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Learning for life and work : GEFOP contribution to the World Development Report 2007

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FOREWORD

GEFOP is a group of vocational training experts set up by the AFD. It brings together vocational training researchers, managers and practitioners from Europe, Africa and Asia, as well as training specialists from international organisations.

The contribution to the 2007 World Development Report, which has been produced and jointly approved by the group of experts, draws on both the direct expertise, theory and practice of the various members of GEFOP, and the conclusions of various European studies referred to in the contribution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Priority 1: vocational training should be considered a first chance for acquisition of knowledge as well as for professional and social integration in all countries

Too often, vocational training is seen as a “help bring young people back” when the basic education system has failed (the notion of giving a second chance), or as a top-up to the basic knowledge base young people will need, to help prepare them for the immediate needs of the world of work (the notion of continuous adaptation or readaptation to a flexible and constantly changing labour market).

For GEFOP, it is vital to move away from this view of vocational training as a means of “recycling those who have failed”, towards one where it is perceived as a first chance, in other words as an educational option which can provide young people with a maximum set of durable achievements in terms of literacy, basic knowledge and lifelong learning skills.

All education schemes, however general they are in nature, need to help young people enter the world of work and acquire the human, social and cultural capital they need in order to be able to succeed in their personal, public and professional life. Vocational training has a specific purpose, which is to improve skills related to technologies and the work-related development of this capital.

Priority 2: the aim for developing countries should be to promote ways for young people in the informal economy to have access to jobs and occupational skills, in cooperation with all of the stakeholders concerned

The informal economy, notably in sub-Saharan African countries, provides 80% of existing jobs and helps 90% of young people coming out of the education system to find work. It is therefore impossible just to pursue the limited strategy of adapting the existing technological and vocational education system. It is even more unacceptable to continue investing massively in formal training which only helps a small minority of young people into work, and to neglect ways of providing young people in the informal sector with skills training. A total revolution and overhaul of the mindset is needed. This is based on two major observations:

- The contents and methods of education in training establishments are barely if at all adapted to the skills needed by young employees in small and very small firms from the informal economy. Thus, they turn to existing traditional forms of apprenticeship or can alternatively go to private training colleges, which are not always up to the job. This inequality of access goes against the principle of equity recognised by all international organisations dealing with education and training.

- Existing traditional learning and skills training systems, in spite of their organisational weaknesses in providing theory-based approach to learning, have a role to play in providing effective and vital job and skills training, which is currently neither fully-exploited nor recognised. Changing these systems so that they start to offer appropriate training paths is the only way to enable the vast majority of young people starting their work experience in the informal economy to acquire the general, technical, behavioural and social skills they need, in order to move gradually from a job they do just to survive into one that will provide them with a reasonable subsistence level and enhance their financial and professional circumstances. The move, in certain countries, from traditional apprenticeship to dual-type apprenticeship provides an example of how, with the active involvement of the stakeholders concerned, one can build on work achievements in the informal sector in order to enhance and develop them.

Along the lines of schemes run by some African Training Funds, notably sub-Saharan ones, and certain technical assistance programmes, it is time for the efforts of national officials (public authorities and social partners) and donors to focus on the possibility of introducing organised training schemes to cater for the needs of those working in the traditional and informal economy, and especially the very many young people who work without any guarantee of a stable revenue or recognised employee status.

Priority 3: efforts to have a higher rate of young people go on to secondary education should not be made to the detriment of basic education

The priority given to post-primary education in the discussions on proposals for the 2007 World Development Report should take two major points into consideration.

- Firstly, the fact that, in spite of the undeniable progress made in the last decade regarding access to school, the objective of all children finishing primary school is still far from being reached. In most countries, no more than half of any given year-group do so. Moreover, the quality of teaching is still poor because of large class sizes, and splitting them in two reduces the number of school periods for each

child. There are also problems related to the level of the teachers and the language in which teaching is carried out (national and international languages). In this regard, closer attention must be paid to improving quality than in the past, and this must go hand in hand with continued efforts to ensure universal education.

