



**Fifth International Conference on Adult
Education
(CONFINTEA V)**

The Economics and Financing of Adult Learning

Report of CONFINTEA V

Edited by

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CONFINTEA V Reports

CONFINTEA V reports contain the contributions to various themes on adult learning presented during the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg, in July 1997. The views and opinions expressed in this volume are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UNESCO or the UIE. The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this review do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO or UIE concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.



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Introduction

Investing in Human Development

Madhu Singh

This report brings together five major papers dealing with different aspects in the economics and financing of adult learning. The UNESCO-PROAP four country impact study examines the social benefits of adult learning in developing countries. Roy Carr-Hill discusses the costs and benefits for Over-Serviced and developing countries. Ronald Pugsley shows how these social benefits are being taken into account in policy decisions about the financing of adult learning in the United States of America. Jan van Raven's paper focuses on future trends in adult learning policies which, he says, will need to shift from financing of learning inputs to recognising learning outputs or competencies, as these are likely to be among the hallmarks of the knowledge society. The paper by David Atchoarena examines the wider question of organising training systems, particularly with regard to the allocation of roles between the various social partners. All papers look at how alternative approaches to financing, given costs and benefit, can make adult learning a reality for all citizens.

All five papers were originally presented during the workshop on theme nine, "The Economics of Adult Learning: The Role of the Government," held during UNESCO's Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) in 1997 in Hamburg. This meeting marked a turning point in the conception of adult learning. The conference organised by UNESCO and in particular the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg, mobilised the co-operation and support of Member States and of a wide range of partners, including UN organisations, governmental and non-governmental organisations and the private sector to discuss strategies for making adult learning a reality for all citizens and deal with different aspects of financing adult learning.

According to the Conference's key document, **The Agenda for the Future**, which contains a series of more specific and detailed proposals with respect to each of the 10 themes of the Conference, "*The costs of adult learning must be seen in relation to the benefits that derive from reinforcing the competence of adults. ... The education of adults contributes to their self-reliance and personal autonomy, to the exercise of basic rights and to increased productivity and labour efficiency. It is also positively translated into higher levels of education and well-being of future generations. Adult*

education, being a human development and productive investment, should be protected from the constraints of structural adjustment."(p. 26.)

There are at least three key issues with regard to the economics and financing of adult learning: What are the social and economic benefits of adult education? What different mechanisms are there of its financing (Who pays for what, and who pays how much)? and how can the of private and social benefits be shared in relation to how costs are shared? Mechanisms for funding adult learning are of central importance, particularly in a time of growing constraints on public and private resources. But they can also create incentives and reflect responsibilities.

Changing goals of adult learning

Today more resources are being allocated to adult learning than ever before. This is largely due to outside forces. For instance, global competition is creating a need for adults to remain competitive. Also, increasing geographical and occupational mobility is creating a corresponding demand for language and upgrading courses for immigrants. At the same time there is broad consensus emerging in many countries that government has an important role to allocate more resources for providing disadvantaged populations equal access to lifelong education.

All these issues are having a profound impact on the goals, aims and the nature of adult learning. The major goals of adult learning now include preventing and combating unemployment, promoting a smooth transition from school to work, social inclusion and social cohesion. Adult learning is characterised by a shift from supply-driven to demand-driven organisations and economies. There is a shift from education to learning. Learning is a process 'extending from cradle to grave'.

There is also a shift in thinking regarding the distribution of responsibilities for adult learning over various actors: the state, the education sector, the firm, the learner and the NGOs.

The new discourse: lifelong learning, learning society and the knowledge society

The economics of formal education has until now been focused on the cost side, the focus has been on formal learning, leading to certification, and based on criteria of selection and exclusion. These approaches are unlikely to survive unchanged in society where there is growing realisation of the importance of new modalities of learning, a new culture of adult learning and lifelong learning. The realisation of the central position of continuing education and training for human resource development from the perspective of lifelong learning is now part of the

official positions of UNESCO and OECD. According to Bélanger and Tuijnman, *"It is considered a means for shaping the future of societies by emphasising the personal development of the individual, thus countering the risk to cohesion, promoting the democratic traditions in society, and responding to the challenges in an increasing global and knowledge-intensive production system."*

Costs and benefits of adult learning

Greater importance is being given to the proper evaluation of the costs and benefits from different types of adult learning, taking into account investments in infrastructure, extent of reliance on formal initial education structures, the unit and opportunity costs, costs involved in identifying the adults, community involvement etc.

Improved understanding of the wider economic returns and wider social benefits accruing to human capital investment is key to devising effective approaches in raising as well as disbursing resources.

Qualitative studies like the UNESCO-PROAP study, included in this report, highlight the contribution of education to health, which in the past has been difficult to prove. These social benefits and externalities should be taken into account in policy decisions about the financing of adult learning, especially non-formal adult learning.

In the same study it is also pointed out that though adult education benefits do not visibly translate into lower unemployment rates or sudden financial gains, what they do is to play an enabling or equipping role - giving the adult participants the wherewithal to improve their quality of life. The study also emphatically underscores the fact that financial policies must take into account that fighting poverty is not limited to an economic dimension but must also include access to a statute and to participation in social life.

Alternative approaches to funding work-related adult learning

In the perspective of lifelong learning, vocational education and training are indispensable elements in a national economy. The question of funding is crucial to a reply to an ever increasing demand. Many approaches to funding are being tried out and implemented which are trying to seek answers to the questions raised, as regards, accessibility, cost and benefits to individuals and firms. There is a growing recognition that the cost of financing work-related adult learning will have to be re-evaluated because new factors are calling for a greater emphasis on experiential and contextual learning that relates to work, the home, and community; use of technology; widening the recognition of competencies to all areas of learning etc. All these are expected to promote a diversity of learning

styles and non-traditional learning environments that have been neglected by formal educational policies. Financing of adult learning cannot be discussed independent from these new learning environments..

The question of who pays, who pays how much, and how one pays for continuing professional training depends very much on national traditions and models of education and training systems, the conditions of the labour market, economy and public finances. In many countries work-related adult learning is left largely to market forces. In still other countries where governments have a larger role, legislation obliges firms to contribute financially to adult learning. Legal provisions such as paid educational leave are also becoming regular features of continuing education and training in which financial responsibility of training is being shared between state and employers and trade unions.

Diversification of the demand for work-related adult learning

The impact of structural adjustment programmes is one of the most crucial aspects in the economics of adult learning. The increased scarcity of public resources everywhere has brought about appeals to other sources, particularly from businesses and users. In this context of giving a wider role to private trainers, many countries are reforming their systems of education and training.

The segmentation of the labour market and the financial crisis, has driven adult training to diversify the sections of the public targeted by them. For example training institutions are now actively financing the setting up of training programmes for workers in the informal sector.

Conclusion

Adult learning needs to be reassessed as a productive investment. The benefits – to the individual, the community and society as a whole – can be far-reaching. Formal, non-formal and informal learning styles and environments must be taken into account in the financing of adult education. New formulae must be found to address wider aims such as the promotion of citizenship, democratisation, cohesion and cultural development.

Investment in adult education can pay dividend, not only in terms of economic growth, earnings and employment, but also on health and demographic behaviour. There are social benefits in improved quality of life and the overall development of society.

Beneficial effects extend beyond the actual learners – the direct consumers of education – to affect children, families, and communities as well. There are also hidden social costs involved in not investing in people's competencies.

To support the shift from education to learning, and from supply-driven to demand-driven approaches, policies will be needed to stimulate the education and training demands which have not been and cannot be met by formal educational systems.

Only when adult learning is seen, assessed and evaluated as an economic and social investment, will appropriate financing policies be possible.

Emerging from the deliberations of the Hamburg Conference, the participants committed themselves to a series of concrete ways of improving the financing of adult learning.

- Multilateral financial institutions should fund adult education within the framework of partnerships
- Member States should allocate at least 6 per cent of the Member States' Gross National Product (GNP) in education and an equitable share of the education budget to adult education.
- Every development programme, whether it be agriculture, health or environment, should include an adult learning component.
- Community initiatives in adult learning should be financed and supported.
- The current debts of the least developed and developing countries should be converted into investment in human development. Member States should explore this creatively.
- Social partners should be stimulated to engage in adult learning in enterprises, and investment in education and training in every enterprise should be considered as an investment in productivity.
- Social partners should promote the ratification and application of the International Labour Organisation Convention 140(1974) concerning paid educational leave.
- Utmost importance should be given to investing an equitable share of resources in women's education.

As regards future research, there is still very little understanding of the impact of financing instruments on learning outcomes. This is important in the designing of effective policies.

In order to have a better understanding of the costs-benefit relationship, there is a need for more research on indicators of how to measure, quantify and isolate certain factors. New monitoring is required to assess the level of participation and the processes involved, keeping in mind the need for social and regional equity. The experiences of various countries must be compared and discussed in order to arrive at an optimal financing model.

More analytic work is also needed on comparative assessment of the increasing number of institutional frameworks in the delivery of learning opportunities. The important question to ask is: how can various financial arrangements stimulate quality adult learning for all citizens in different learning contexts.

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Economics of Adult Learning: The Cost of Lost Opportunities

Roy Carr-Hill

I Introduction

There are several sets of problems associated with the economics of adult learning: what are the incentives and constraints on adult education; what are the current financial systems; what has been the impact of the Structural Adjustment Programme. These are all wide topics.

Focus of this Paper

The main focus here is the importance of developing a coherent analytic framework for analysing the costs of lost opportunities, recognising the specificity of different kinds of adult education and learning. On this basis we assess the benefits of adult literacy in developing countries and the real costs of illiteracy in over-industrialised countries.

The paper therefore covers three issues:

the importance of distinguishing between the balance of direct and indirect costs and individual and social benefit in different types of adult learning.

- how the benefits of literacy should be measured in community or integrated development programmes in developing countries.

- the high level of ‘indirect costs’ of national first language illiteracyⁱ in Over Serviced Countries.

What Analytic Framework

Classically the utility of investments is assessed through net present value or rate of return analysis. Based on human capital theory, estimates of the rate of return to different levels of education have been made - both in developing and Over Serviced Countriesⁱⁱ - since the early 1960s. They have been subject to controversy for almost as long! For example, a recent review by Hough (1992) enumerates sixteen sets of difficulties and then goes on to refer to authors who suggest others. Apart from whether analysis should be carried out from the perspective of the individual or the society; the problems he enumerates with the rate of return approach can be grouped into five types. These are:

(i) Identifying and Including All Costs and Benefits:

There are several sub-problems:

- (a) Non-monetary costs such as capital depreciation and income foregone by the individual are difficult to assess.
- (b) how to translate into monetary terms some benefits which may be very difficult to quantify.

Whilst universally recognised, this latter is one of the mysteries where further evidence is needed; and will be taken up in detail in section IV.

(ii) Validity of Using Earning Differentials as a Measure of Productivity:

Similarly, there are several sub-problems here:

- (a) labour market imperfections/rigidity specially in well established occupations.
- (b) the available data is weak - for example, income statistics nearly always exclude fringe benefits;

(c) age earning profiles should be based on time-series which will only be available for a limited number of occupational careers.

(d) how to allow for the probability of unemployment or of labour market participation rates.

(iii) The Screening Hypothesis/the Diploma Disease/Credentialism

Although developed from within different theoretical frameworks, the common proposition is that the observed association between education and earning may not reflect the added value of education. Different levels of education may supply recruits to the labour markets by serving as a *screening* device for employers to identify employees with different levels of ability or the appropriate personality. This is a form of *credentialism* in which certification rather than useful knowledge is the valued outcome, and hence the paper-chase after ever higher diplomas or the *diploma disease*. The latter is exacerbated by the tendency of those with higher levels of education not to accept 'lower status' occupations even though they might be better rewarded than those with the level of education appropriate to their occupation (for a recent rigorous empirical analysis of Portuguese data, see Kiker et al, 1997).

It seems clear that this is partly true when one compares the qualification required for the same jobs over time: the issue is the extent to which it is true. Associated with this is the problem that several other factors - such as home background and social class - are associated with earnings which may or may not be taken into account by employers

(iv) Distributional Effects

Most analyses ignore the distributional effects (Leslie 1996); those who are already better educated (and, in general, wealthier) receive more adult education. Much of the argument about the 'equity' or otherwise of student loans relies on these arguments

(v) Externalities

There can be several 'externalities' (depending on how widely the net of cost and benefits is cast in the first place). For example, it argued that one of the major reasons for promoting universal schooling is to establish the conditions for good governance, on the assumption that an educated citizenry will prefer good governance to bad. Obviously, the argument of Bowles and Gintis (1976) - that

education (including adult education) serves merely to reproduce the capitalist social order - is relevant here, but unfortunately they - like many sociologists of that era - failed to distinguish successfully between authoritarian and liberatarian socialism.

Specificities of Adult Education

In analysing the economics specifically of adult learning, we have to clarify:

- what kind of adult learning
- what are the kinds of costs that need to be taken into account, and what are the potential benefits, of the different types of adult education.

Indeed, there is a need to clarify indicators which measure the impact of literacy not only in terms of improving individual skills, but also the changes in the social environment and the economic situation of her or his community.

Types of Adult Learning

The failure of school systems to expand sufficiently led to the promotion of non-formal education which would enable

the adult poor to “catch up” (Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed 1973). There have been interminable debates about the definition of non-formal education which are not very relevant here except to emphasise that the differences or not between formal, informal and non-formal term adult learning covers a wide range of different types of adult education:

Palliative - a second chance for those who have missed out on formal schooling. Thus, there have been attempts to eliminate illiteracy in developing countries both because literacy is/was seen as human right and on the presumption that this will contribute to economic development. The most famous example was the UNESCO Experimental World Literacy Campaign (1972); but there have also been mass campaigns in Cuba, Nicaragua, Tanzania and USSR. These and other national programmes have been reviewed in Bhola and Carron (1987), and been criticised for their presumptions about illiteracy by Street (1991).

In Over-Serviced Countries, this takes the form of ‘remedial’ education for those whom school has failed. It has, however, become increasingly evident that rapid technological change generates new generations of ‘illiterates’. The International Adult Literacy Survey (OECD, 1996) based on preliminary surveys of functional literacy in Canada and the United States, has since been carried out

in 12 OECD countries and shows that substantial minorities (between 20% and 50%) are “illiterate” in terms of being able to function at play and at work in the IT age.

Popular education - usually organised by the community or militant groups for the poorer sections of the population or at least the relative weights to be attached to different aspects are clearly very different. The major examples have been in Latin America.

Professional or vocational education - for employment whether in a generalised sense, pre-occupation education, job entry training and career long training (Stayley 1971). Obviously all of this presumes that the kinds of jobs for which training is provided will survive.

Functional (but non-Vocational): typically in Over-Serviced Countries for personal enjoyment and fulfilment. On one level this can be treated as a version of Illich’s learning networks, but this form of adult education is highly individualistic - rather than communal - both in the sense that much adult learning is private and because the most likely people to benefit from adult learning opportunities are those who have already benefited from a substantial degree of formal education. Of course, many of the life skills demanded and learnt in developing countries are also functional and non vocational.

Costs and Benefits

The balance of direct and indirect costs, of individual and social benefits, are likely to be very different in the four cases.

(i) *Palliative Education*

Most of the second-chance programmes do not require large scale investments in equipment or in highly trained teachers because they often use the same buildings and materials and because the same teachers do night shifts. Unit costs of provision are therefore typically low - although in Over-Serviced countries, there are often quite substantial costs involved in identifying the adults in “need” of remedial education. Moreover, precisely because of the strong links presumed to exist between education and employment - even if they are distorted (see above) - the opportunity cost of the courses for the individuals are also likely to be low, simply because many will be unemployed.

In terms of benefits, the usual presumption is that there are reasonable or high benefits (whether through employment creation, family planning, good governance or health); so the lack of investment is a puzzle in both developing and over-serviced countries and is taken up in sections III and IV.

(ii) Popular Education

The direct costs here are often minimal (because the workers are committed and/or voluntary) although the indirect costs - in terms of family or work absences can be quite high. However, they are usually identifiable. The major problem here is more fundamental : the objective of this form of adult education is to change / transform the social order and the costs of institutional change are notoriously hard to measure.

For example, if governments actually faced their environmental responsibilities to implement programmes to cut energy utilisation by half in the Over-Serviced countries, - this would imply a significant reduction in the working week. We can therefore expect the benefit - as conventionally measured - to be negative (see also Carr-Hill 1987). The contrary view is that it is inestimable because the framework of measurement is so different. Either way (even if data were available) cost-benefit ratios are not easy to calculate.

(iii) Professional or Vocational Education

The assessment of the rates of return to generalised employment/education and, to a lesser extent, pre-occupation training run into the same kinds of problems as with assessing the rate of return for formal education.

