/modern sector of the labour market to absorb new entrants. Furthermore, authors have been consistently pointing to the school-work mismatch which has been taking place during the past decades. While the conventional school system has been criticized for no longer being able to guarantee graduates wage-employment within the formal sector, and has been said to impact on disadvantaged youth's informal sector activities only through a process of negative selection, parallel vocational training systems have also been considered to be costly and restricted in their reach, since they require the entrants' completion of primary-school grades. Moreover, there is disagreement in the literature on whether the latter should or could be adapted to the needs of the informal sector. The informal or traditional sector of the labour market in developing countries has been described as the only option to open unemployment in the formal sector of rural towns and urban cities. This sector has also been the focus of policies and regulations in so far as it accounts for 30 to 60 per cent of non-agricultural employment in developing countries.

The second part of this report has stressed the changes and adaptations that the labour market as well as the educational and training systems have undergone as a result of the severe crisis that characterized the 1980s. The phenomenon of the 'informalization of the economy' was described as the expansion and growing complexity of the informal sector, now encompassing pre-entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs. The dynamic nature of the informal sector has led educational planners to approach it from a more positive viewpoint. Conventional educational and training systems have been, to a certain extent, undergoing further democratization, through programme re-orientation and system decentralization, so as to better respond to rural and urban informal sector realities, as well as to local youth's needs and interests. Finally, non-formal vocational training programmes – the alternative to the conventional training provisions – have been analyzed in greater depth, in terms of their goals, organizational structures and training modalities. The advantages and disadvantages of non-formal training structures have also been discussed, revealing that, though more flexible than formal structures, they are financially more fragile and seem to lack the appropriate co-ordinating schemes which would make them more effective and viable in the long run.

The third part of this document suggests a framework for the study and evaluation of

non-formal vocational training programmes, which encompasses three major parameters – success, innovation and sustainability. It is argued that these three elements are in fact intimately connected and that it becomes difficult to analyze one without considering the other two. Success features are broken down into three levels – macro, intermediate and micro – to the extent that any action within the area of training provision for disadvantaged youth in developing countries can only be analyzed from an interdependent and integrated perspective. Furthermore, innovative approaches within the context of training for disadvantaged youth seem to coincide with those which creatively build on resources, joint efforts or co-ordinate complementary service. Sustainability acquires, in this specific area, the meaning of visibility and strength. It is argued, in turn, that this may be achieved through a more efficient information system which would disseminate accumulated knowledge, thereby facilitating inter-institutional and intersectoral co-ordination. Finally, the importance of a supportive environment, such as the possibility of programme leavers obtaining loans or credit for starting up a small business, has also been emphasized as it is a recurrent theme in the literature.

Therefore, it seems that non-formal vocational training programmes are essentially dependent on a set of comprehensive strategies at the macro level, and on supportive approaches (also referred to as the 'enabling environment for micro enterprises') at the intermediate level, which simultaneously concern government authorities, local communities (and disadvantaged youth) as well as programme organizers. At the same time, as Blaug (1973:p.13) contended over two decades ago, "the doctrine of general inter-dependence – everything depends on everything else – can become a perfect excuse for doing nothing." Thus, the same author adds that: "there are spheres of relative autonomy; if this were not so, piecemeal improvement in any one direction would be doomed at the start." In this sense, training also is but a piecemeal strategy, though an important part of a complex whole which needs to be better understood, analyzed and assessed. Meaningful improvement in the area of non-formal vocational training programmes for disadvantaged youth could thus start with a closer examination of what provisions have been made available to this specific population, followed by analysis of: (i) programme aspects which have proved to be more or less successful; (ii) strategies and approaches which stand out as particularly innovative in this area and, finally, (iii) the means through which the necessary support has been obtained.

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