- It must also be taken into account that the numbers of young people in secondary and higher education have proportionally increased more rapidly than those in primary education in the last few years. This tendency is becoming more marked. The political priority given to the primary sector has not been detrimental to the other levels of education, but it has been insufficiently backed up by extra funding or an increase in the number of classes opened. In other words, the continued development of secondary education, to the detriment of basic education, will lead straight to an economic and social dead-end, because secondary education mainly benefits the better-off levels of society, where children are already in school. It is not so beneficial to poorer sections of the population.

The vast majority of young people go directly from basic education to a job in the informal economy (with an almost compulsory passage via traditional apprenticeship or on the job training). This fact therefore suggests that the development of training through post-school apprenticeship should be topped-up with a form of pre-apprenticeship, which would be integrated into basic schooling.

The stress given to these three priorities in no way detracts from the importance attached to the other points and proposals made in the attached text containing GEFOP's overall contribution.

It merely highlights the observations and convictions underlying this contribution: it is urgent and necessary, for the public authorities as well as for international donors, to reorientate their strategies and financial allocations towards vocational training systems that would give opportunities for professional and social integration to the great majority of youth, now working in precarious conditions in the informal economy.

INTRODUCTION

Education and training for young people is a vital investment for all countries, both to ensure the individual and professional success of young people themselves, and to provide countries with the knowledge and skills base they

need for their future development. This investment is of strategic importance in both developing and developed countries. However, the extent of the challenge facing different countries depends on their level of development.

1. Learning in order to acquire both a professional and a social identity

Looking at the situations of young people in transition between school and the world of work, it can be seen that

their access to jobs will largely affect their social integration.

1.1. A massive shift towards the informal economy in developing countries

Structural adjustment policies in developing countries have led to job cuts in the formal economy or they have at least hindered the creation of new ones. This has limited young peoples' opportunities in the formal labour market. Only those with a high level of education and training are able to integrate the formal sector. The others have no alternative but to find a job or activity in the informal economy. When young people start working in the crafts and trade sectors in urban areas or in agriculture in rural areas, they are held back in the traditional social

system. They become part of an economy based on survival and subsistence rather than on growth and production. The informal economy does have a role to play as a cushion in society in that it ensures that young people do not find themselves without any occupation at all. However, it cannot fulfil this role for long if it does not give them a chance to gradually work towards a real job or acquire professional skills that are not just based on the replication of existing techniques and working relationships.

1.2. A very different transition process in developed countries

In developed countries, education and training for young people is primarily oriented towards giving access to the labour market. The speed of this access and the form it takes (length of time spent looking for a first job, suitability of this job for the level and qualifications of the candidate, the degree of job security, or lack of it, the nature of the contract, and so on) broadly depends on a young person's level of qualification and social standing at the outset. This tends to be discriminatory, because labour market access will have an impact on the person's social integration and the nature of his professional life. In developed economies, this is because the labour market is a key factor for young people when they are making the transition into adult life. It is effectively what determines their social identity, around which all other aspects of life are structured. This notion of the

labour market having a primary impact on social identity explains why high unemployment among less-qualified young people in OECD countries makes them feel socially excluded and can lead them to join marginal or revolutionary movements.

Although the nature of labour market access may vary according to countries' different levels of development, economic globalisation is having an impact on the ultimate purpose of education and training everywhere. They have increasingly taken on a wider remit than just helping people into the labour market and now help young people make their first steps towards social integration, independence and responsibility, so that they can work collegially with others and interact smoothly within interpersonal and professional networks.

2. Meeting the challenge of providing young people with a minimum skills and knowledge base

All countries are confronted with the need to provide their young people with a knowledge and skills base so that they are not just equipped for getting a job, but are also capable of maintaining and developing their ability to acquire new job skills throughout their working lives and, more importantly, to find their place in society. Job skills cannot be acquired without social skills, which means that the knowledge and skills base must not only help young people to enter the labour market, but must also enable them to evolve within it

with the highest possible degree of autonomy, personal initiative and ability to cooperate with others. Under the Lisbon Strategy¹, and in the wake of the OECD report², the European Union has identified a number of key skills needed for meeting three fundamental aspects of life: cultural capital, meaning lifelong personal fulfilment and development; social capital, meaning skills which enable citizens to be active in society; and human capital, meaning individuals' ability to obtain a decent job on the labour market.