There has been a substantial literature on the rates of return to job entry and career long training which are less open to the problems identified above with rate of return analyses. Unfortunately most of it is hidden (transparent-grey) literature because it is produced by firms. However, it is a reasonable presumption that the rate of return for individuals will be quite high; assessing the social rate of return depends on the issues of over-education and under-education raised in the formal education system.

(iv) Functional (but non Vocational)

In developing countries, functional life skills learnt can often be very valuable not only to the individual but also to the community (e.g. proper care and maintenance of a village water supply); and, of course, the costs are usually low (see section III).

But in over-serviced countries, personal adult learning for enjoyment or for fulfilment - is mostly a final consumption good. In neo-classical economics, it's contribution to welfare would therefore be simply represented by it's price.

However, many of the activities encouraged by such learning, and subsequently practised, impact upon the environment and upon the resources available for more basic services for less-educated sections of the population. There can therefore be considerable externalities which should be taken into account but that is another paper.

III Measuring the Benefits of Literacy in Developing Countries

Classically- when UNESCO first started over fifty years ago - the promotion of literacy was assumed to be an integral part of development. The presumption was that the astonishing success of the Marshall Plan in providing capital investments to a Europe ravaged by World War II could be reproduced in Third World countries (as they were called at the time), in order to create the expanding markets required by a rapacious capitalism. When that failed the presumption was that the missing ingredient was education and so local national governments - encouraged by the then industrialised countries - poured resources into expanding the formal education system.

The Origins of 'Illiteracy'

That also failed for a variety of reasons: a very weak political and social infrastructure; declining quality of the education delivered during rapid expansion; and insufficient political will to shift resources from war to learning. However, it generated a social demand for education that was clearly going to outstrip the 'economic' need for graduates of that system - which in turn led to the so-called diploma disease in which employers were able to demand higher and higher qualifications from potential employees without actually increasing productivity of the activity. In Over-Serviced Countries as has been mentioned above, this has led to the problem of over-education (e.g Duncan and Hoffman, 1981). In developing countries, the focus of attention has been graduate employment.

More importantly - from the perspective of universal adult literacy - this left large numbers of people outside the formal system and conventionally illiterate. Despite being a focus for rhetoric for over a quarter of a century in terms of the rhetorical over-promotion of non-formal education compared to the actual numbers registered on adult education courses in developing countries (see Table 1) (Carr-Hill and Lintott 1985), there has been in practice very little change (the estimate that there are nearly a billion 'illiterates' has not changed for several years). What is the case for formal schooled literacy (however it is delivered) and why is it not accepted?

The Case for Literacy

The first presumed impact is the assumption that education impacts upon *fertility*. Thus the United Nations and the World Bank - in making their projections of population growth - assume a linear relation between literacy rates (measured in terms of the proportions who have completed four or more years of education) and in fact mortality rates. Hence the presumed need for state investments.

Apart from the reasonable feminist critiques that this is tantamount to treating education as contraception (see for example, Howard and Bunwaree 1999) the problem is actually demonstrating those links empirically at an individual or household level rather than at a national aggregate level, and in postulating plausible links in a causal chain between literacy and reduced fertility. There are overall associations between years of education and birth and fertility rates, but much of the associations appears to be subsumed - as in over-serviced countries - in the effect of income/power/status on access to and enjoyment of more comfortable lifestyles and those associations are open to the same difficulties of interpretation (see Hallak and Caillods 1995). Moreover, the population data upon which these estimates are based are very suspect (see Murray 1987).

Nevertheless this is probably the strongest case. Yet female participation is low (see Table 2).

Then another postulated link is between years of education and *health*. One can cite the (loose) links between the literacy campaigns in Andhra Pradesh and the banning of alcohol sales (Crinnion, Shotton and Carr-Hill 1999). However, more rigorous evaluation is less enthusiastic.

There have, for example been surveys of people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours about health comparing between those who have been on a literacy programme and those who have not. Carr-Hill et al (1993) showed in Tanzania how those who had been enrolled in literacy classes gave more correct answers to knowledge questions and appeared to have more 'modern' health attitudes and practices. However, they also showed that most of those enrolling in literacy programmes had already been to school. Teasing out the 'added value' of the attainment of formal schooled literacy is very difficult (see also the forthcoming report on a more representative study in Uganda).

Caldwell and others (1987) have provided a powerful theoretical framework linking education and fertility and health, but the evidence for the link between education and health is circumstantial. At least part of the problem is that, in contrast to the income effect on fertility, the mechanisms of transmission of knowledge presume learner motivation and there is often powerful propaganda against the health messages, for example, by tobacco companies.

The third postulated impact is the importance of an educated citizenry on *good governance*. This is often cited not only by rhetoricians, but even poor illiterates can mouth the propaganda. But one has to be careful: adult education campaigns can also be a vehicle for vote rigging (see Carr-Hill 1995).

IV The Hidden Costs of National Language Illiteracy in Over Serviced Countries

The problems of assessing benefits are more complex in developed countries: because of complex labour markets and complex inter-relationships between fertility and nationalism between ill-health/morbidity and income. Given these problems in assessing the monetary benefits of adult education, this section is concerned with the evidence for the (hidden) non-monetary cost of national language illiteracy.

There are a number of sectors in which communication skills imposes costs which could be avoided. Some of the best examples are with immigrants who may well be highly literate but cannot communicate in the local language (Carr-Hill et al, (1996), and this discussion is mostly based on the English situation; and draws on two recent surveys of the minority linguistic communities in England (Carr-Hill et al 1996; and Rudat, 1994).

Poorer Health and Increased Health Care Costs

Although infant mortality rates are slightly higher - as are some death rates for specific conditions (Population Trends 1986) - the main concern is with higher rates of morbidity and the associated health care costs incurred by illiterate adults.

In the UK, the consultation rates with primary care are much higher among South Asian groups (RCGP, OPCS, DoH, 1995); and in part this has to do with inability to communicate. (see Table 3). Indeed the English NHS provides a range of interpreting services at different entry points to the system. Whilst symptomatic of concern, this cannot be a sensible use of resources in the medium-to-long term.

Positive Health

These are sometimes claimed to be associations between education and 'positive health'.

One interesting sideline is the likelihood that education might lead to the collective promotion of positive health. In developed countries, the obvious example is the pattern of smoking over this

century during which, first smoking was fashionable and then - about 30 years ago - it was first suggested that there was a link between smoking and lung cancer. During the 1920s and 1930s, middle classes smoked more than working classes. After the Second World War, working class groups began to catch up; and then, when it was first suggested that there was a link between smoking and lung cancer, doctors were the first group to give up smoking followed by middle classes which has led, just recently, to legislation against tobacco.

Prevention of Illness

As in developing countries, it is assumed that education impacts upon health behaviours. There have been valiant attempts to associate education with alcoholism and smoking behaviour, but they are confounded especially by stress. There have also been studies of the links between health education and liability to specific illnesses such as HIV/AIDS; but evidence is difficult.

There are also supposed to be associations between education and other non-health related life style factors which are considered below.

Better use of Resources

Whilst poverty lines are assessed on the presumption that the poor have full information and full access, in fact better educated people are more able to take advantage of information about purchases and about savings. For example the poor are more likely to gamble partly because the possibility of winning is their only prospect of emerging from poverty.

(Avoidance of) Domestic Violence

The use of force and physical violence is mostly the prerogative of the state and there is no clear relation between state violence and average levels of education or of literacy. However, on an individual level, there is evidence that domestic physical violence is associated with lack of education (the highly educated preferring more subtle psychological forms of violence such as obligatory counselling and verbal insult - e.g. Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf).

Better (education-?) Child Rearing Practices.

Parallel to the presumption that reductions in fertility and in fact mortality rates can be linked to levels of female literacy in developing countries, there is also a substantial evidence that educated parents

tend to provide encouraging educational environments for their children. Carnevale (1992) gives an estimate of over £20,000 saved per year in adult life as a result of one year of pre-school education.

Better Take-Up of State Benefits

One of the main problems with welfare systems in UK is the lack of take-up of benefits leading to other, more costly problems of ill-health etc. This extends to lack of knowledge on how to use the legal system etc.

V Conclusions

The state should be involved in adult education because of its functions with regard to manpower planning, addressing social priorities, controlling people's expectations, solving social problems. Planning the funding of these programmes involves professionals in activities which are parallel to their activities with respect to other welfare services.

Although the review has only been brief, it is clear that assessing the economic benefits of literacy in developing countries is complicated and that most of the costs of illiteracy in over-serviced countries are non-monetary (at least in the short term).

The obvious remark from an academic at this stage is a plea for more research. But, whilst this might be useful, all the experience suggests that it is unlikely to be helpful in identifying target groups and implementing programmes that will be successful. The problem is the attempt to translate national mission statements and national plans into implementable programmes involving learnings. As has been argued forcefully by Carron and Carr-Hill (1989), the planning of adult and non-formal education has to take place locally. This is because the potential benefits of adult education are themselves local. Exactly who will benefit from any particular programme and how that will be associated with the balance of power within a community can only be assessed locally. From a central level, one can suggest the kinds of factor which should be considered; but one cannot dictate the pattern of costs and benefits.

Table 1 : Enrolments in Adult and Primary Formal Education and in the Average Growth GDP

Countries	Total AE enrolment per 1000 pop.	Average growth GDP	Enrolment rate in primary
Central African Rep	1	1.6	70
Liberia	14	1.3	66
Libya	75	-	110
Sierra Leone	6	1.9	
Somalia	9	3.4	30
Sudan	<10	6.6	51
Swaziland	>10	4.5	-
Zambia	7	0.4	95
Bahrain	17	7.4	102
Indonesia	18	7.8	112
Philippines	237	6.2	110
Sri Lanka	<11	4.3	100
Thailand	>7	7.2	83
Argentina	26	1.9	116
Chile	60	2.1	119
Colombia	80	5.7	128
Costa Rica	49	5.2	107
Dominica	53	6.3	102
Ecuador	24	8.6	108
Honduras	>11	4.4	89
Panama	16	4.5	113
Santa Lucia	21	-	-
Venezuela	43	4.5	104

Source: Carr-Hill and Lintott (1985), pp.6-9.

Note: The Spearman rank correlations are as follows: between total enrolment per capita in adult education and the average growth rate in GDP over the seventies 0.375 and; between total enrolment per capita in adult education and the gross enrolment ratio in primary school = 0.792. Both figures are significant at the 10 per cent level.

Table 2 : Female participation in NFE programmes (proportion of females to total)

	<25%	25-50%	50-75%	>75%	Total
Africa	3	4	3	-	10
Developing Asia	1	6	3	-	10
Latin America	-	5	6	3	14
Developed Countries	2	5	7	-	14
Total	6	20	19	3	48

Source: Carr-Hill and Lintott (1985), Table 3.

Table 3 : Use of Interpreters with General Practitioners

	Ethnic Group		
	Indian	Pakistan	Bangladeshi
Use informal interpreter	4	4	12
Spouse	1	3	7
Child	3	2	4
Other	<0.5	<0.5	2
Interpreter provided	3	1	7

Base: all those whose main language is not English.

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1. The use of the phrase 'national first language illiteracy' is a recognition that there is some truth in the arguments of, for example, Street (1991) that the use of the term 'illiteracy' is disempowering: whilst it is used to mobilise resources, it is then used to define negatively the recipients of all this activity as "those sad disempowered, uncritical, embedded, cognitively deprived and culturally deficated sets of people". But only some truth: many programmes do not involve negative definitions of their clients.
2. The term over-serviced - rather than industrialised-countries - is used given it is difficult for many in the West to identify with industrialisation and I, personally, find it difficult to reconcile rampant capitalism with post-modernism!

Impact of Non-Formal Adult Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: A Four-Country Studyⁱⁱⁱ

UNESCO Principal Regional Office

For Asia and the Pacific

Introduction

Adult learning, more perhaps than any other activity, plays a crucial role in releasing the energy and creativity of people and enabling them to meet the complex challenges of the modern world. The future of our societies rests above all on people and on people's potential. For all people are learners throughout their lives. The adult is endowed with a plethora of collective and individual experiences as well as abilities. What he needs, and must be provided with, is the voice and the opportunity to build on experiences, to construct himself intellectually and physically and to develop both himself and his community. The opportunity to learn enriches human life and allows men and women to unleash the forces of creativity and determination that so often lies dormant within them.

The commitment of UNESCO to adult learning and the leading role it has played in the promotion of adult education has been in clear evidence over the last five decades. The First International Conference on Adult Education was held in Elsinor, Denmark in 1949, the Second in Montreal in 1960, and the Third in Tokyo in 1972. In Paris, in 1985, the Fourth Conference adopted a vital declaration stressing the fundamental importance of the right to learn : The right to learn is: *the right to read and write; the right to question and analyse; the right to imagine and create; the right to read ones own world and to write history; the right to have access.*

The changing role, broadening scope and growing importance of adult learning have subtly but profoundly changed the very nature of adult and continuing education.On the one

hand, the state has evolved from doer to facilitator; on the other, there has emerged a greatly expanded partnership involving a wide array of organisations that have become more and more involved in the education of adults *so educational resources; the right to develop individual and collective skills*. The UNESCO's General Conference at its Nineteenth Session convened in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1976, adopted a Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education stressing the vital role of adult education as *forming part of life-long education and as a means for the promotion within society as a whole, of the ideas of autonomy, responsibility and dialogue*.

The World Declaration on Education for All adopted at the landmark Jomtien Conference (Thailand, 5-9 March 1990) reaffirmed the right to learn and the commitment to meet the basic learning needs of all our people by expanding learning opportunities... and working for a fully literate society. The Amman Affirmation of June 1996 pointed, in particular, to the need to invest more effort, resources and imagination in adult education and literacy which, it noted, are investments in the education of entire families. More recently, in September 1996, the Asia/Pacific Regional Consultation, held again at Jomtien, adopted a Declaration which called upon *"all adult education practitioners and stakeholders to critically assess the present practices with a view to increasing the effectiveness, quality and responsiveness of delivery systems..."*

Most fittingly, it was at this latter Conference, at the same historic venue, that the idea for this synthesised study germinated. Delegates were unanimous in their view that globalisation, privatisation, structural adjustments and debt servicing liabilities had forced most governments to cut-back their investment in the social sector more particularly in education and most definitely in adult education. Multilateral co-ordinating organisations, international donor agencies, inter-government aid facilitators - all along parsimonious and step-motherly in their attitude to adult, non-formal education - were tightening the screws even more. Organisations, agencies and governments were prepared to increase support to the formalised school and elementary education sector where investments and results are more palpably visible, more easily demonstrable and above all more amenable to the "discipline of the measuring tape". For the greyer area of adult education, however, where shades of black and white mix and merge, where buildings, constructions, student and teachers cannot be counted and multiplied, where drop-out ratio and pass percentages count for little - delegates felt that there was double scepticism and a virtual closed-door policy.

It was against this backdrop that a strong feeling was voiced about meaningful, enduring and substantial effort to convince policy and decision makers to allocate higher investment priorities to adult non-formal education. It was decided to take up a regional research initiative that would attempt to study the impact of adult education programmes on individuals and communities in four countries in the Asia/Pacific region. These country studies, which would be both qualitative and statistics would

provide an information and data base for the advocacy effort which would be undertaken in the immediate context of the Fifth World Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg in July 1997.

Scope

Four countries were invited to take up intensive field-oriented studies in selected locations. These countries were : India, Nepal, Philippines, and Thailand. They were asked to identify catchment areas such as district or communities that would be representative of adequate cross-section and would also possess a critical mass of individuals directly involved in adult education programmes. Taking into account the fact that the nature of adult education programmes would vary from country to country, the overarching concept was for each to take up micro-level studies at limited number of locations.

The qualitative inferences and quantitative data were to be systematically compiled in a format that clearly underscored the areas, the levels, the spread and reach and finally the enduring nature of the impacts that adult education programmes had had. This would allow for cross-country, cross-community and cross-programmatic comparisons enabling evaluations and drawing of broad conclusions.

The changing role, broadening scope and growing importance of adult learning have subtly but profoundly changed the very nature of adult and continuing education. This transformation owes its emergence to a two-fold apparatus. On the one hand, the role of the state has evolved from doer to facilitator; on the other, there has emerged a greatly expanded partnership involving a wide array of organisations that have become more and more involved in the education of adults. The scope of this study envisions a systematic, impact-oriented examination of these emerging phenomena. Clearly such an approach would have far reaching policy and investment implications

Objectives

General Objectives

The general objective of the four-country synthesised study is to focus on the importance being given to adult, non-formal education in the Asia/Pacific region. in broad terms, the study aims to bring out (a) the role of the state as doer and facilitator (b) the participative role played by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), local communities, the private sector, and decentralised grassroots level administrative units and (c) finally, and most importantly, the impact that adult education programmes

have had at the micro level on the various aspects of the lives of the participants as well as of the community.