2.1. Meeting the challenges in developing countries

In developing countries, acquisition of the skills and knowledge base means first and foremost being able to complete primary education. In spite of the undeniable progress made over the last decade regarding access to education, the objective of enabling all children to finish primary school is far from being attained, and access to lower secondary school remains the privilege of a minority. Moreover, drop-out and leaving rates bode ill for young peoples' futures and have a big impact on their future careers. A recent statistical study carried out in the seven capitals of West Africa clearly shows that the level of education attained by young people greatly determines their career path.³ While public sector employees on average will have spent 11.3 years at school, those in the private sector will have spent 8.2 years, and those employed in the informal economy, which accounts for 76% of jobs, will have only been to school for an average of 3.5 years.

On this issue, the Dakar Forum of May 2005 concluded that the economic and social advantages of basic education can only be reaped if schooling allows young people to obtain durable knowledge in terms of literacy, and this supposes that each new generation of children finishes primary school⁴. The report also concludes that extending universal education to the first few years of secondary school is justified largely by the same arguments as for primary education.

¹ European Commission (2004), Implementation of the "Education & Training 2010" work programme, Key competencies for lifelong learning, European reference framework.

² OECD (2001d), Knowledge and Skills for Life. First results of the PISA 2000 survey, Paris, OECD.

³ STATECO (2005), Méthodes statistiques et économiques pour le développement et la transition, n° 99.

⁴ UNESCO (2005), Education for all: paving the way for action, Report presented to the Dakar Forum.

In developing countries, post-primary education and training is mostly only recognised as such when it is formally part of secondary education – whether general, technical or vocational – and leads to formal recognised qualifications. Quite apart from the fact that such education is often of only average or even poor quality, it only constitutes a very small part of the way knowledge and skills are acquired by young people in these countries. Various studies⁵ have shown that traditional apprenticeships and on-the-job training are the

most important types of training for young people looking for a job, whatever their level of formal education, because only these types of training allow them to acquire the professional, social and behavioural skills they need to work in the informal economy. Everyone agrees that the types of training found in the informal economy could be improved or better used. However, they are not advertised as paths which young people should explore and make the most in order to access a good career and decent social conditions.

2.2. Meeting the challenges in developed countries

Two observations can be made further to a broad look at the development of education and training systems in developed countries.

The first observation is that all these countries have set a minimum knowledge base for young people to attain, which corresponds to the level they should have reached when they have completed lower secondary school. This increase in educational capital, to which developing countries aspire, will also require greater capacity in terms of existing human, material and financial capital if given year-groups are to be educated to the required level. It also requires that those in charge of the education system appreciate that below a certain level of education, young people will have no real social or job opportunities.

The second observation also highlights the shortfall in educational levels attained in developed countries. Firstly, too many young people leave after the first few years of secondary school without any recognised qualifications. Under the Lisbon Strategy, the European Union has asked for each member State to commit itself to reducing the number of young people leaving school early to less than 10% of a given year-group before 2010.⁶ Secondly, even young people who leave school with a recognised qualification have not acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for everyday life and work, and they have great difficulty entering the labour market. Given these shortcomings, developed countries, particularly in Europe, introduced post-

school vocational training schemes over twenty years ago. They are based on close cooperation between public authorities, the social partners, sector bodies and companies, and are designed to help young people make up for their lack of preparation for the world of work⁷. Such training is supposed to prepare young people as well as possible for their future occupation and/or job, but it more generally aims to give them a practical introduction to the wider knowledge of economic and social culture they will need in the labour market.

These observations show that the content and methods of secondary education are most often ill-adapted to the needs of young people and present-day society. Urgent measures should be taken in order to improve what is on offer and raise the profile of vocational education and training as a means of getting a job and learning to work with initiative and enterprise⁸.

⁵ Birks, S., Fluitman, F., et al, Skills (1994), acquisition in micro-enterprises: Evidence from West Africa, OECD-World Bank-ILO.

French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000), Les apprentissages en milieu urbain, Formation professionnelle dans le secteur informel en Afrique.

⁶ Commission of the European Communities (2002), European benchmarks in education and training: follow-up to the Lisbon European Council, Com 629 final.

⁷ Walther R. (2005), Financing Vocational Training, AFD.

⁸ UNESCO (2005), World Data on Education.

3. Considering vocational training as a “first chance” for education and employment

Too often, vocational training is seen as a second choice or last chance for young people when the various educational paths they have taken have not helped them find a job or take their part in society. However, vocational training is not just an option when the educational system has failed to give young people the skills and knowledge base necessary for their integration. Neither is it simply a means of preparing young people for the immediate needs of the world of work, teaching them only the actions and behaviour expected in the workplace or for a given job. Nor is vocational training just a good means for preparing young people for entry into an increasingly flexible and less and less regulated labour market, and for helping

them gradually adapt to the new economic and social conditions of labour market access.

Vocational training is above all one of the possible paths young people can take through the education system. It is therefore an integral part of the effort which must be made to give them a maximum base of durable knowledge in terms of literacy, basic knowledge and lifelong learning skills. It is thus regrettable that the debate on education for all tends to neglect the part which can be played by vocational training in literacy, both for young people who have not been to primary school, and for adults. In effect, “the lack of literacy is not only a gap in Education for All, it is also obstructs the reduction of poverty”⁹.

3.1. Refocusing vocational training in developing countries

In developing countries, the primary issue is to develop vocational training which allows the vast majority of young people coming into the labour market after working in the informal economic sector to acquire the general, technical, behavioural and social skills they need in order to move gradually from a job they do just to survive into one that will provide them with a reasonable subsistence level and enhance their financial and professional circumstances. This overall goal has several consequences.

- First of all there is a need to move away from the current situation in which vocational training for young people is almost always the poor relation of education, in spite of the development of Training Funds to finance it. Although dual learning schemes are increasingly being developed with encouragement and support from various donors, few countries have made them a national policy, and they are

only just starting to be introduced (e.g., in Benin). Technical education still exists almost everywhere, but it does not meet economic and social needs and is of poor quality “technical colleges are not providing meaningful job-oriented practical training due to a lack of teacher motivation, poor planning of the disciplines that are taught, resource constraints, and a complete separation between the colleges and the world of work”¹⁰.

- It must be borne in mind that the contents and methods of education in these establishments are barely if at all adapted to the skills needed by young employees in small and very small firms. They thus only have access to existing traditional forms of apprenticeship or can alternatively

⁹ World Bank (2002), Findings, Human Development, n° 209.

¹⁰ World Bank Report quoted by Fluitman F.(2002), “Working, but not well”, ILO International Training Center.

go to private training colleges, which are not always up to the job. This inequality of access goes against the principal of equity recognised by all international organisations dealing with education and training.

The consequence of this state of affairs is that vocational training systems need to be reviewed in developing countries. The goal should be to support initiatives taken by

various national and international bodies aimed at training young people and adults in the informal economy and to reorganise vocational and technological education training to take account of the skill needs of all stakeholders in the economy. However, a broad review of vocational training cannot take place without the involvement of the various political, economic and social actors concerned.

3.2. Raising the profile of vocational training in developed countries

In developed countries, secondary-school level vocational training – unlike university-level vocational training – still suffers from lack of esteem within the educational system, in spite of efforts made for more than twenty years to make it an attractive option for success. It is always believed to provide knowledge and skills of little importance, in contrast to the respectability of general academic education.

The under-esteemed image of secondary-level vocational training stems from its difficulty in freeing itself from what could be called its “original sin”: that of always having been introduced as a means of directing poorly-performing pupils towards the labour market, or as a means of helping under-skilled and socially-excluded young people and adults into work by providing them with a second, third or fourth chance¹¹. This early disadvantage has today given rise, in different ways in different countries, to opinions and pronouncements which all stress the importance of developing vocational education training for both and economic and social purposes:

- On one hand, it should provide young people with the skills companies need and help them to find jobs quickly;
- On the other hand, it should not just be limited to providing young people with skills tailored to the immediate needs of the labour market, but should also endow them with the social and human capital they need in order to progress and remain in control of their own career path.