Specific Objectives

To study in both qualitative and quantitative terms, the impact that on-going programmes of adult learning have had on :

-educational practices; social and behavioural aspects; skill development and economic prospects; peoples participation and communication; health and hygiene; self confidence and self-esteem; gender equity and women's empowerment; and awareness of larger national and global issues such as preservation of the environment, freedom from religious bigotry, etc.

In the end, the synthesised approach would seek to establish how manifest, how widespread and how enduring these impacts have been or are likely to be. It would examine whether a balance has been struck between work, social and community life and personal development so that people in this region can learn to know, to do, to live together to read and to understand the world around them and create for themselves a synergy between all these experiences.

Overview of the Adult Education Scenario

Each of the four countries has addressed its own problems in its own way. The tasks and the challenges have been different. So too have been the approaches. What has emerged are four distinctive stylistic variations all geared towards the same goal - eradication of illiteracy and the promotion of a learning society.

The worlds adult illiterates numbered 885 million in 1995. Out of this, the Asia/Pacific region accounted for 625 million or 71 per cent. India had 290 million illiterates - a third of the worlds total and a shade less than half of the illiterates in the Asia/Pacific region.

India

Of all the countries in the world, it is India which has the biggest literacy problem. About one-third of the world's adult illiterate humanity resides in this country. At the last decennial census held in 1991, the most startling fact to emerge was that about 300 million adults were illiterate. As we move into the next millennium, India is in grave danger of the knowledge

revolution bypassing half of its adult population. The price the country has to pay in terms of learning, technology and human resources development can well be imagined.

Literacy rates have no doubt virtually trebled from 18.3 per cent in 1951 to 52.2 per cent in 1991. For the first time, the number of literates has exceeded the number of illiterates in the country. What is appalling however, is the stagnancy in the number of illiterates. They number approximately 300 million in 1951. They number about 300 million even today. Gains made in improving literacy levels have been largely neutralised by the annual population growth rate of 2.2 percent. While the overall illiteracy status itself is daunting, there are glaring gender and social disparities. While two out of every three males are literate, two out three females are illiterate. This wide hiatus stares Indian planners in the face.

The first really serious attempt to meet the challenge, was made in 1978 with the launching of the National Adult Education Program (NAEP). This programme was a class-room based, paid-teacher approach that ran aground on the shoals and rocks of demotivated learners. There was little to sustain the interest of teachers and even less to encourage the total involvement of participants. Started with a great deal of fan fare, the NAEP virtually ran out of steam in less than a decade.

Two major events, occurring in quick succession, rekindled hope. The first was the establishment of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988 which gave to literacy and adult education, primacy of place on the national agenda. Then, in 1990, came the unique experiment in Ernakulam district (located in the state of Kerala at the southern tip of the country). Here a campaign approach was adopted characterised by large scale mobilisation of persons from all walks of life through a multifaceted communication and motivation strategy that highlighted the vital link between literacy and living. The essence of the campaign was the effort to generate a positive demand for learning as a tool for social change. The Ernakulam experiment, with its new multi-pronged approach, came as a breath of fresh air and was quickly adopted by the National Literacy Mission in other parts of the country. The mass campaign mode for total literacy became also a campaign for social mobilisation which meant above all, arousing, awakening, awareness building, sensitising and motivating. What began in a small, unassuming way in a few districts in southern India has today burgeoned into a country-wide campaign that straddles 425 of India's 520 districts.

The National Literacy Mission today imparts functional literacy which implies self reliance in the 3 R's, participation in the development process, skill improvement for enhanced economic status and imbibing values such as national integration, environmental conservation, gender equity, observance of the small family norm, etc. Total Literacy Campaigns are area-specific, time-bound, volunteer-based, outcome oriented and are designed to be cost effective. The campaigns are implemented by dis-

district-level literacy committees registered as independent, autonomous bodies to provide a uniform umbrella under which individuals and organisations can work together. Today, the Mission accesses 130 million people, through 10 million volunteers and in a short span of five years has made over 60 million people literate.

To avert the phenomenon of relapse, neo-literates are provided continuous learning opportunities. Post-literacy campaigns have been launched in 178 districts. They are aimed at taking the neo-literates from a dependent to a self-guided learning stage as well as promoting the development of income generating skills in the process. Post-literacy centres serve as nodal points for convergence of messages and services. They act as information windows creating awareness about government schemes and other facilities available for economic development, environmental conservation, social empowerment, health concerns, etc. Of late, the National Literacy Mission has initiated continuing education programmes in about 30 districts. The continuing education centres provide access to all adults in the vicinity for life-long learning. They provide facilities for reading and writing, skills improvement, recreation, information dissemination, cultural pursuits - in short an overall learning ambience that anybody in the community is free to use.

Nepal

Nepal's links with adult education began to be forged only with the introduction of the First Five Year Plan in 1956. But the activities initiated remained confined to literacy till the end of the 1960s. A new era began to dawn when local and international NGOs entered the scene in a big way in the decade of the 1970's. Today, almost 500 NGOs and INGOs are actively engaged in the non-formal adult education sector. After the Jomtien Conference of 1990, the Nepalese government's own commitment began to manifest itself with the launching of the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) in July 1992. Shortly, thereafter, was constituted the National Non-formal Education Council.

The government has set for itself the target of launching literacy campaigns in all municipalities and in one hundred Village Development Committees (VDC) within five years. According to the plan that has been chalked out, the VDCs will receive both training for facilitators as well literacy materials.

This government initiative is supplemented by large scale assistance from INGOs and NGOs. Recently, the United

States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided a substantial grant through Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT) and World Education Nepal to attack illiteracy among girls and women using local NGOs as vehicles. The goal of the PACT programme is to make 270,000 women literate over a period of two years, and they have already begun working closely with government units such as the District Education Offices. More than 7,500 literacy classes in 30 districts are being run through local NGOs.

With these joint initiatives from the governmental and non-government sectors, Nepal hopes to create a proper and enduring base for and education activities. This, they hope, will gradually bring them closer the cherished goal of a learning society and help them overcome the daunting burden of carrying an overall literacy rate of mere 40 per cent (55% male; 25% female).

Philippines

In the evolution of the adult education system of the Philippines, the first substantial landmark may be traced to the Commonwealth period, 1935-46 when the office of Adult Education under the Department of Public Instruction was created. All that this did, however, was simply to transfer the vocational stream to the ambit of non-formal education. The bias towards the formal sector already ingrained, became even more pronounced. During the post-war period, 1946-72, the community school idea was first actively promoted in many provinces and then completely abandoned.

During the martial law period that followed, 1972-83, a notable feature was the Presidential Decree of 1977, creating the position of Under-secretary of Education and Culture for non-formal education. This decree reinserted non-formal adult education into the educational system. Even then, the non-formal set up continued to get low priority and negligible funding, to the point of virtual neglect. Even till date, this sector is served only through a statement of the 1991 Congressional Commission on Education which states that initiatives of the private and public sectors to provide non-traditional education services through alternative delivery systems should be encouraged and given.

Against this backdrop of virtual government apathy towards adult education, what deserves attention is the role of NGOs and Peoples Organisations who entered this sector in the late 1960s with counter-education, literacy and other political education efforts. Activities of these groups are sometimes foreign funded but actual services are delivered usually by unpaid volunteers from the ranks of students and activists who may or may not have the professional training required for the job.

What has emerged in the Philippines, therefore, is an education system characterised by a large formal education sector, in which mass public education at the primary level is relatively accessible to all. This has had a direct consequence on the basic literacy rate which stands at 93 per cent, one of the highest in the region. This rate is a function of elementary school spread and reach, and it is correct to assume that basic nonliterates are to be found mainly in marginal communities without schools.

However, this is only half the picture; the other half has to do with the relatively high drop-out rate, the problem of literacy retention and the much lower functional literacy rates. *Two* observations need to be made:

First, there is a relatively large gap of approximately 16.6 per cent between basic and functional literacy rates, implying that those who learn the rudimentary skills of reading, writing, counting and simple computation are not able to expand these skills to a point where they become functional and integral to their daily activities.

Second, there exists a negative correlation between the basic literacy rate, which is among the highest in the Asia/Pacific region, and low economic growth as measured by per capita gross national product (GNP). This implies: i) the need to teach skills beyond basic literacy; ii) that literacy teaching should be closely linked to adult learning where livelihood and income-generating activities are actively promoted; and iii) that these activities in order to be sustainable, should integrate literacy and education into complete systems of productivity and economic and social upliftment.

Thailand

Since its emergence as a promising strategy for rural development in the early 1970s, non-formal adult education has played a significant role and has become a vital vehicle for human resources development in Thailand. Upto the present, more than 3 million people have participated in both general and vocational programmes of non-formal education which has had a tremendous impact on national development. The Department of Non-formal Education, established within the Ministry of Education in 1979, has organised several educational programmes primarily for out-of-school youth who have sought additional learning. The major objectives of non-formal adult education in Thailand are to provide second chance education, to support and promote learning activities for youth and to organise an informal learning environment for the public. Non-formal adult education programmes in Thailand can be classed into three broad categories:

1. Basic education programme including literacy, primary secondary education programmes;

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2. Vocational education programme; and
 3. Informal education programme including libraries, village reading centres, television and radio programmes, science education centres, etc.

Non-formal adult education programmes are provided to people with different backgrounds, particularly to disadvantaged groups in rural remote areas. Among the three broad categories, the basic non-formal programme is the most popular with about one million adult learners.

At the time of the Second World War, Thailand found itself saddled with a literacy rate of barely 32 per cent. After the war, the concept of a education was broadened from just literacy education to encompass vocational education, mass education and quality of life improvement. In 1954, in co-operation with UNESCO, Thailand set up the Thailand UNESCO Fundamental Education Centre (TUFEC). From 1961-76, concept and practices of adult education expanded drastically and caught the public interest. The National Non-formal Education Centre was set up as a co-ordinating mechanism. Many new projects and activities were initiated such as the functional literacy programme, radio and correspondence educational programme, interest groups, village reading centres, and book donation activities. The non-formal education network was expanded by using volunteer teachers and community volunteers and the mass media was intensively harnessed.

After the setting up of the Department of Non-formal Education in 1979 adult learning became an essential part of the Thai national education system. Since then many new projects have been initiated. Administrative and operational mechanisms have been developed and so has a large network that stretches all the way down to the district level.

Today, endowed with an impressive literacy rate of around 95 per cent (98 % male; 92% female) Thailand has expanded its coverage of non-formal adult education to reach out to the most disadvantaged groups the country. It has developed programmes and activities to serve the needs and interests of people in both rural and urban areas. The Department has developed a new vision of non-formal adult education that promotes lifelong learning, focuses on the decentralisation of program management, develops new programmes for the labour force and strives to strengthen informal networks in order to establish a truly modern learning society.

Research Design

For the purpose of this Impact Study, UNESCO's Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP), Bangkok, provided a broad framework of the research design. PROAP suggested that each

country must identify at least three catchment areas which could be districts or communities. It also suggested that in order to provide a comparative picture, either other similar districts or communities will be surveyed which would serve as control groups, or secondary sources of data will be utilised to provide a longitudinal before-and-after picture.

In relation to indicators, PROAP opined that such indicators would need to be devised as would measure the impact of adult education programmes both on individuals as well as on the community.

For direct measurement, the following indicators could be considered: median income level; enrolment ratios of school age children; retention or drop-out rates among school children; population growth; gender sensitivity; etc.

Other measures needing to be gleaned indirectly through indicators based on individual responses could be: individual income levels; new skills (orientations, values, etc.) acquired; level of individuals participation in community affairs, group membership, etc.; extent of family entrepreneurship; gender roles in family, status of women and girls within and outside the family; evidence of information seeking behaviour; changed behaviour in the market place; aspirations for their children for a better lot in life; attitudes towards learning; participation in post-programme learning activities; increased self-esteem and self-respect; etc.

Finally, PROAP suggested that survey results should be enhanced by illustrative case studies and anecdotal evidence.

Keeping in mind these broad overall guidelines, each country built up its own research design based on the particularities of situation, location, programme spread and out-reach, manpower availability and research facilities.

India

A two-group, pre and post-test field experimental design was adopted. Learners made literate in the adult education programme were considered to be the treatment group, while those who did not participate or dropped out early thereby remaining illiterate or semi-illiterate were considered to be the control group. This approach is a useful design in measuring the effects of an intervention and also helps uncover causal relationships among variables.

A field (primary) experimental study was conducted in three backward districts where adult education programmes have been running for at least three years. The districts selected were Birbhum in the state of West Bengal (Eastern India), Dumka in the state of Bihar (North India), and Bilaspur in the state of Madhya Pradesh (Central India). All three have a relatively low socio-economic development status as compared to the rest of the country and possess a large segment of marginalised, communities.

The various methods of data collection for the field study included structured interview with the participants (treatment and control group ii) focus group discussions with neo-literates; iii) unstructured interview with functionaries, volunteers and activists; iv) case studies of individual/communities tracing the path of their development since acquisition of literacy skills.

Additionally, a cross-sectional correlation design was adopted in which a large set of socio-economic development variables were analysed. The data for the correlational analysis was collected from several secondary sources including the decennial census, sampling registration system National Family Health Survey and the National Council of Applied Economic Research. Analysis of data derived from these secondary sources was used as collateral evidence to bolster the conclusions derived from the primary field surveys undertaken at the three specified locations.

Data collected from the field study was analysed using the Chi-square Test of goodness of fit to test the hypotheses. Correlation and factor analyses were used to analyse relationships between adult education a host of variables on which data had been collected from secondary sources.

Nepal

The three districts, in three geographically distinct areas were chosen to obtain a representative cross section - Rasuwa district in the mountain Tanahun district in the hills, and Sarlahi district in the Terai (or plains). Two groups were also clearly identified - an experimental group which participated in the adult education programme and a control group which had not participated in any such programme. Thus a basis for comparisons became available.

Initial data were collected mainly from the government records available, with the district education officers, school supervisors, and programme co-ordinators. At the field level, 24 participants were identified. cross-checking the information provided by the participants, a number of relatives were also interviewed. The general methodology adopted the case study approach. Various indicators were developed to measure the impact of adult education programmes at the community level as at the individual level.

Philippines

Five communities were purposively selected - four in which adult education programmes were being conducted by NGOs and private organisations and one where a purely governmental programme was being run. The communities identified were - i) Plaridel, Quezon Cardona, Rizal; iii) Gamu, Isabela; iv) Infanta, Quezon; and v) Valen Negros Oriental.

Initial available data were gathered from municipal documents, research reports of ongoing and completed projects, the Bureau of Non-formal Education and other organisations involved in adult education. After the visits of research teams, there was intensive interaction among them to validate the field data they had collected. These data were then collated and synthesised so as to identify in clear terms the areas in which the adult education programmes had demonstrated substantial impact.

Thailand

Primarily, the case study method has been relied upon. Five communities in five provinces were selected ensuring that in each there was a critical mass of persons who had participated in the non-formal adult education programmes during the past 2-3 years. In Chiang Mai province, two sub-districts viz. Tambon Buak Kang and Tambon Chae Chang were chosen; in Songkhla province, Tambon Pa Ching and Tambon Nawa; in Samut Sakhon province, Tambon KJong Ton and Tambon Kaset Pattana; in Nakhon Nayok province, Tambon Pakha and Tambon Pikultong; and in Ubonratchathani province, Tambon Pome Paeng.

The samples for the study were adult learners who had participated in the non-formal secondary education programme. Fifteen such participants in each community were purposively selected to be interviewed. Hence, in all, 75 participants were interviewed. During these interviews an attempt was made to examine the socio-economic and personal impacts as relevant to individuals, their families and their communities. Basically, three types of instruments were used to collect information at the field sites: Base-line surveys; interview formats for participants; and interview formats for non-participants. Analysis of the quantitative data was carried out by using simple statistical processes comprising ratios, percentages, frequencies, etc. Qualitative data was initially processed by each regional team.

Although the five case studies were separately undertaken, each one adopted the same procedural framework and the same research design. The data from these five studies were re-analysed and

processed and the findings were synthesised to give an overall picture of the impact of non-formal adult education. This synthesis was done at the national level in order to get an overall picture of the research.

Profile of the Study Communities

In order to acquire the correct perspective and understand the context in which the country studies were conducted, it would be necessary to look, in some detail, at the profile of the communities that were selected. These profiles reveal a broad spectrum of social mores, infrastructure and educational disparities and geographical and environmental diversity. Yet one common strand binds them all. Subjected to the measuring rod of social and economic indicators, they present a distinct picture of backwardness.