Such a change of approach, which is linked to the introduction of vocational training schemes combined with work experience and the skills permitting entry into the labour market at any level (from workers’ qualifications to those of

engineers and managers), is essential for developed countries if they are to acquire the human resources they need in order to face the challenges of the knowledge-based economy. It represents a shift away from the practice whereby educational systems reserve high-flying options (which are remote from economic and business life) for the elite, and just equip the “less gifted” with the skills they need for immediate entry into the labour market. It substitutes the notion of differentiation with one of just categorisation, requiring those in higher education to learn how to cope in the job market, and ensuring that those at lower levels of education have the social and cultural skills they need for work. The most positive sign of this change of approach is the fact that several countries are currently adopting systems for accrediting prior learning, which makes it possible to obtain diplomas and certificates through the validation of professional experience alone¹².

In developing countries, as in the developed world, there is a common consensus that vocational training should no longer be considered as offering just a “second chance”. This is because it is necessary to meet the challenge of helping young people to acquire the minimum human, social and cultural capital they need in order to find a good job quickly and become fully-fledged citizens. This is just as important for young people as for the economy and society as a whole.

¹¹ AFD, *op cit*.

¹² This is notably the case in France, thanks to the Social Modernisation Act (Loi de modernisation sociale) of 17 January 2001, which enables all young people and adults with at least three years’ professional experience to have their skills accredited via a qualification of the same level as that given by the education system.

4. Reconsidering training objectives and opportunities in developing countries

This analysis of the current situation regarding policies set up to facilitate the transition from primary school to lower and upper secondary school does directly give

consideration to hypotheses relating to the maximum quantitative and qualitative development of post-primary education.

4.1. Increasing the rates of transition into secondary education must not adversely affect basic education

The priority given to development of post-primary education firstly comes up against the problem that, in spite of the undeniable progress made in the last decade regarding access to school, the objective of all children finishing primary school is still far from being reached. In most countries, no more than half of any given year-group do so. Moreover, the quality of teaching is still poor because of large class sizes, and splitting them in two reduces the number of school periods for each child. There are also problems related to the level of the teachers and the language in which teaching is carried out (national and international languages). In this regard, closer attention must be paid to improving quality than in the past, and this must go hand in hand with continued efforts to ensure universal education.

It must also be taken into account that the number of young people in secondary and higher education has proportionally

increased more rapidly than those in primary education in the last few years. This tendency is becoming more marked. The political priority given to the primary sector has not been detrimental to the other levels of education, but it has been insufficiently backed up by extra funding or an increase in the number of classes opened. It should perhaps even be feared that the funds absorbed by developing access to secondary education will prevent this objective from being achieved. The challenge of how to divide public resources between different levels of education is not just economic and budgetary. It is also important an equity issue. The intense pressure to go on studying mainly benefits the better-off levels of society, where children are already in school. It is not so beneficial to poorer sections of the population. In other words, the continued development of secondary education to the detriment of basic education will lead straight to an economic and social dead-end.

4.2. General education should not be developed to the detriment of vocational training and education the informal sector

Contrary to the basic premise underlying the current approach to managing the transition to post-primary education, thinking about a child's future job cannot be put off until some point beyond primary and lower secondary education, but must begin during it. The introduction of a national policy for dual apprenticeship (combining theory and practice, with employee status) after lower secondary school, as has been done in Benin, provides only part of the answer. The advantage is that it offers young people real vocational training rooted in the real world and also encourages skilled workers to raise their technical competence levels. However, it bears no relation to the content of basic education and is aimed at young people who, even if they must have reached a certain level of education, have mostly left school some years before beginning their apprenticeship. This problem creates a risk that knowledge gained in school will be lost, and that young people might be left on the streets or without any real status, as is the case with traditional apprenticeships.

The development of post-school training through apprenticeship must be complemented with a form of pre-apprenticeship, which would be integrated into primary education. The issue is how to define the precise form this would take, which means finding answers to the following four questions:

- At which point in basic education should the difference between curricula leading to a job and curricula leading to further secondary studies be made? The end of primary school or the end of lower secondary school?
- How can an introduction to technical subjects be provided in the primary school curriculum by widening the knowledge covered or making changes to the way children are taught?
- Finally, what sort of opportunities can be offered to young people who leave school before they can start an apprenticeship with employee status?

Developing countries are developing technical and vocational education for the sorts of jobs which are in decline in the formal economy and public administration. They must develop post-primary education which takes account of the fact that the number of young people coming out of the higher levels of the education system (and higher education in particular) is much higher than the number of available jobs¹³. They must also take account of the low levels of qualifications needed doing existing jobs and the under-qualification of those who occupy them. Along the lines of schemes run by some African Training Funds, notably sub-Saharan ones, and certain technical assistance programmes¹⁴, it is time for the efforts of national officials and donors to focus on the possibility of introducing training measures to cater for the needs of those working in the traditional and informal economy, and especially the very many young people who work without any guarantee of a stable revenue or recognised employee status.

- What sort of skills and knowledge base is necessary in order to help young people into traditional or informal employment, with a view to improving such work, both in terms of status and the level of the professional skills they will have? (Informal employment concerns up to 90% of young people in certain countries).

¹³ UNESCO (2005), Education for all: paving the way for action, Report presented to the Dakar Forum.

¹⁴ GTZ (2004), Projects/Programmes aimed at Economic Improvement and Poverty Alleviation through non-formal training in Sub-Sahara Africa.

5. Accrediting vocational knowledge and skills and raising one's profile

Public authorities and the stakeholders concerned attach much importance to prior knowledge and skills, which is reflected in current accreditation and certification systems. They encourage young people to exploit their cultural, social and human capital and thus increase their chances of entering the labour market and taking up their place in society.

Such systems are common to all developed and developing countries in the field of formal education and vocational training. However, practices vary considerably as regards whether or not experience to be accredited has been previously learnt in the informal economy, and whether or not the training is based on a structured form of learning.

5.1. Acknowledging work experience and the value of skills acquired in the informal economy

The so-called informal economy's position outside the structured activity of the formal economy naturally excludes the possibility of recognising the prior experience of the young people who work in it, even in countries where schemes for accrediting prior experience have been introduced. Experience suggests that the "quality" and skills of workers in the informal economy are easily comparable to those of workers in the formal economy. The only difference is the economic and financial relationship between the "enterprises" and their clients.

It would thus be useful to look more closely at how to use certification as a means of acknowledging both the activities of the informal economy themselves, and the people, especially young people, who carry them out. This is all the more important because several studies have shown that the introduction of schemes for recognising prior experience can be structurally beneficial for occupational sectors, all the more so when they permit the acquisition of a formal diploma or qualification. The current conversion of traditional apprenticeship into dual apprenticeship in many sub-Saharan countries is part of this trend towards the recognition of prior knowledge and skills acquired by young people in the informal economy.

Efforts to find a way of accrediting the prior skills of workers in the informal economy should, among other things, shed light on how their prior experience can be taken into account along the same lines as that acquired in the formal economy. They should also help determine how training schemes for workers in the informal economy can be introduced alongside those of the formal economy, and, lastly, how people working in the informal economy can be given rights comparable to those which exist in the formal economy (recognition of employee status, access to on-the-job skills training in the same way as employees in modern economy have, recognition of a product's "quality", etc.).

Bearing in mind the symbolic value of certification as a third party's confirmation of the quality of the individual's experience and potential, it can undoubtedly help promote increased esteem for the experience of people and work in the informal economy. This would offer a means of combating their exclusion, which keeps them on the margins of society, and of enhancing the cultural and economic ties they are developing with it. It would provide a way of introducing training measures tailored to the specific circumstances of the sector, which would give a boost to enterprises working just for survival and subsistence purposes and help them adopt a growth-oriented

approach. This would give the very large majority of young people who gain their first work experience in such enter-

prises a chance of developing their professional skills in a more structured and accepted manner.