India

Birbhum district in the state of West Bengal, situated in eastern India famous for being the seat of Shantiniketan, an abode of alternative learning established by the Nobel prize winning Indian poet Rabindra Nath Tagore. The red soil of the countryside and the lilting melody wandering mendicants - the bauls - are a typical feature of this peaceful and idyllic rural district. Devolution of power to local self-government has helped bridge chasm between the people and the administration. Birbhum, like the rest of Bengal, is politically very aware. The people are neither shy nor diffident about articulating their needs. They are, in fact, aggressive about demanding change. Village education committees have been established and training is being provided to their members. Birbhum has a high percentage of forest cover. For the women, this provides *sal* leaves are gathered, stitched together and dried. Later they are trimmed and moulded into disposable plates for which there is a continuous demand.

Dumka district, in the state of Bihar is situated in northern Indian Bilaspur district in the state of Madhya Pradesh is situated in central India. Both are predominantly rural districts with large tribal populations. The majority of the people survive on subsistence agriculture and produce. Even in relation to their immediate environment, both districts are extremely backward.

Nepal

The three sites proposed for the study have been selected from three of the country's seventy five districts. They are Rasuwa, and Tanahun Sarlahi representing the high mountains, the mid-hills and

the Terai respectively which form the country's three topographical belts stretching longitudinally from east to west.

Sarlahi is one of the least developed districts in the Terai belt, though it is agriculturally fertile. As this district lies on the border of the northern part of India, there are several similarities in the lifestyle of the people with that of the people of north India. Two village communities were selected for the study - Laxmipur for the experimental group and Japdi for the control group.

Laxmipur is about 12-13 kilometres north of Malangwa, the district headquarters. It has a population of about 3,000 people with a voters list of 1,800. The major ethnic groups living in it are Muslims, Tharus and Telis. Muslims are a little isolated in the sense that they do not take part in the programmes organised for all. They participate only in the programmes which are exclusively meant for them.

There are two primary schools in the village and one secondary school which is about 15 minutes walking distance from the community. There are many literacy classes running at present. The literacy programmes have been gaining momentum in this pocket since 1992.

Tanahun is considered as one of the educationally advanced districts in the country. It is also politically and economically a more advanced district. The Ministry of Education has launched the literacy campaign here since 1996. Two of the village communities sampled for the study were Gurung Gaon and Barabise of the Bhanu village development committee. Both these communities have a mixed culture of multi-ethnic groups. Gurunggaon was selected for the experimental case study and Barabise for the control group.

There is one primary school in Gurung Gaon while the children from Barabise community have to go to Nareshwor Secondary school which is about half-an-hour walking distance from the village.

Rasuwa is one of the eight districts of Bagmati zone. It is a mountain district. North of this district, there is Ganesh Himal. The majority of the population in the district are Tamangs and the others are Bahun, Chhetris, and other occupational castes like Kami, Damai, and Sarki. The two village communities selected for the study were Dhunge for the experimental group and Gambu Danda for the control group.

Both of these communities do not have enough food supply for the whole year. The main occupation here is agriculture. The food supply from the field is enough only for 6-8 months. For the remaining months, the men go out elsewhere to work as labourers while the women continue to stay at home.

There is one primary school in Gambu Danda and Dhunge has a lower secondary level school which has 1-7 grades. Children from both of these communities go to the secondary school in a nearby village which is about 15 minutes walk for Gambu Danda and 30 minutes for Dhunge.

Both the areas are not yet served by NGOs activities. Dhunge is more prosperous in terms of school, literacy classes, retail shops and so on. It has also a rice mill and a health post. The majority of the population in the community are Bahums and Chhetris.

Most of the people living in Gambu Danda belong to the Tamang ethnic group. Their educational level is not very high and they do not show much interest in educational activities either. There are no literacy classes running in this community.

Philippines

Plaridel, where the government is running the magbassa kita (Let Us Read) project since January 1992, is a fourth class municipality in Quezon Province. The primary economic activity is rice cultivation but fishing and furniture making are also major occupations. Plaridel has only one health unit but there are day-care centres in each of the nine barangay or administrative sub-units.

Cardona, in the province of Rizal, has been the focus of an adult education initiative (ambitiously called *Self-Help Education Programme*) taken by a Peoples Organisation which is a confederation of fisher folk. This initiative began in 1985 and its principal political objective was to arrest marginalization of small fisher folk. The Laguna lake is the hub of cardonas life with fishing being the major source of income. Farming is another significant economic activity with rice as the major crop. There are 15 elementary schools and 4 secondary schools operating in the town.

Gamus adult education programme was implemented by the Parents and Youth of Gamu (PAYOGA), an NGO based in the province of Isabela founded in 1985. Gamu is a fifth class municipality and is one of the oldest towns in the Mallig region. It is primarily on agricultural area and the major crops planted are rice and corn. Cooperatives abound in the area. The municipality lies at the bottom end of the economic spectrum with 75 per cent of its population below the poverty line.

At Infanta, in Quezon province, a Farmer-Scientist Programme was taken up in 1993 by the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture, Los Banos, addressing primarily the problems of farm families. Infanta is plagued by low levels of functional education, poverty, dependence on outside

help, and a turbulent political situation that fosters both an insurgency movement and a strong military presence. Infanta is a fourth class municipality. The rural population comprises 87.6 per cent of the total and approximately 70 per cent of the population is below the poverty line. The town is peopled purely by an agricultural and fishing community. Rice and coconut are its major crops. The spirit of organising is active among the people. There are, at present, at least 24 NGOs, most of whom are farmers' groups. Efforts for livelihood and economic development are consolidated through an umbrella organisation called the Community Resources Development Organisation (CREDO).

In Valencia, in the province of Negros Oriental, a Comprehensive Education and Community Development Programme was begun in October 1995. Valencia is an interior town and is a fourth class municipality. It is primarily an agrarian economy with a fairly substantial belt of forest land. There are 18 elementary schools, two public high schools, two private high schools and 24 day-care centres.

All the five research sites have very high basic literacy rates exceeding 93 per cent but functional literacy rates are a good 17 per cent lower. This is a clear pointer to the need for sustained and comprehensive adult education programmes.

Thailand

Although conducted in 5 different regions, the study targeted people having overall similarities in their socio-economic profiles. The main occupation in all the areas is agriculture with a variety of crops grown. Rice is the chief staple but rubber is also a major occupation in the south. Among the study villages, around 95 per cent of school-age children have access to education upto grade six. However, there is also at least one school in a nearby area that offers lower secondary education. In some areas there is also a secondary school at the Tambon level. Since for levels beyond this, students have to go to the districts or to the city, the number of people continuing upto high school is minimal.

Besides the formal schooling system, there are non-formal education service centres at the district level in all the five regions. Whereas at the district, there is an NFE Service Centre, at the Tambon level a learning centre provides primary, lower and upper secondary non-formal education. There is also a public library in every district and a village reading centre in most of the communities. There are common public services in the area of health. At the Tambon level, in each region, there is a public health centre that provides basic health services. Piped water is available in some villages in the central, east and north-eastern region.

Impact

From the data garnered, both primary and secondary, this study seeks to establish the impact that adult education programmes have had on the communities/districts chosen. While doing so, two important factors need to be kept in mind.

First, it is always possible to level the charge that the impact said to have been achieved is attributable, in whole or in part, to causes or factors other than the adult education programme. Such a charge can never be completely rebutted. Nor is it necessary to do so. What needs to be emphasised, and also to be conclusively proved, is that the adult education programme did one or more of the following three things: i) triggered off the impact; ii) sustained and nurtured it; iii) or was primarily responsible for the extent of the impact.

Second, the quality of adult education programmes themselves may vary. Undoubtedly, well conceived and well executed initiatives do lead to sustainable impacts; but where programmes have lacked commitment or have been haphazardly carried out, hardly any perceptible gains have been achieved. This argument has to be conceded. Yet, the riposte lies in the argument itself. In order to achieve lasting, demonstrable impacts, non-formal adult education programmes need to be executed with: careful preparation and planning; the full involvement of NGOs, volunteers, officials and participants; the full co-operation of the community at large; constant validation, consolidation and reinforcement at each stage; consistent monitoring and evaluation; and-continuous linking of literacy skills with life improvement skills.

The impacts that adult education programmes have had on the purposively chosen communities/districts in each of the four countries can best be studied by grouping them under different heads.

Educational

One of the major impacts that adult education produces is that it encourages children's education. Children who live in an illiterate environment tend very rapidly to forget what they have learnt at school and to relapse into illiteracy. By contrast, dropping out is less frequent and knowledge is retained longer by those who, thanks to their families, have the opportunity to read and to maintain their acquired store of knowledge. For the family is the child's first school from childhood through adolescence. Adult education ensures that each new generation is born of better-educated parents, thereby producing a significant improvement from one generation to the next. In particular, the basic

education of adult women generates considerable progress in pre-school abilities of their children as well as improving the efficacy of schooling by reducing absenteeism and drop-out rates.

Attitude Towards Education of Children

The field study findings show that the parents of children with levels of literacy show a more positive attitude towards the education of their children, particularly that of girls. While both neo-literates and illiterates think that education is necessary for boys and girls, the educational level of neo-literates as well as the interest they take in the education of their children is much higher. Though there are differences in aspirational levels of education for boys vis-à-vis girls, reflecting inequity among both illiterates and neo-literates, the extent of disparity is significantly lower in the case of neo-literates. Neo-literates also take more interest in the education of their children. In India, it was for over one-fourth of neo-literate parents (28%) interact regularly teachers of their children as compared to below 10% in the case of the illiterates.

Increased School Enrolment

The adult education programme has contributed in a significant way to better enrolment of children in schools. The study findings in India show that enrolment of boys and girls in the age group 5-15 years is significantly higher in neo-literate households as compared to children in illiterate households. Two out of three boys in neo-literate households are in schools compared to three out of four in participant households. In the case of girls this difference is even more enhanced 58 % for non-participants; 72% for participants.

Social Awareness of the Importance of Education

All four country studies recorded heightened social awareness regarding the importance of education both for themselves as well as for their children. In Nepal, more than 61% of respondents from among participants expressed a strong

desire to provide their children with good education. In fact, they sent out a clear message to their governments to provide better access to superior quality of educational services Thailand study shows that as much as 88% of respondents strongly believed in education being an indispensable part of

peoples lives. In the Philippines, the Cardona programme demonstrated that participants consider education as really having greater value and the Gamu Programme came out with ample evidence that members associated with the adult education programme had increased motivation for education and training. They were actively encouraging the younger members to study and were themselves keen on acquiring more and more skills and techniques. The Valencia programme tied community development and education closely together and expanded the educational programme into an Education for All in its literal sense. All sectors community were involved and the facilities upgraded - from early childhood education in each barangay day-care centre, to children and in formal basic education, to high school students in outlying areas through the Home-School Programme, to non-formal adult education and life-related literacy, to post-secondary vocational-technical training, to faculty development for formal school teachers and even to graduate studies under the open university. This multiplicity of programme ensured continuing education for all. The relationship between formal non-formal adult education was assured through the restructuring of the curricular programme of the formal school and closely tying it to community life and activities. The integration and articulation of the development and education programmes was done through a task force made up of local officials, formal education leaders, community literacy teachers, NGO leaders, and leaders of local associations.

The India report details how the biggest achievement of the adult education movement in Birbhum has been its impact on girls education. The confidence of the girls as they perform drill of play football is the result of the awareness among neo-literate parents that girls need to be educated and outgoing. The need to provide equal opportunity to both girls and boys has also had the effect of generating greater demand for the quantity and quality of primary schooling.

There can be little doubt that when all four countries are taken together, the single biggest area of impact has been in the sphere of education. In Thailand, and particularly in the Philippines, the formal educational infrastructure has been rather well developed for quite some time now. Hence, in these two countries the effect, though clear enough, is perhaps not dramatic. But in India, and most definitely in Nepal, the impact is indeed considerable. School enrolment figures in the 6-15 age group show a sharp jump by as much as 8-10 per cent for boys and 14-16 per cent for girls in both countries. Drop-out rates also show, on the one hand, learners themselves are motivated to pursue further studies and on the other, the aspiration level for their children increases manifold. Hence a strong demand is generated for more and better schools and improved curricula. It needs to be stated however, that adults still have persuaded much more consistently, to keep children in school and them to complete their education. In the realm of girls education particularly, the full potential of adult education as a major contributing tool is a long way from being realised. Greater efforts towards this end needs to be made in India and Nepal.

Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment

One of the great strengths of the adult education programme in this region has been the involvement of women. As much as 62 per cent participants in India are female. Whereas in the Philippines and in Thailand women have been consistently involved in large numbers, in Nepal growing numbers of women are slowly acquiring the self-confidence to come out of their houses and join programmes of adult education. Programmes have provided illiterate adult women who have been denied access to formal schooling with a great opportunity for reading, writing, increasing awareness levels and skills training. Literacy and adult education campaigns have actively promoted gender equity and have so to empower them as to decision-making about themselves, their families and their communities.

Status in the Family

This major strain running through the programmes has played a significant role in improving the status of women within their own families. Whereas traditionally, women, particularly in Nepal and India, had little say in family decision-making, they, through participation, have begun to express their newly found self-belief in having a say both within and outside the family.

Educational Equality

Another area in which women's equality has shown a major improvement as a result of adult education programmes is the area of enrolment boys and girls in school. The India report brings out the fact that where among non-participants the ratio for enrolment is 58 girls to 67 boys, among participants it is 72 girls for 75 boys. Nepal too reports a noticeable correction in the imbalance motivated primarily by the impact of the adult education programme.

Differences in the literacy rates between adult males and females has caused a great deal of concern in the developing world. Thailand and the Philippines have successfully bridged this gap but India and Nepal a long way from doing so. In the one decade between 1985-1995, the differential for India stood reduced from 30 per cent to 28 per cent or mere 2 percentage points. In Nepal, the differential actually rose during the same period from 24 per cent to 27 per cent sending ominous sign to planners.

Women as Entrepreneurs and in New Vocations

Participation of women in these programmes has opened several opportunities for neo-literate women to step out of the household and involve themselves in some enterprise or in a new vocation. In Infanta, in the Philippines, the programme has encouraged participation among women. It has also produced several women farmer-scientists. Their active involvement in the agricultural operations of their families and community has become a model for others. Because of this, some women members have started to organise themselves into women's associations. They want to underscore the fact that women have an important role in agricultural development.

The Durnka campaign in India has demonstrated how adult education helped women take charge of their lives. They have formed a group Jaago *Behena* (*Awake Sister*) which tries to sensitise women to the need for collective action against social ills. These women have also set Didi Bank (Sister Bank) which promotes the habit of thrift and savings. Here women have also learnt to maintain hand pumps thereby b their dependence for repair on mechanics from outside the village

Inequality between men and women is one of the most persistent disparities in most societies. Differences in female and male literacy are one aspect of this phenomenon of gender-based inequality in the Asia/Pacific region. The Philippines is an exception. Here, male differentials were just 2 percentage points in 1980 and less than one percentage point in 1990. In Thailand, the gap was 8.3 percentage in 1980 which closed to 4.4 percentage points in 1990. In the Philippines a strong and widespread formal education infrastructure together with unbiased gender perception about educational opportunity, has allowed women to be more or less en par with their male counterparts in the area of literacy but also in the higher reaches of the education system. In Thailand too, a similar phenomenon has taken place, and literacy and educational disparities are fast disappearing. The contribution of adult education to this phenomena has been virtually nil in the Philippines and only limited in Thailand.

In India, the literacy gender gap was a massive 30 percentage points in 1980, almost the same in 1985 and stood at 29 percentage points in 1990. For Nepal the figures are even more alarming in that they have a been growing - 23.3 in 1980, 24.8 in 1985 and 25.8 percentage points in 1990. In both countries, for ages, women have been subjected to varying degrees of social discrimination and economic exploitation. The common form of disparity is that the female is confined to the traditionally ascribed roles within the four walls of the house. She is subject to prejudices in an orthodox milieu and has to be content with a secondary place in society.

The adult education movement in India has helped to make the horizon of vision wider and, at a more mundane level, has helped to disseminate knowledge of a host of women's issues. Literacy campaigns

have brought about dramatic changes in the lives of women. Women are communicating how they have started feeling more self-confident, how articulation has improved, how they have become more discerning and how they have learnt to function autonomously. Also, because of large scale social mobilisation, a social sanction has been obtained for larger women's participation in social, political and economic life. Women have gained substantially because the various patriarchal considerations that hinder their participation become inoperative as women come out of their homes and take part in the campaigns with great enthusiasm.

In Nepal, regrettably, the impact has been neither so extensive nor so deep. Whereas women are participating in the programme in large numbers and they are gradually mobilising themselves in the public sphere yet, there is a sharp persistence of stereo-type gender roles. The country report acknowledges that the one slight visible change is in the area of providing equal opportunity for boys and girls for primary education. Much greater efforts are called for if gender equity is to become a reality in Nepal.

Economic

Where programmes of adult education have gone beyond the transaction of mere literacy skills, where they have served to enhance productivity as well as knowledge and powers of reasoning, learning and adapting to development requirements, they have had direct repercussions on economic activity. The acquisition of literacy along with elements of skill development enable the worker, farmer and the wage-earner alike to enhance their earning capacities.

Both the Philippines and India reports have brought out clearly though, that acquisition of basic literacy does not automatically translate into higher income generation. The Philippines is a classic case of a country which registered a negative correlation between the basic literacy rate (which is as high as 93% and among the highest in the Asia/Pacific region) and economic growth as measured by per capita GNP, one of the lowest in the same region. Yet there is no doubt that adult education plays a key *enabling* role. It helps to equip, train and upgrade skills and it provides the motivation for the adult to improve the quality of his lifestyle.

Income Generation

The Nepal study showed that participants, mostly agricultural farmers, were able to develop other ways to supplement their income, for example, 12.8% were found to have opened their own small tea shops or other small retail businesses and 4.2% had found a job. The Thai study finds that involvement

in the adult education programme resulted in a significant economic impact. Among the 75 members interviewed as many as 37 (49.3%) contended that they now earn more income because of the new knowledge and skills that they are able to bring to their jobs.

The Philippines study findings reveal that in the Cardona Programme there was definitely enhanced family entrepreneurship. There may not have been a significant increase in the income of the fisher folk because of the deteriorating condition of the lake. There was, however, a more systematic livelihood planning and decision-making and the discovery of alternate sources of income. . In the Gamu programme, the income of the farm households tended to improve because of the decrease in expenses for minimal or non-use of chemical fertilisers and production of their own seeds. They had also acquired the capability to diversify livestock production and rearing. As much as 60% of the members claimed an increase in family income. They were able to avoid borrowing outside the co-operative, buy appliances and tools and send their children to school. In Infanta, there was a significant increase in rice productivity with lower input costs because participants had acquired seed sustainability, applied the technology of organic farming and many diversified to livestock production.

The India report details how in all three districts, with the improved vocational skills and increased access to institutional credit, the education programme has contributed to the emergence of economic enterprises started by neo-literates. Almost 16 per cent respondents said that they had started a new economic enterprise as tailoring shop, vegetable production unit, fisheries, etc.

Skill Development

In Thailand, 20 per cent of those interviewed confirmed having upgraded their existing skills or having acquired new ones. Some had learnt to make compost fertiliser, some had improved accounting skills, others had enhanced their clothes making abilities and yet others had moved on to wholly new areas such as becoming agents for life insurance. In India 62% of the participants confirmed having developed existing skills or acquiring new ones. In the Philippines, participants had developed livelihood skills such as food processing, organic farming, dress making, live stock raising and bamboo crafts and also learnt new technical skills such as accounting, bookkeeping, preparing feasibility studies and marketing techniques.

Better Expenditure Management, Household Savings and Access to Credit

An overwhelming majority of neo-literates in all four countries reported better management of their expenses. Adult education programmes have contributed to a reduction in expenditure on bad habits and an increased desire to satisfy genuine social needs.

The India study delineates the manner in which women participants, have begun to set aside their earnings not only in regular banks but in special thrift societies. Such societies, as for example in Dumka, are run by the women themselves. They offer 24-hour services and easy access to micro-credit. The Philippines study depicts the efforts of adult educators to free the participants from the bondage of loan sharks. In Gamu, for example, a loan programme started by the PAYOGA - KAPATAGAN provides capital for the members to start their own livelihood projects at very nominal interest rates.

Assessment

In enabling participants to improve their economic status, adult education programmes in all the four countries, have had a somewhat variable impact. It must be acknowledged that adult education benefits do not visibly translate into lower unemployment rates or sudden financial gains. What they do is to play an *enabling* or *equipping* role - giving the adult participant the wherewithal to improve his quality of life.

From the available studies, it appears that the respondents from Thailand were significantly convinced that non-formal adult education had provided them with the opportunity for upward economic mobility. They had not only been able to procure promotions in existing vocations, but many had diversified into newer and more promising lines of work. The Philippines programmes too have widened economic horizons. Enhanced family entrepreneurship, systematic livelihood planning and the ability to acquire alternate or supplementary sources of income have all been direct outcomes. Simultaneously, skills acquired in the course of adult learning have helped farming households to decrease their expenses on account of minimal or non-use of chemical fertilisers as well as seed self-sufficiency. Increased agricultural productivity has also resulted from the use of organic farming techniques and diversification into livestock production.

Nepal too has done reasonably well in this area. A significant number of participants have been able to supplement their regular earnings by opening small retail shops or acquiring regular jobs. In India, however, skill development has yet to be linked to literacy campaigns in significant way. Economic benefits have, therefore, been restricted to women's co-operatives providing banking facilities or

groups of women operating thrift and small savings schemes. Although as many as 178 post-literacy campaigns are running in the country, skill development even in traditional vocations, has unfortunately remained a peripheral concern. Corrective measures have recently been initiated with seriousness but they have yet to take hold.

Health and Hygiene

The effects of adult education on health and hygiene are indeed most significant. Raising the functional literacy level of a community leads a demonstrable decline in fertility and infant mortality rates. Adult education helps spread knowledge about health care and nutrition, therefore enabling mothers to keep their families in better health and to care better for their children. Enhanced functional literacy levels bring about an attitudinal change towards traditionally entrenched ideas and the desired number of children. Family planning is ineffectual where women are illiterate; but it works well where they can read and write.

General Health Awareness

The study findings show overwhelming differences between participant and non-participants in knowledge levels and attitudinal disposition towards minimum age at first marriage for boys and girls, problems of early marriage, spacing and the small family norm. Awareness of Oral Rehydration Salt is much higher among neo-literates as compared to nonliterates as shown in the studies of India and Nepal.

Use Of Safe Drinking Water

Better awareness of health practices has prompted more and more to collect to collect safe drinking water from community hand pumps. In many villages, neo-literate women have also started looking after the maintenance of the hand pumps to ensure proper functioning.

Knowledge of Family Planning Practices

Particularly from India and Nepal, the studies showed that adult education campaigns had enabled women to be far better aware of the avenues open to them for restricting the size of their families. This

had prompted greater use of prophylactic methods. Simultaneously, this has brought greater pressure to bear on the health service delivery system. The demand for better extension services and increased availability of prophylactic devices is on the increase.

The India and Nepal reports also showed strong positive impacts of the adult education programmes on increased life expectancy at birth, lowering of fertility rates, reduction in infant mortality rates, enhancement of deliveries by trained professionals and increase of mean age at marriage.

Improved Hygiene

Adult education also seems to have impacted significantly on the practices of domestic cleanliness. Neo-literates, particularly in Nepal and India but also in the remote rural areas of Thailand and the Philippines, showed a much higher desire to maintain a cleaner, germ-free household environment. Domestic sanitation has very low penetration in rural and interior areas. Adult education initiatives have certainly made a dent in this sector.

Assessment

The role played by adult education programmes in the sphere of health and hygiene may be regarded as supplemental. The four countries under review have their own health extension services which play the primary role in spreading health education and acknowledge of health issues. The adult education programmes help in two specific ways. Firstly, by increasing the literacy levels and receptive capacities of adult learners, they allow health messages to be absorbed more quickly. They enable participants to understand and perceive the benefits and flow from health awareness and actually adopt safer and more advanced health practices. Secondly, the outreach of adult education programmes is frequently greater. So, such programmes access the unreached and the marginalised communities in areas where health penetration is either non-existent or minimal.

In Thailand and the Philippines, the contribution of adult education, improved health and reproductive health practices has been somewhat diffused. In fact, the Philippines which has had a female literacy around 90 per cent right through the 80s and 90s and a declining rate from 5.97 in 1973 to 4.26 in 1988 now shows indications that the decline in fertility is relatively slow and possibilities of an actual increase exists.

In India and Nepal, however, adult education Programmes are playing a powerful complementary role. Literacy Primers carry imaginative signed messages on hygiene and health matters and discussions on

family planning and restricting family size regularly take place in education classes. Participants are also actively urged to adopt improved hygiene and sanitation practices in their domestic environment.

Social and Personal Development

If there is one sphere in which adult education Programmes in this region have contributed to most significantly, it is the sphere of social personal development. Whether it is Bilaspur in India, Sarlahi in Nepal, Songkhla in Thailand or Valencia in the Philippines, everywhere individuals and communities have been strengthened, their outlooks transformed, their self-esteem levels raised, their awareness of local, national, and international issues broadened and their feelings of isolation and exclusion removed.

The successful campaigns have clearly demonstrated that community involvement and support are basic to an adult education programme. Where such programmes have involved whole communities and specific content of peoples lives, they have strengthened that community, given it a new cohesiveness and the capacity for group action. They have provided to the community the opportunity to plan, implement evaluate their own programmes so that they become empowered and self-reliant in their attempts to determine and sustain the course of their lives. The Infanta programme, for instance, has enhanced community extension and developed responsive local institutions. The participants having a common plight, have organised themselves into a people's organisation called the Association of Sustainable Agricultural Farmers of Infanta. This has given them the capacity to expand their extension work, and lobby with the local government as well as the local NGOs. Birbhum, in India, the adult education movement has witnessed the community and the district administration working together in a spirit of co-operation. People are no longer hesitant in contributing to the development plans of their own village. A new cultural confidence gets echoed in the traditional dance that the tribal people perform in their renewed affirmation of life. In Tanhun, in Nepal, participants gave voice to a similar form of community organisation and participation. The community there has already formulated its strategy to demand better electricity supply to ban the consumption of liquor in the villages and to promote new technologies in agriculture.

At the individual level, self-esteem and self-confidence have increase manifold across the board. Almost all respondents were agreed that they had acquired a sense of self-belief which had been missing earlier. With this had come the desire to increase awareness levels, to know more about the outside world and to escape from the shackles of entrenched beliefs, antiquated ideas and both social and religious dogma.

One other notable feature, evident in all four countries, has been the extent to which individuals and communities have developed a deep and abiding consciousness about ecological issues. In Birbhum, India, Peoples Committees have been formed among neo-literates to patrol the forest area and prevent illegal falling of trees. In Gamu, in Valencia and in Cardona adult educators have laid considerable stress on avoidance of the use of chemical fertilisers and reliance instead on organic farming and seed sustainability.

Assessment

In the realm of community development, Philippines and India have shown the way. Of the five programmes reviewed in the Philippines study, four have impacted the community indelibly. Enhancing community extension, developing responsive local institutions, improving cohesiveness and promoting the capacity for group action - these have been the hallmarks of the Philippines programmes. Success in this area in India has been somewhat patchy. Literacy campaigns in south and eastern India recorded significant gains in community mobilisation. But the northern states - popularly known as the Hindi heartland - have proved much more difficult.

The Nepalese programmes have met with very modest success. Only the surface has yet been skimmed and major initiatives are urgently called for. Thailand has never really espoused the concept of community mobilisation in its non-formal adult education programmes. The stress has been much more on provision of facilities and imparting of skills.

But what cannot be taken away from any of the programmes in any of the four countries, is that they have contributed significantly, at the individual level, in raising self-esteem, and self-confidence and enhancing self-belief.

Summary, Recommendations and Policy Implications

In his seminal work "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed", Paulo Friere portrayed in sharp and poignant relief what he described as the culture of silence and the dependence of the oppressed. Every development service requires the understanding and participation of the people whom it is meant to serve. This is achieved only through education - not formal, but non-formal and informal. Development does not take place in an oppressive or exploitative environment. Men and women have to be liberated from such an environment so as to become active participants in development. Adult education has to contain a style of teaching which is intrinsically liberating. This, broadly, was Friere's view - an approach in which adult education became a weapon for social change.

We need thus to perceive adult education as the process of influencing the mind-sets and behaviour patterns of people. In fact the whole development paradigm is linked very closely to adult education. Julius Nyrere in 1967-68 said that development has a purpose and that purpose is the liberation of man. Which is why we recognise the fundamental importance of developing our human resources in the broadest sense. Nations that do a better job in managing their human resources are the ones most likely to emerge as the most successful in the coming years. And it is precisely in this area that adult education - concerned as it is with raising the critical consciousness of communities - plays a critical role.

When we talk of adult education, it is in fact the rediscovery of an old and tested truth that education takes place in a multiplicity of locales, that involves discussion and mutual sharing rather than formal lectures and didactic presentations, that it is continuous with the whole of ones life and that it can be tailored to the needs of different ages, groups, and professions in society. When we look at development from the perspective of adult education, we acknowledge that the basic purpose as well as the basic instrument of development is man and non-formal adult education is both a critical end of, and a necessary means to, development.

If that be so, then adult education should be a strategic element in integrated national planning in its formulation, articulation, implementation and review phases. This may appear to be stating a truism but the history of the last thirty years suggests that this vital aspect has neither informed the consciousness of national decision takers or high level policy planners nor even educational experts, much less of political lobbyists and least of all of international donor agencies.

The 1996 Jomtien Declaration on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning adopted at the Asia/Pacific Regional Consultation (16-18 September 1996) highlights this as a conscious effort to redress this shortcoming, the delegates at the Regional Conference were unanimous in their view that a Regional Impact Study for South Asia and the Pacific needed to be presented at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education to be held at Hamburg in July 1997.

This four-country study, co-ordinated by UNESCO/PROAP, Bangkok is thus intended to impress upon opinion leaders, decision-makers and international donor agencies that *adult education deserves much higher policy priority and significantly higher financial support.*

With the help of primary data collected from field studies and secondary, back-up data available from published sources, this Impact Study clearly demonstrates that adult education programmes, when run with community support and when addressed to the basic needs, problems and aspirations of adult learners, have a decided and demonstrable impact on:

- **the Educational Scenario:**

- (i) encourages children's education particularly that of girls;
- (ii) lowers the drop-out rates;
- (iii) brings about a more positive attitude towards education;
- iv) increases school enrolment and educational attainment;

- **Health and Hygiene Matters:**

- (i) increases the age at first marriage;
- (ii) encourages the spacing of children;
- (iii) promotes the adoption of family planning practices;
- (iv) assists the lowering of fertility rates, reduction in the infant mortality rates and enhancement of deliveries by trained professionals;
- (v) teaches the maintenance of higher levels of domestic sanitation.

- **Economic Activity:**

- (i) enhances earning capacity;
- (ii) plays a major role in equipping, training and upgrading skills;
- (iii) promotes better expenditure management, household savings and access to credit;

- **Social and Personal Development:**

- (i) acts as a catalytic agent for community mobilisation;

(ii) enhances self-esteem and self-confidence;

(iii) creates consciousness of important issues touching their lives such as environmental conservation;

• **Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment:**

(i) helps women acquire a better status within their families and within their communities;

(ii) assists in bringing about equality between boys and girls in the sphere of enrolment;

(iii) facilitates entrepreneurship and new vocations for women.

This Four Nation Impact Study, based on exhaustive field research in India, Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand, is a powerful and positive reinforcement of the view that adult education benefits can be seen, heard, documented and in many instances even measured. With such concrete evidence forthcoming, planners, policy-makers, NGOs and donor agencies can no longer shirk their responsibilities nor turn a Nelson's eye to the imperative need for a quantum jump in resource support for adult education programmes across the globe.

At the World Summit for Social Development, Denmark, 1996 it was resolved that reducing the adult illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level with an emphasis on female literacy shall be a major priority for governments with assistance from the international community as a part of the commitment to meet the basic learning needs of all.

In line with this objective, our study strongly urges an action plan at the national level that includes time-bound national strategies for the eradication of illiteracy and the provision of lifelong learning facilities. It advocates an inter-agency approach which would ensure that adults, particularly women, are provided with useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and the ethical and social values required to develop their full capacities in health and dignity and participate fully in the social, economic and political process of development.

What is required at the international level is that international financial institutions support these objectives, integrating them into their policy, programmes and operations. This should be complemented by renewed bilateral and regional co-operation.