5.2. Certifying the level of skills rather than the level of qualification

In the knowledge-based economy, it is becoming increasingly evident that the growth capacity of small, medium and large enterprises – and consequently their ability to create wealth and jobs – primarily “depends on the skills of their human resources ... and which is above all based on the quality of knowledge and skills.”¹⁵ It is also increasingly considered that a qualified workforce constitutes the most valuable part of a company's capital and the source of its competitive advantage. It is therefore right that vocational training should be presented to all young people as a means of reaching any level of qualification,

from operative to engineer, and as a good way of facilitating access to the labour market by effectively linking knowledge with skills, know-how with innovation, and intellectual effort with work experience. Existing certification systems often tend to put more emphasis on young people's level of qualification than their ability to solve problems and combine technical, practical and procedural know-how efficiently on the job. Certification will help young people enter the labour market more rapidly if it does more to validate their professional skills in relation to the qualifications required and jobs offered.

¹⁵ Commissariat Général au Plan (2003), La France dans l'économie du savoir : pour une dynamique collective, La Documentation Française.

6. Involving the stakeholders concerned in the management of vocational training schemes

The transition of young people from school to the labour market cannot be considered independently

from the role played by the various stakeholders involved.

6.1. Strengthening the management partnership between public authorities and the social partners

The social partners (representatives of employers and trade unions) are key stakeholders. From an analysis of the development of European training systems, it clearly emerges that, as from the time when youth unemployment grew sharply in the 1980s, the social partners have helped public authorities to develop post-school job training and dual training systems combining periods of training at college with in-company work experience placements. The social partners are nowadays still involved in identifying the skill needs of young people who are in training or looking for a job, as well as those of people already in the labour market. Furthermore, the national reform programmes for growth and jobs set up by European countries as part of the effort to coordinate EU social policies require that they contribute to, and provide their opinion, on the design and delivery of priority measures for helping young people into the labour market¹⁶.

Furthermore, in both developing and developed countries, the social partners are increasingly considered as public

authorities' key partners in the design, management and evaluation of training and job-start schemes. In European countries, they sit on the range of national, regional and sectoral vocational training boards, as well as the various committees which exist in the employment policy field. In developing countries, Training Funds set up and run by national authorities – mostly with technical assistance and help from international donors, including the World Bank – involve representatives of employers and employees and often crafts and farming bodies in the design, delivery and management of continuing training for young apprentices. Other than helping to provide a better understanding of economic and labour market needs, which makes job training schemes more efficient, this management partnership approach ensures that job-start schemes are run fairly, in accordance with the recommendations of the 2006 World Development Report. It actively promotes complementarity between the need to achieve economic growth and social equity¹⁷.

¹⁶ National Reform Programmes for Growth and Jobs: Germany, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, United Kingdom, etc.

¹⁷ The World Bank (2006), Equity and Development, World Development Report.

6.2. Helping developing countries to develop a training market tailored to young people's job-start and skills development needs

One of the big challenges developing countries face when they try to develop efficient measures to help young people enter the labour market is their lack of expertise. This concerns how to assess skills needed by micro, small and large firms, how to identify the skills and strategic occupations likely to boost the development of the modern and traditional economies, and, lastly, how to structure the market so that it can offer appropriate training and job-start opportunities.

All attempts in sub-Saharan African countries to structure

this market just via deregulation or competitive tendering have demonstrated the inefficiency of such solutions, with time being lost due to bidding procedures which are ill-adapted to their situation¹⁸. Rather than insisting on alternative proposals which fix the type of tender in advance (private, non-governmental, associative or public), it would be better to have a principle whereby tenders will only be deemed to be acceptable if they are based on a public/private partnership involving the social partners and incorporate expertise as close as possible to the needs and requirements of national, sectoral or regional organisations.

¹⁸ The imposition of tendering rules on FODEFCA, the Bénin Training Fund, for selecting training providers which often do not exist or, when they do, have little experience in the field concerned, illustrates how inefficient the exclusive option of competitive tendering can be.

7. Developing means of financing which take account of real vocational training issues

From the analysis of financing policies and practices developed in vocational training, it emerges that most ways of financing schemes for helping young people make the transition from school into the labour market are subject to

co-financing rules, with contributions from public authorities, companies and individuals. However, it is not certain that the funding burden is shared as equitably as it should be, in either developing or developed countries.