Developing countries receive a mere US\$ 2.5 billion aid towards education and a very small fraction of this for adult education. This accounts for an insignificant 5 per cent of the total flow of

international aid. A study by the Institute for Research into the Economics of Education (IREDU), France, showed that in giving aid, smaller countries are favoured with higher per capita aid for education and those areas are preferred where pupils are few, aid is more visible and impact of contribution easier to evaluate. *Adult education, therefore, is clearly not a priority item for external aid.*

The Director-General of UNESCO in his declaration on International Literacy makes a fervent plea for an immediate redressal of this imbalance and complete re-prioritisation for adult education : "*A literate world is not only one where people can read and write, it is a world in which the human potential has been liberated and placed in the service of progress. There is, in short, no secret about what is required to build a better world for tomorrow. It is increasingly evident that we must begin by investing substantially in improving adult education today*

The strong message that reverberates across the pages of the four country studies may be seen as recommendations that have far-reaching consequences. The strong message that reverberates across the pages of the four country studies may be seen as recommendations that have far-reaching policy implications for governments, planners, NGOs and multilateral donor agencies across the globe. These may be encapsulated below:

- There is an immediate urgency to reach out to the unreached;

- Literacy and continuing education programmes must be a part of national plans and should be flexible, innovative and diverse;

- There must be much larger participation, involvement and accountability on the part of NGOs, governments, and other practitioners of adult education;
- Curricula and teaching-learning materials must be relevant to the needs and circumstances of the learners. Hence the culture and knowledge systems of indigenous peoples must be recognised, respected and built upon;

- Attention must be focused on addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

- Greater stress must be laid on decentralised planning for adult education. Decision-making must begin with community participation and the fullest involvement of local bodies, representatives and local governments;

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- Programmes must be content-specific and community-based. They must address the basic needs, problems and aspirations of adult learners;
 - A gender equity perspective must be integrated into all adult education programmes;
 - Finally, and perhaps most importantly, new partnerships at the international level need to be forged and existing alliances strengthened.

This Integrated Study is part of the general objective of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V), July 1997, to manifest the growing demand for adult learning in all areas of life and forge world-wide commitments to meet the requirement for a sustainable and equitable development *in which adult education plays a major contributing role.*

Glossary

Adult basic education : all forms of organised education and training that meet the basic learning needs of adults, including literacy, numeracy general knowledge and life skills. For statistical purposes, adults usually defined as persons aged 15 years or over.

Basic learning needs : comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numerically, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and at required by human beings to survive, to develop.

Fertility rate : number of live births in a given year 1,000 women the age-group 15-49 years.

Functional literacy: a term sometimes used to distinguish the ability to use literacy skills for particular purposes in the home, community workplace. However, it is now generally considered that true literacy must be functional and relevant to the individual's needs.

Illiteracy : a lack of mastery of the written language, usually related to a social condition of poverty, but not to be confused with ignorance.

Illiteracy rate : number of illiterate adults expressed as a percentage of the total adult population (15 years or older).

Life expectancy at birth : the average number of years a newborn infant is expected to live if prevailing patterns of mortality in the country at the time of birth were to stay the same throughout his or her life.

Net enrolment ratio (NER) : the number of pupils in the official school-age group expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age-group.

Non-formal education : educational activities for children, youth or adults that are organised outside the formal school system, sometime referred to as out-of-school education.

Under-5 mortality rate (U5MR): the number of deaths of children under five years of age per thousand live births during a given year.

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Footnotes

1. This paper has been taken from the report: UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP): *Impact of Non-formal Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: A Four-Country Synthesized Study*, UNESCO-PROAP, Bangkok, Thailand, July 1997. For reasons of space, the graphics, tables and photographs have been excluded.

Adult Education in the United States: A Rudder Held by Many Hands

Ronald S. Pugsley

No education steering wheel

In recent years, adult literacy has become crucial to the economic performance of industrialized nations. Literacy is no longer defined merely as a basic threshold of reading ability. Literacy is now seen as how adults use written information to function in society. Society has become more complex and low-skill jobs are disappearing. Unemployment and underemployment are more frequent among persons with low literacy levels. Low levels of literacy among a broad section of the population threaten the strength of economies and the social cohesion of nations.

With these high stakes, governments have a growing interest in understanding the level and distribution of literacy among their adult populations and in what can be done to improve literacy. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) yielded a rich array of data on the literacy skills of adults in seven industrialized nations. These data have been demonstrated to be comparable across language and culture. As a first international survey to test adult abilities directly, its results have wide interest and are useful for many kinds of analysis. IALS results show that literacy is a problem for most developed nations.

In the United States, the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) 21- 23 percent, or some 40 to 44 million of the 191 million adults, demonstrated skills in the lowest level of prose, document and quantitative literacy.

The central government in U.S. education

When our thirteen colonies united to form a federation, they gave up their individual powers selectively and with great caution. A basic condition of the federal union was to create a central government to do those things that the states could not do for themselves. The central government was expected, for example, to conduct foreign policy, print money, regulate trade and wage war. Among the powers reserved to the states--and more specifically to localities--was the power to provide educational services.

It would be hard to describe, except in some minor and short-term way, how the United States' central government has turned education powers back to the states. The states never gave up their authority over education. Whenever proposals to create national standards for education are made, a profound debate begins. Historically, Americans have held--and still hold today--that local control of education is a sacrosanct principle of democratic governance. Education of children is seen as the prerogative of

parents, the aggregate version of which is the representative local school board. Education, after all, determines what is in people's minds and hearts. An educational system free from central control is the key to maintaining a democratic government.

A meaningful federal role in education first became evident through the courts during the 1950s as a way to ensure equal access to education for all races. It expanded through Congressional and executive branch action as a tool in the war against poverty in the 1960s. Federal legislation to provide economic opportunities to the poor established the federal role in adult education itself in 1964. That role was to encourage states to establish systems to provide adults with basic literacy skills.

Policymakers and the public agreed in those years that literacy was a necessary element for the poor to achieve upward social mobility, primarily through individual empowerment but also by building their academic qualifications for employment. Most states at that time did not have systems to deliver adult education services. The federal role was limited to seeding these systems with small amounts of money as an incentive to level the education playing field for disadvantaged populations. The central government did not set policies regarding what was taught in classrooms except to protect what the courts saw as basic freedoms, such as freedom of religion. Intrusion by the federal government into what is taught was not tolerated by states or localities. But states were eager to receive additional federal funds for literacy --even if it meant providing state and local dollars as match.

Let me put these philosophical orientations in concrete financial terms. Of all the funds spent on education in the United States, only a small part - about 7% - is federal assistance. About 93% of education funding is contributed by the states and localities. In contrast, of adult education spending in the most recent available year (FY 1993), just three of every ten dollars spent came from the federal government.

Here is an illustration of the rudder held by many hands. The availability of federal funding has leveraged state funding increases for adult education over the last two decades. In 1980, states contributed just \$74 million to adult education services. The federal contribution for that year was \$ 100 million. By 1998, the estimated federal share of adult education funds will have more than tripled to a requested \$382 million. More telling is the estimated growth of state contributions by 1998 to almost 13 times their size in 1980, totaling almost \$930 million. Moreover, federal spending accounts for at least half of adult education spending in half the states. The relatively few federal dollars, however, provide the rudder of the ship steered by both the central and state governments.

Another example of the rudder is in the changing availability of funded programs. Where there were no systems for adult education, opportunities were provided. Special focuses in state programs such as opportunities to obtain a high school credential or to learn at the workplace were put in place in response to changes in the federal adult education statute over time.

Even so, we at the central government level in education have more influence than control, with some financial incentives to sweeten the pot. "Steering" is something we do and don't do well because local adult education services are very responsive to local needs and local funding streams. And adult education policy is controlled to a great degree by larger outside forces--even involving federal activity-- that impact on education, but do not arise from it.

Adult education in the United States

In the context I have described, what I am about to say may make more sense. Adult education under United States statutes is defined by who receives instruction not by what the instruction is. The definition reads, in part, ...'Adult education' means ... instruction below the college level for adults who ... lack sufficient mastery of basic skills to enable them to function effectively in society ... [and] whose lack of mastery of basic skills results in an inability to speak, read or write ... English ... which constitutes a substantial impairment of their ability to get ... employment commensurate with their real ability..." Nothing in the definition says what is to be taught, for how long or when. Nothing in the law says adults must participate. And there is no consensus that it should.

Local providers may be local school districts, community colleges, community-based organizations or alliances of eligible organizations and private enterprise. The target population numbered about 46 million in program year 1995 and we served only nine percent of that population.

States are responsible for collecting data on adult education services--without regard to the source of funding supporting those services--and reporting that information to the federal government. States also use primarily federal funds to provide professional development for adult education personnel.

Professional development may be provided for teachers--who are mostly part-time staff trained for elementary-secondary teaching--as well as to other adult education personnel. This includes about 100,000 volunteers who assist the adult education teaching force nationally.

The federal government's role is to provide funds that leverage state investment to support education opportunities for persons who are educationally disadvantaged and most in need of services--a target population that state systems might not otherwise rate high on their lists when distributing scarce funding for education. Local providers offer services designed for adults in diverse locations and on flexible schedules so that adults can work learning around their responsibilities as parents and employees. Adults' participation is strictly voluntary, except for incarcerated adults who may participate to advance toward parole.

In good programs, learning basic skills is done in "real-life" contexts of work, parenting and citizenship--and is aided by technology that provides access to learning even at home. Programs may involve basic skills, obtaining a high school credential, or learning English as a second language. Outcomes are measured by local programs including not only learning gains, but other measures of advancement such as moving off welfare, gaining employment or registering to vote.

As a result of the 1991 National Literacy Act, states were required to develop indicators of program quality and to use them in measuring effectiveness of local programs. The federal government developed "model" indicators, and some states adopted them. But the statute was consistent with American thinking about control of education because it gave states freedom to create their own indicators of program quality. Nationally, states have implemented their indicators fully. All states have developed indicators. A number of states indicators went far beyond the simple federal models, some even creating uniform definitions and measures across social programs. The indicators, which govern the direction of program improvement, are also a rudder moved by many hands.

Activity of outside forces in shaping education policy in a democracy

When we talk about education policymaking in the United States, then we are not talking primarily about central government activities. We are speaking mostly about state and local activities in adult education, these activities are frequently in response to federal incentives. Pretty clearly, Washington has a limited role in education-- more influence than it has power.

Federal policies that do emerge usually represent a broad consensus of the national population that the central government has a role in "doing something" about an issue. There is usually some difficulty involving equal access to education for disadvantaged populations or educational quality, that requires federal activity. How that consensus emerges is at best not scientific--and at worst it emerges through the stress and strain among a range of contending forces. It's not a process amenable to federal "steering" primarily because a national consensus about the need for the policy has to develop for a policy to be established.

Examples of issues shaping adult education policy

Let me lay out some recent examples of forces outside the education system that do "steer" education policy in the United States. Some these forces actually are the result of federal policies in other areas where more control is exercised.

Global competitiveness

After World War II, the United States' economy was strong and competitive. Our economy was based on producing large numbers of cheap goods with identical quality. But the United States' economy in the 1980's experienced heavy going in an emerging global economy. The new economy competed on quickly providing small amounts of high quality goods especially designed to customer specifications.

Globalization meant a number of things: elimination of trade barriers-, deregulation of markets and financial services; greatly increased flows of information and financial capital among nations; and reintegration of central/eastern European and Asian nations into the world economy. Like all OECD nations, the United States' capacity to adjust to a global economy depends on its ability to improve productivity and capitalize on innovation. This capacity depends first and foremost on the knowledge and skills of the population. The need for workers with new skills demonstrated to parents, business owners, and taxpayers that graduates of our high schools--and even some postsecondary institutions--did not have the basic skills that businesses and industries need to compete globally. This was especially true of new skills such as team-work and problem-solving, A national consensus for federal action to make sure our workers could compete in a global economy was building in the late 1970's and the 1980's. By the late 1980's to mid-1990's, taxpayers agreed that the federal government should "do something" to help workers faced with business' new requirements. Voters also agreed that elementary and secondary schools should do more to make sure graduates could participate effectively in work. Congress provided federal incentives to partnerships of businesses, unions and education organizations to bring workers' basic skills up to par. This Administration promoted federal incentives to help states build programs bridging the gap from school-to-work.

Immigration

In addition to being young, the United States is a nation of immigrants. All of us came--or our ancestors came--from somewhere else. This includes, it is now thought, Native American populations who have lived on lands that now comprise the U.S. for thousands of years. But today's climate for immigration is quite different from the nation that greeted immigrants with open arms over a century ago. Immigrants to the United States were a priceless source of labor for widely available jobs and force pushing back what seemed to be an endless frontier. Our frontiers are gone now. Our nation is crowded. The labor market is competitive and requires high-tech. Yet more and more immigrants arrive on our shores--legally and illegally--hoping for their piece of upward mobility, peace and security that is the American dream. New statutes granting amnesty to illegal immigrants who had been in the United States for a period of time, brought many hidden immigrants into programs to seek English for citizenship.

Many immigrants participate in English as a second language (ESL) courses funded by adult education programs. Adult education helps our immigrants become effective citizens. Their economic independence and their ability to execute their rights and responsibilities as citizens require mastery of the English language. The ESL programs offered by the federal, state and local adult education system enroll about 1.4 million individuals annually. In 1995, 400,000 basic ESOL students advanced to the intermediate level, indicating initial mastery of basic English literacy. Some states, such as California, spend about half of their federal allotments for adult education on English as a second language classes.

Welfare Reform

Welfare reform in the United States is another force shaping adult education. As you may know, Congress and President Clinton have undertaken a major reorganization of the welfare system that has existed since the days of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The 1996 welfare reform legislation created a block grant which provides funds to allow states to run welfare programs of their own design within broad federal guidelines. The new law requires that welfare recipients engage in work in order to receive benefits. For the most part, what counts as work does not include education, except a limited involvement in vocational education. Persons wishing to pursue standard adult education opportunities would have to work 20 hours to fulfill the work requirement and then participate in classes. The new statute also restricts benefits paid to legal immigrants many of whom have been in the United States for many years.

Adult welfare recipients in the U.S. have such low levels of literacy that about 40 percent cannot do tasks such as completing an application. Over one third to almost one half of welfare recipients test in the lowest level of literacy. Because literacy is currency on the labor market, seeing to it that welfare recipients have good basic skills seems imperative. Turning back responsibility for welfare to the states has had an interesting effect on adult education programs. We have found that programs involving welfare clients are changing to fit requirements of the new law. For example, a number of states have moved from open-entry open-exit to a more structured approach. Others have extended hours of attendance to meet requirements of welfare reform. Still others are changing curriculum to include more job readiness training and workrelated contexts for basic skills. All of these changes appear to enhance program quality, although what the ultimate outcome is remains to be seen.

Intergenerational Links

A trend related to welfare reform is an increased interest in family literacy approaches. Family literacy programs help parents and children learn together. Traditional family literacy modes include pre-school classes for children, adult basic skills training, parenting education and parentchild interaction time. Model programs began primarily in Kentucky and North Carolina, first funded with adult education funds and then by a private trust and private industry. Almost simultaneously,

Congress enacted a federal program of incentives to provide family literacy classes to parents in adult education programs who had children less than eight years old and who lived in high-poverty areas. The program, consistent with the U.S. approach to education, became a program of grants to states in 1992, rather than directly from Washington to local school districts. Even Start projects now exist in every state in the nation, an indication of its widespread support.

Studies confirm that parents are more motivated to learn when their children are involved. Children also learn more and are better prepared for school. Parents' involvement in their children's education increases for those participating in the family literacy programs. However, the model takes multiple years to implement.

As educators contemplated the effects of welfare reform, it became clear that family literacy programs offered promise. Mothers who receive welfare benefits have an average of 2.6 children, two-thirds of whom are under age six, welfare reform has generated an increased interest in family literacy approaches. Nearly half lack a high school diploma. A number of family literacy programs had also been used successfully with welfare clients. One study primarily of welfare recipients found that welfare savings alone for less than a two-year period can replay the total direct cost of family literacy programs. With the effects of welfare reform making this approach attractive to many states, the outcome of the expanding experiment remain to be seen.

Where we're going

There is a saying in the U.S. that "it's not where you've been, it's where you're going that counts." Despite our systemic differences in organizing educational systems, the emerging global information economy changes the demands on all our citizens. The case for increased importance of the human factor in learning economies and societies is evident. The challenges call attention to the level and distribution of literacy in society. They focus national on adult education as a means of acquiring and developing literacy. No matter what road we took to get here, it is clear that developing literacy should be a key element in every nation's long-term policy strategy.

Adult learning in the Knowledge Society: Shift from financing learning inputs to recognising learning outputs

Jan van Ravens

Introduction

Goal

This paper has the ambition to provide a framework for understanding and interrelating some major developments in the field of adult learning. The framework may serve as a basis for government strategies to stimulate adult learning.

Method

Since the paper and its presentation are relatively brief, the accent is on general trends, prophecies and recommendations, rather than on details.