7.1. The need for developing countries to draw clear lines of responsibility between public authorities, companies and individuals

Analysis of existing financing systems in most of developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, shows that public authorities finance the formal part of vocational education (which takes young people on to only 20% of existing jobs)¹⁹, whereas training through traditional apprenticeship is financed by craftsmen and the families of the young people themselves. Pilot schemes aimed at introducing dual-type training are paid in the same way, but with extra help from Training Funds (and ultimately through vocational training taxes paid by companies in the modern sector) and from international donors, who provide either the money or technical assistance.

It is clear that this shortfall between the financing available and the amount needed for training all young people so that they have a minimum knowledge and skills base can no longer be allowed to persist. The State and companies' respective shares of financing must be redistributed.

- To achieve the Millennium Goal of universal education and manage the necessary flow of children into upper secondary school and then university, it will be necessary to provide the great majority of young people with some vocational training after primary school. Policy decisions on how to achieve this cannot be left to existing Training Funds alone, and even less so to modern companies, whose taxes

contribute to the funds while also being partly kept back by the State. Analysis of the situation shows that countries have every interest in developing a national dual apprenticeship policy, and that the public authorities must not leave this to be financed by the private sector alone.

- While the financial involvement of companies and trainees in vocational training is justified in terms of the benefits they will reap from it, financing of initial vocational training cannot be their sole responsibility, as the cost would be excessive. The use of State funds seems unavoidable. This increase in the State's responsibility must be accompanied by a review of the role of technical education, which is a large beneficiary of State funds but too inefficient. Moreover, such public financing responds to the need for equity, bearing in mind that secondary and higher education is generally free. This means that the worst-off families are treated unequally, because they have to support their children's efforts to acquire job skills, in contrast to well-off families who do not have to provide such support.

¹⁹ Fluitman F. (2002), "Working, but not well", ILO International Training Center.

7.2. Introducing co-financing incentives in developed countries

Paradoxically, financing systems in developed countries are characterised by a high level of public-sector involvement in initial vocational training, dual-type and apprenticeship training systems, although for the latter two types, companies cover the costs of work placements, on-the-job training and apprentices' wage costs. Contributions by individuals and their families are everywhere minimal, unless they have opted for a training scheme which has not been approved or subsidised by the State. In general, public authorities do their utmost to cover the cost of enabling young people to acquire the skills and knowledge base they need for the labour market.

To tackle unemployment among young people and support their efforts to enter or return to work, a growing number of countries are beginning to establish co-financing incentives to encourage them to increase their knowledge and skills base. These include the introduction of training vouchers and subsidised learning accounts, which enable them to learn a language, acquire computer or management skills, set up their own business, have their work experience validated or raise their level of qualification²⁰. Even though the use of such measures has still not been properly evaluated in terms of their impact on the beneficiaries, it seems clear that public authorities have mainly introduced them in order

to motivate individuals to take on responsibility for their own skills development and career path, and to encourage them to invest their own time and money. In all countries, this motivation can be achieved by simplifying procedures for the groups targeted (facilitating funding applications and payments) in order to remove obstacles which could discourage them from training. It can also be achieved by offering courses (such as languages, computing and new technologies) which give training a good image and enable individuals to learn about new forms of information and communication. Lastly, such motivation can be achieved by ensuring that requests for training are treated individually, which gives applicants the feeling that they are in control of their future career.

The development of such incentive measures can only be beneficial. They help young people become stakeholders in their job training and encourage the development of a life-long approach to learning. However, the relevance and quality of incentive measures will depend on the fulfilment of a number of pre-requisites (availability of information and guidance systems, existence of clear information on the quality and efficiency of training offered, monitoring and mapping of individual training and career paths, etc.), without which they cannot meet their intended purpose.

²⁰ OECD (2003), Mechanisms for the Co-finance of Lifelong Learning. ELAP, European Learning Account Partners Network, A Catalogue of Recent Lifelong Learning Co-Financing Initiatives.