The prophecies are not predictions based on extrapolations from any quantitative material. They are however based on (perceptions and interpretations of) present trends in adult learning. The recommendations concern the choices governments might make: which trends should be supported and which should be opposed in order to stimulate adult learning?

Central thesis

The central thesis is that the focal point in adult learning policies will shift from the financing of learning inputs (the resources needed for formal education and training) to recognising learning outputs, usually referred to as learning outcomes or competencies.

This is a trend that one can already witness. It is a process that is predicted to go on, regardless of government policies. But it is also a process that governments might want to accelerate in the light of the goals of adult learning.

Contents

Part 1 of this paper addresses these goals, and argues that most adult learning is learning for employment in the purpose of social inclusion.

Part 2 deals with the shift from education to learning. This process is seen as a particularisation of the general shift from supply-driven to demand-driven organisations and economies. The motives to enhance the ongoing education-to- learning shift are to be found in pedagogy, in the issue of inclusion, and in the theme of the knowledge society.

Part 3 addresses the issue of the costs of learning: What makes learning so expensive. and what policies are designed to cover the costs? The main conclusion is that most financing solutions are relics of the industrial era, and go against the dynamics of the knowledge society.

Part 4 is about the recognition of competencies. It describes how traditional recognition systems are in danger of becoming obsolete, how others are on the rise, and what governments might do to guide this, basically positive development. It is concluded that the transparency of knowledge and competencies - on the level of the individual, the firm and government - will be among the hallmarks of the knowledge society.

Focus

The focus is on the OECD-experience. This implies by no means that it is of less relevance to developing countries or to countries in transition. In building their education and training systems, these countries may avoid the pitfalls of old strategies, and directly adopt innovative approaches.

Part 1:

THE GOALS OF ADULT LEARNING: INCLUSION AND EMPLOYMENT

Inclusion

Although there is no universal formulation of the goals of adult learning, some notions do arise frequently in policy documents. There is ample agreement that adult learning should somehow serve the objective of inclusion or social cohesion (OECD, 1997), and thus the fight against the exclusion of individuals and groups from society. Another, closely related objective is the prevention of conflict, referred to as 'learning to live together', (UNESCO, 1996) and as education for a culture for peace, (UNESCO, 1997). We will confine ourselves to inclusion, since it is more concrete than, and a condition for prevention of conflict

Learning for employment

Inclusion can be pursued on three levels: economic (participation in the labour process), social (full participation in social life) and civil (participation in the democratic process). These three levels of participation relate to one another like layers in the Maslov pyramid of human needs. Economic participation is the basic. It is essential to survival on a minimum level of prosperity, and enables the individual to participate socially. This, in turn, is both a goal in itself and a condition for the higher goal of participation in democratic processes.

It follows that adult learning, serving the goal of inclusion, is to a large extent, learning for employment. This can either be to improve performance in present work or - for the unemployed - to increase the chances to obtain a job. Learning for employment may therefore include paid, subsidised and unpaid labour.

Subsidised access to the workplace is for many individuals necessary. However, governments should promote this not as a goal in itself, but as a way to qualify for a regular job.

Not all adult learning, however, is learning for employment. Some learning precedes it, some learning goes beyond it. Once more the Maslov pyramid may serve as a metaphor, as a way to arrange learning needs.

The need for literacy is at the very base. It should be met in pre-adult learning, and, if not, it should be given high priority, without any financial, institutional or regulatory thresholds whatsoever. Clearly, universal literacy is a merit good; in both OECD and other countries it should be withdrawn from discussions about collective and private benefits and contributions.

At the top of the pyramid we find the 'higher', learning goals, such as self-realisation. In this case the private benefits are clear enough to make the individual pay the costs (if any) of the learning, especially if economic participation is already ensured.

This paper will further concentrate on learning for employment as a means to inclusion.

Part 2

THE SHIFT FROM EDUCATION TO LEARNING

The four UNESCO conferences prior to 'Hamburg-1997' were on adult *education*. The present one is on adult *learning*. This change reflects what is by far the most fundamental trend in the world of education and training today: thinking and acting in terms of education makes way for thinking and acting in terms of learning.

We shall first address this issue against the background of a broader development in society at large. Then we discuss three motives to enhance this trend: the learning process itself, inclusion of learning styles and the knowledge society.

From supply- to demand-driven production

Education and teaching are supply-categories. Educational systems and institutions supply the service of teaching: the teacher, content, facilities, and methods.

Learning is on the demand-side. Learning is what the client does, driven by his needs and motivations.

On a more general level, it can be observed that the shift from supply to demand is high on the agenda in all sectors of the economy and of public life. Economies where production and distribution are predominantly based on the supply paradigm are either in crisis or have already fallen apart. Mixed economies are redesigning their public sectors in such a way that they are no longer steered and financed on the basis of inputs, but rewarded for quality, performance and outputs. Satisfying the customer is becoming the main, if not sole, target of all organisations.

Thus, the shift from education to learning is part of (and supported by) a much broader societal and economic development. Let us first look into the learning process itself.

The learning process

Many will be familiar with the educational triangle, where at the centre of the education process is the teacher (supplier), and where content and learner are at the bottom. It is the teacher's job to transfer the content to the learner.

It is a well known fact however, that this educational triangle does not represent what really happens. Pedagogically it is nonsense to say that one can actively transfer content to a learner. Instead, the learning is done by no one but the learner, provided that two conditions are fulfilled: the learner has to be motivated to learn, and the learning has to be facilitated by resources that suit his learning style. These resources might include books and other media, a time and a place for learning, learning methods, and a professional to support or guide the learning process.

The shift from teacher-centred education to learner-centred learning is by no means based on brand new pedagogical insights. It has been advocated for quite some time. But it seems that now - against the background of the supply-to-demand shift in society at large - the time is right for these views to disseminate. This has two major implications, the first of which brings us back to the issue of inclusion.

Inclusion of learning styles

Until only a few decades ago, just a small fraction of the population in many OECD-countries participated in further education. This fraction might be referred to as the cognitive elite. The learners were mostly recruited from the upper layers of society, and if not, they were selected on the basis of excellent prior performance in school-environments. With the transition from elite to mass tertiary and adult education, this small fraction of the population expanded rapidly. The larger this proportion, the more it came to include people with non-cognitive learning styles. An increasing number of individuals enrolled with an affinity for work-based learning, for learning by exploring and experimenting, for learning by doing or imitating, et cetera. Governments adapted to the massification of tertiary education by creating non-university subsystems (some on a dual basis) and various educational pathways. But at the very core of the learning process, teacher-centred education remained the dominant design.

At this point it can be recommended that governments should stimulate the proliferation of educational arrangements that meet non-cognitive learning styles. This might be a much better idea than to try to widen access for individuals to educational institutions that are simply not designed for them. Social inclusion seems to imply including all learning styles in the educational award structure. We will return to this recommendation in the last part.

The knowledge society

The second implication of the education-to-learning shift is the inclusion of all learning environments.

If we look at the learning-triangle once more, we see illustrated how learning is not restricted to 'traditional, environments that are primarily designed for learning, such as classrooms and instruction rooms. Learning happens also where learning is usually not the primary goal but a secondary result: in the workplace, in public life, in private life, in cyberspace. As long as there is a learner and a motivation, any learning environment will do, provided that it suits the learner's style and motivation. The professional who supports or guides the learning process may be a 'traditional' teacher or trainer, but also a boss, a mentor, a colleague, a client, a supplier, or even a software program; In self-guided learning that professional is absent.

In the past few years, new ideas about the creation of knowledge and competencies have come into focus. Nonaka Takeuchi (1995) and Gibbons et al. (1994) have - among others - drawn the attention to the fact that knowledge is not only found when looked for during research work in laboratories and libraries. Knowledge is often the unintended and even unnoticed result of interaction in the workplace between colleagues, between suppliers and customers, between companies and scientists, between various actors in the social arena, et cetera. Competitiveness is not always the result of visible and measurable expenditure on R&D, but also of organisational change and organisational learning, which makes the mechanisms of knowledge creation transparent and improves them.

Likewise, learning (the creation of competencies) is an ongoing process in the flow of work, and strategies can be designed to further improve the workplace as a learning environment. Kessels (1996) has developed the concept of the corporate curriculum as a framework for these strategies. His emphasis is on the motivation area of the learning triangle. In the workplace, the application of what is being learnt is always near, both in time and in place. This brings about a motivational impulse that provides the workplace with an enormous advantage over the classroom. Formal, off-the-job training often suffers from low returns on investment, due to insufficient transfer of the training to the workplace (Broad & Newstrom, 1992). Kessels found that the success of a training program depended more on the participation and commitment of the workers in the preparation of that program (i.e. on the hidden effects of this organisational intervention) than on the internal, didactical quality of the program itself.

The notions just described are partly subjective, in the sense that we are recognising more and more the unintended nature of the production of knowledge and competencies; it was always there, but we are now beginning to see it. But partly these notions are objective: society is actually moving towards more complexity, and towards a higher speed of exchange of information and knowledge. Rigid organisational structures make way for networks - both human and digital - that provide a much more flexible way of organising relationships and interaction. The creation of knowledge and competencies becomes increasingly situational; learning and its application are integrating.

The complex of developments that are described in this paragraph will further be referred to as the knowledge society. This is the phase that society enters after the completion of the industrial era, which we will first turn to for a better understanding of present adult learning policies.

Part 3

ADULT LEARNING IN THE INDUSTRIAL ERA

Adult learning was never entirely restricted to traditional learning environments. But in the knowledge society it spreads to all corners of society. In this chapter it will be argued that many present systems of stimulating adult learning focus on traditional learning environments only, especially on financing their inputs. They are often relics of the industrial era and go against the dynamics of the knowledge society.

First we will very briefly discuss how learning was formalised and why this process persisted even though the costs of formal learning are more visible and higher than the costs of workplace learning. We then will examine the ways in which the problem of financing adult learning is dealt with, also on the basis of a typology of four paradigms. Finally some hypotheses are formulated.

The formalisation of learning

For a long time roughly from the Industrial Revolution until recently changes in labour processes have mainly implied massification, rationalisation, and standardisation of production. This applies to both industrial labour and service industries (the production concepts of Taylor and Ford) and for white collar work (Weber's rational bureaucracies). Standardisation made it possible to precisely define the competencies needed for a task or job, and to isolate, the acquisition of those competencies - i.e. the learning from the work-environment. The medieval guild-philosophy of integrating learning and

application made way for separation of the two. Learning for employment was increasingly 'delegated' from the workplace down to formal training, and to some extent further down to subsidised vocational education.

The costs of learning

With the formalisation of learning, its costs rose and became more visible.

Let's make no mistakes here: learning in non-traditional learning environments is hardly ever totally free of costs. To learn in the workplace, in private life or in cyberspace requires time, tools, and sometimes guidance, even when these learning resources are non-traditional. Many of these resources however are paid for anyway, regardless of the learning that takes place along the way. In the workplace the learning resources are present mainly for the goal of production, in private life the learning resources often primarily serve the goal of recreation.

A fruitful - though not always practicable - approach would be to only consider the additional costs made especially for the learning. In the case of workplace learning for instance, these additional costs would concern the extra guidance that an inexperienced worker requires, and his temporary under-productivity.

In formal learning the costs are both more visible and higher than in workplace learning. The learner's productivity is clearly zero during the learning. Teachers and trainers have to be paid. And the material environment - sometimes a classroom, sometimes a sheer imitation of the workplace - has to be financed. Notwithstanding the high costs, the returns on the investments in formal learning are often rather low.

Although the formalisation of learning seems to be unprofitable in many cases, it is supported by some powerful financial and sociological mechanisms. Where regular vocational education is subsidised, firms have an opportunity to shift their learning costs on to government by delegating learning to the education system. This is a rational - though sometimes unconscious - strategy, even if vocational education poorly meets the needs of industry. Furthermore, in a society where formal learning has become the vehicle for success, income, status and happiness, the belief in formal learning often transcends reason. In many cases, workers are trained off-the-job just because it is believed that this is pedagogically beneficial. Moreover, formal training is often considered a reward, an incentive or a good opportunity to meet friends. So, even in the case of training, where it is not always possible to

pass on costs to other actors, firms might transfer learning from on-the-job to off-the-job more than they should.

The financing problem and its solutions

The formalisation of learning, in fact, posed the question of how to finance learning for employment. It is not so much the need for human capital itself that caused this problem, but rather the way in which the creation of human capital is organised.

Throughout the years various responses to the financing problem have been advocated. Until the seventies it was argued by some Gurus that government should provide all citizens with a lifetime learning account for their education permanente, and make them independent of the whims of employers. (Note how even in this visionary perspective a lifetime of learning was supposed to be spent in traditional learning environments). Formal adult learning, however, is relatively expensive. A training course of several days may exceed the costs of a full year of regular education, especially when we include opportunity costs (due to absence from work) in the calculation. The execution of these visionary plans would have more than doubled government expenditure on education and training; after the recession of 1982-1983 these plans were hardly ever heard of anymore.

The practice of OECD-countries may be more interesting to look at than the history of ideas. For a brief and general overview of approaches to financing adult learning, a typology of four paradigms is introduced below. Each is connected to one or more countries considered most representative for that paradigm. The typology merely serves to demonstrate the variety in thinking about how to distribute responsibilities for adult learning over various actors: the state, the sector, the firm, the learner and, as a configuration of actors, the market. Who benefits from which learning activities and to what extent? Who pays, and to what extent? Where lies the boundary between company based training and regular vocational education? And to what extent is the latter financed by government and what is contributed by the learner?

The sector-approach (Germany, The Netherlands)

In Germany and in The Netherlands the sector (a collection of firms in the same branch of industry) is, more than elsewhere, an important level for the co-ordination of education and training. The philosophy is that firms in the same sector will have similar educational and training needs to a large extent. The sector-level thus provides economies of scale where individual firms are not large enough.

The sector serves as a powerful platform for influencing the content and requirements of regular vocational education. As a result, vocational education is of relatively high quality and to a large extent subsidised by government.

In the Netherlands the sector-level is even very influential in the organisation and financing of private training. Various sectors maintain a fund for training and R&D to which each firm contributes regularly. From this fund activities are financed with a sector-specific character. It is unclear, however, if this sector-approach will survive the knowledge society without much change. Companies within a certain sector are increasingly attempting to distinguish themselves from others in that same sector in order to realise competitive advantages. Co-operation is often sought with outsiders, and even within the activities of one firm the boundaries of sectors are often transgressed. The common proportion of training needs might diminish, and the firm-specific proportion might grow. Moreover, learning might 'return' to the work-environment as is argued above, which makes common training activities even more obsolete. The mere existence of a fund for off-the-job training may impede that return.

The market-approach (some Anglo-Saxon countries)

In the Anglo-Saxon countries the training of adult workers is - on the average - more under the influence of the market-mechanism than elsewhere. Compared to the German and Dutch experience this results in roughly the opposite pro's and con's. Companies have all the freedom in the world to organise training or bring learning back to the workplace as they wish, but economies of scale can only be realised in the larger enterprises.

Government, too, tends to leave work-related learning to the forces of the free market, more than elsewhere; the learners own financial contributions are generally higher. This is alleged to cause under-investment in regular vocational education in for instance the United States.

Interestingly, it has never been established that this causes a competitive disadvantage for the US. This might, of course, be explained by the fact that human resources are not the only fact that human resources are not the only factor determining economic growth, but this interpretation becomes less satisfactory as the importance of knowledge increases. Another explanation might be that a higher degree of workplace learning is compensating for the low average quality of school-leavers in the US (Van Lieshout, 1997). Paradoxically, the educational leeway of the US might be advantageous in some cases if this explanation were correct.

Finally, it can be argued that markets never come alone. Where training and even education are strongly market-driven, this is probably the result of a more general preference for the market as a co-ordination mechanism. In such a market culture, labour markets are likely to be more flexible, too. By consequence, wages are lower and the preparedness to accept a distant job higher. In short, the national stock of competencies is likely to be smaller in a market culture, but the allocation of those competencies tends to be more efficient.

The state-approach (France)

To say that France has a state-driven training system, would be a tremendous exaggeration. In France, too, there is a role for the sector-level and the market. Still, France has distinguished itself by a government policy that set a clear national framework for *education permanente*. Especially the law of 16 July 1971, that obliged firms to financially contribute to adult learning and that empowered individuals to participate in training activities, should be mentioned here.

In the spirit of the time in which it was introduced, this law was a true 'monument', among lifelong learning policies. In the perspective of the knowledge society however, the same questions arise as in the case of the Dutch sectoral funds for training and R&D. In Australia, a law similar to the French one has existed only briefly. It was found that companies were inclined to extend the definition of training, merely to meet the training targets.

A more recent French policy instrument, designed for young adults (age 16-25), is the credit formation individualist of 1989, which, by the way, resembles the system of youth training credits in the United Kingdom (1990). These instruments are more realistic and affordable than lifetime learning accounts, and also seem to run lesser risk of misallocation than the French, Australian and Dutch fund-approaches.

The company-approach (Japan)

On an institutional level, the Japanese system of vocational education and training resembles the Anglo-Saxon system, which is the result of the US influence shortly after World War II. In practice, however, an important factor is the well-known philosophy of lifetime employment in large enterprises. Access to a job in these companies may be difficult, and the preceding competition in the education system very tough indeed. But once in, one is confident to have a job for a lifetime and to

enjoy all the privileges that come with it, such as lifelong training. The advantage for the firm lies in the low rate of labour turnover: there is little risk that investments in personnel are for the benefit of the competitor.

Two aspects of the Japanese model are rarely mentioned, however. One is that in the Japanese culture, learning is regarded as something that should serve spiritual development rather than utility. The high Japanese standards of productivity and quality are mainly the result of the organisation of the work process and of the dedication and loyalty of the workers, not so much of formal training (Needless to say that dedication and loyalty are, indeed, the result of lifetime employment).

The second less known aspect of the Japanese model, is that lifetime employment is confined to large enterprises. In the periphery of these enterprises smaller firms operate as suppliers of semi-manufactures and as a buffer against economic decline. For these SME's human capital creation is problematic. Recently, this buffer is failing to totally protect the large firms from decline, so that even there lifetime employment is no longer ensured.

Hypotheses

The typology here above allows no hard conclusions, but some hypotheses do arise with a fair degree of plausibility.

- There is a strong tendency that systems (or non-systems) of education and training are determined by the culture of a nation, albeit a culture of co-operation, a market-culture, a culture of national identity, or a culture of loyalty.
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- In some countries the national culture induces explicit national policies for adult learning. However, the dominant actor is not always government (as in France), but can also be a partnership of stakeholders such as the sector, or an agreement between employers and unions (Germany, The Netherlands).
- In other countries an explicit national policy is more or less absent. Training and to some extent education are left to the dynamics of society. As a result, the market (US) or the firm-level (Japan) are the main co-ordinating mechanisms.

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- There is no winner. None of the approaches is clearly proven to be more successful than others in reaching the goals of inclusion and economic growth. There is no rationally founded 'one best way, of organising and financing adult learning.
 - All explicit national policies have at least one thing in common: they focus mainly on the problem of *financing* adult learning. By consequence, the instruments have a strong tendency to promote measurable, formal learning only, and to against the goal of inclusion. The cases of the US, and on further consideration also Japan, show how workplace learning can compensate for formal education and/or training without obvious damage to employment and competitiveness.
 - If financial instruments are to stimulate adult learning at all, they should somehow include non-cognitive learning styles and non-traditional learning environments. The Dutch fiscal incentive to hire apprentices can be regarded as an example of such a stimulus for high quality work-based learning. Especially when combined with the French or British ideas of credit systems for (young) adults, this subsidising of access to the workplace might be an interesting innovation. This combination could further serve as a model for redesigning the financing of tertiary education on the bases of shared responsibilities of government, industry and learner (van Ravens, 1995).

Part 4

THE SHIFT TO RECOGNISING LEARNING OUTPUTS

Introduction

Besides financing, there is second major instrument to encourage learning. It does not apply to the input side of learning (as financing does) but on the output side. In this, it is well-aligned with important changes in society at large.

This second instrument is the assessment regime. Whenever learning is completed, it can be tested or assessed.

If it has been established that the desired learning outcomes or competencies are realised indeed, these competencies can be recognised and validated. Finally, the competencies may be accredited: they can be embedded in the reward structure, usually a national system of certificates, diplomas and degrees.

All this sounds very familiar. It has been common practice in regular education since ages. Historically, the assessment, recognition and accreditation of competencies has been confined to formal learning just as much as the financing mechanisms have been. It has suffered from the same bias. But potentially, it can be applied much wider. Whereas financing learning inputs is best applicable where learning costs are visible (and usually high), assessment of competencies is applicable to basically any learning - regardless of the learning styles and learning environments - simply because it is on the output side of the process. The next step, after competencies, is recognition of the competencies. The final step, accreditation within a (national or sector-based) reward structure may not always be possible, but might neither be always necessary.

We shall further confine ourselves to the *recognition* of competencies. First its functions are discussed and illustrated by a case. Then, three of the driving forces behind the growing importance of the recognition of competencies are dealt with, and finally this is viewed against the background of the knowledge society

Present and future functions

The present main function of recognition of competencies is well known: it provides potential employers with information about potential employees. It makes the competencies of an applicant transparent. By consequence, recognition of competencies is beneficial to the applicant in that it increases his employability and chances for social inclusion and promotion.

The main function of *widening* the recognition of competencies to preferably all learning, is that this would not only include more learning styles and environments and give em players a more complete picture of an applicant, but also that it promotes more cost-effective learning.

This point has already been implicitly illustrated by the example of workplace learning. Another example is independent learning with the help of information and communication technologies (ICT's).

Independent learning with ICT's, a case

It has often been advocated that the new media can provide a potentially very cost-effective learning environment in certain cases. The production costs of for instance an educational CD-rom may be relatively high, but the scale on which it might be distributed is very large, which would reduce the costs per user-session dramatically. Yet,

the market for new educational media has far from developed up to its potential size. The main reason for this, is that there is no recognition structure for the private and independent use of a CD-rom. The user cannot prove that he has actually learnt something, and the acquired competencies do not contribute to his employability and social status. In this situation, subsidising the purchase of the CD-rom would not help one bit. On the other hand, if the condition of a recognition structure were fulfilled, subsidising would probably not even be necessary, given the low price of this learning tool.

With the inclusion of workplace- and ICT-aided learning, the recognition of competencies may eventually prove to be a much more powerful instrument in promoting adult learning than financing. But how can this become a reality? We shall briefly discuss three developments that might support the widening of recognition structures. The first development is entirely autonomous, the second is based on responses from actors in society, and only the third is a government strategy.

The erosion of the traditional recognition structure

Diplomas are meant to provide lasting transparency of the competencies of the holder. Not long ago, the diploma of a carpenter used to guarantee his mastery of the craft for practically his lifetime. After the initial education, new skills were hardly needed nor learnt.

Clearly, this is no longer the case for most if not all professions. Just as regular education is becoming increasingly general, so the information value of diplomas is low even right after graduation. Soon after the school-to-work transition, new and often more relevant competencies are acquired and the diploma becomes even less accurate. In many cases, the screening function of the diploma is dominant over the information-on-competencies function.

Rivalry between recognition structures

As a response to the decreasing information value of diplomas, some actors (for instance employers and unions) have created their own recognition systems, often on the sector level. These systems usually began as frameworks for the registration of training courses that an employee has been through, but provide a basis for accreditation of a much wider range of competencies. The information contained in them is more precise than the information in the diplomas of regular education, since the skills can be specified in more detail.

Another response is the use of the ISO-9000 system for human competencies. ISO-9000 is a certification system that is already being applied to service processes on a large scale. Since the human factor is essential to the quality of services, there is a tendency to extend the certification to persons. ISO-9000 may come to serve as an alternative recognition structure with perhaps an even higher degree of precision than the ones just mentioned. Another characteristic of certification is that it expires; in the case of certification of workers this implies that competencies are deleted from their personal records when they are not reassessed within a certain period of time.

Governments' response

Governments might neglect the erosion of the regular recognition structure, and the rise of others. In that case this process will probably go on with force and with an uncertain ending.

Government might also guide this process in a desirable direction. Colardyn (1996) has given an impressive overview and thorough analysis of government policies towards the management of competencies. Some of these policies are clearly based on a view on the knowledge society and its implications. An interesting case is the system of accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (APEL) in British higher education

This instrument began as an admission tool: people who have already acquired certain competencies that are part of the learning outcomes of a study, are entitled to exemption for that part of the curriculum. This in itself is common practice in many other countries, although less formalised. To an increasing extent, however, the APEL-system includes experiential learning. Also increasingly, this learning may take place during - not prior to - the study. In some universities in the United Kingdom, and also one or two in the US, the entire curriculum may be exempted on the basis of assessment, recognition and accreditation of prior and present non-traditional learning. In following this strategy, government would not only stimulate the inclusion of learning styles, but might also encompass other recognition systems within the national reward structure.

Transparency of competencies in the knowledge society

The pursuit of transparency of competencies does not stand alone. It can be supported by, and in its turn support, similar developments in two others fields.

The first is human resources accounting. As Miller (1996) has pointed out, current accounting practices focus on tangible assets only. In a time that intangible assets (knowledge and competencies) are increasingly crucial for the performance of firms, this is an unacceptable bias against those companies who make the most valuable contribution to the economy.

Since human resources make up an important part of the intangible assets of a firm, innovations in the field of recognition of competencies may be beneficial to human resources accounting as well.

A similar synergy may occur in the second field: the treatment of government expenditure on education as investments. Many education ministers have faced severe budget cuts in the past decade. The basic reason is, of course, the policy to reduce national budget deficits.

The reason why especially the education budgets are cut, is that education is regarded and treated as consumption, not as investment. This might change for the better if reliable information systems were available that demonstrate how expenditure on education and other learning pays itself back.

Transparency of knowledge and competencies, on the levels of the individual, the firm and government, is likely to be among the hallmarks of the knowledge society.

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Policy Trends In The Financing of Vocational Adult Education

David Atchoarena

INTRODUCTION

Adult education, and particularly vocational training, can be a powerful instrument not only within global educational strategies but also for social and employment policies. While adult education has traditionally been interested in providing training opportunities to the working population, contemporary economic and social development has attached greater priority to new needs, such as preventing and combating unemployment, facilitating transition from school to work, and strengthening social cohesion. To a large extent, these challenges are similar for industrialised nations as for developing countries or countries in transition.

The diversity of roles assigned to adult education, and their transformation, compel modern societies to realise that education is a shared responsibility. Increasingly, adult education, and particularly vocational training, involve not only governments but also businesses, the community sector, non-governmental organisations and unions. This trend led to revisit the respective roles of the various partners involved in adult education, particularly in the field of financing.

The analysis of the economic effects of education has clearly shown the increase in income that individuals gain from additional training. An initial reflection suggests that basic education and general skills must be funded by the State, while the provision of specific skills should remain the responsibility of businesses.

However, beyond this search for rationality and efficiency, the financing mechanisms in place in any country are the product of contextual factors such as the respective role of the State and the social partners in adult education. Indeed, structural and institutional variables often explain the differences observed between countries.

Today, the financing of adult education takes place in a world-wide context of financial problems, including in highly industrialised nations. The current trend is to promote a redistribution in which responsibilities are shared between the various partners involved in the field of technical and vocational education.

It is against this background that the IPE has conducted a series of activities on the financing of vocational education. Most of the literature dedicated to this theme adopts a strictly financial perspective and examines the mechanisms for raising and allocating resources. Without overshadowing this approach, the Institute has chosen to link the financing issue with wider concerns on the regulation of vocational education systems, including the distribution of roles between the various partners involved. One of the main assumptions of this work is that the performance of the vocational education system, including its capacity to satisfy a variety of needs, requires a means of mediation to be set up between the supply and the demand for training. Complementing market mechanisms, intermediary bodies (associations of employers, workers' unions, communities, etc.) and the practice of social and policy dialogue contribute to improving the link between supply and demand. Within this framework, financing policies are part of a broader economic and social strategy; a means of not only collecting the funds but also mobilising the key partners through compulsory measures or incentives, in order for them to achieve expected changes.

In this spirit, the IPE has undertaken research activities and policy consultations. The milestones of this programme were five regional meetings (Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Argentina, Kyrgyzstan and Venezuela) which brought together vocational training experts, officials from Ministries of Education and Employment and from other concerned public institutions, as well as representatives from workers unions and NGOs.

The present document provides a brief synthesis of the activities undertaken and, rather than drawing up a definite "balance sheet", identifies the emerging trends and underlines the issues which should provide food for further thought. The first part recalls the basic principles of financing vocational education. It also shows, in brief, the advantages and limits of the various approaches. This introductory part is structured according to the sources of finance (State, businesses, users), thus highlighting a major concern namely the sharing of responsibilities between the main partners.

The second part is a regional review of the financing of vocational training based on the examination of selected national experiences. While revealing the way in which each of the countries studied has drawn up its specific response to economic challenges, it raises the difficult question of how to take on board the needs of disadvantaged groups, including those in the informal sector.

Starting from a reflection on the consistency between the organisation and financing of vocational education systems, the last part of this document shows the emerging trends, particularly with regard to diversification of sources of finance, the growing role of the market and the regulatory function vested in Training Funds.

The conclusion underlines that when it becomes essential to institute a partnership for improving the effectiveness of public adult education policies, the theme of finance plays a key role. The financial stakes allow the partners, including employers, to get more involved in the social dimensions of training and to contribute to building up and regulating a market for training. However, a comprehensive financing policy for adult education is still to come; it would involve addressing the training needs of the whole adult population, including its most disadvantaged members.

1. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The changing role of the State

Current trends in the organisation and financing of vocational education are not isolated from the broad movement towards reshaping the role of the State. The function of central power is essentially, first and foremost, to define and enforce rules and regulations and to provide finance and incentives. Vocational education is one field which, in most countries, is governed to a considerable extent, by the

State. Conditions for admission to training, and use of public finances present a clear picture of this. However, the State often tends to delegate the definition of rules relating to operation of adult education to social partners.

Furthermore, public policies are now increasingly drawing their inspiration from new sources. The classical opposition between the liberal movement, attached to the market, and the interventionist approach, which is devoted to State planning, is nowadays largely obsolete. The recognition of the role of agents and institutions leads to normative theories of action which give new foundation to public policies. Institutional regulation and learning are now becoming the key-words for opening the door to greater efficiency of public action. This vision marks the establishment of a new kind of relation between the State and the other partners in adult education, a relation characterised by consultation and dialogue.

It is in this context that governments are being led to concentrate their actions on basic education and general skills and to entrust organisation and financing of vocational training, as far as possible, to the private sector and to employers and unions. However, the participation by the State through the general budget remains legitimate when it corresponds to social objectives. This is frequently the case, for example, for programmes aimed at young unemployed people or the long-term unemployed. Updating skills and retraining staff more so respond to the search for competitiveness. Training benefits workers and the businesses employing them. It seems consistent for training to be financed by those benefiting from it, namely the businesses and/or the employees. However, distortions in the market provide a basis for State intervention. This intervention is currently taking the form of tax incentives (tax exemption regimes) or direct subsidies. Under-investment in training by businesses is one of most common and severe forms of market deficiency in a highly competitive global environment. This situation constitutes particularly strong grounds for corrective action by the State.

Considering the costs, expected benefits and goals of vocational education provide the justification for sharing the burden of training between the key partners involved, namely the State, businesses and individuals. Joint financing, however, requires a new balance of responsibilities.

Participation from industry

As indicated above, it seems fair that a system which fits into an industrial dynamic, be directly financed by those benefiting directly from it and not by the community as a whole. This consideration provides foundation for instituting a specific tax regime intended to finance training.

The most common alternative to financing through the general budget consists of instituting a tax on salaries which is paid by the businesses. This mechanism is in fact similar to a new form of social guarantee corresponding to "training insurance".

A payroll tax, in theory, will generate a relatively stable revenue which will develop according to changes in employment. From this point of view, such a system contributes to ensure consistency between demand and resources.

However, as well as these advantages, there are also shortcomings in financing vocational education through a payroll tax. The economic argument presents three basic criticisms.

Firstly, the tax levy affects the relative costs of labour and capital, which makes the use of the latter more advantageous. Therefore, this method of financing tends to favour the substitution of capital for labour and can therefore have a negative impact on employment.

Secondly, and for the same reasons, the system disadvantages labour-intensive industries. The principle of financing training on a salary basis tends, in effect, to penalise them in comparison to businesses who employ few staff.

The last of the three main objections to this financing system concerns its inflationary nature. Adding this charge on salaries to costs would generate an increase in price to the detriment of the consumer.

However, despite these negative economic effects, a payroll tax is still in favour in many countries. Two major types of tax regime can be distinguished. In the first system, the income generated by the payroll tax is used to finance the development of the training system. Originally, this method of financing was set up by Latin American countries. Brazil was the pioneer in the field by introducing it in the early forties. This experience explains why this system of financing is sometimes referred to as "the Latin American Model".

In the second formula, the tax levy is linked to a reimbursement scheme or a tax credit mechanism encouraging employers to invest in training. The costs of training are thus reimbursed or, according to the systems, deducted from the taxable revenue. The right to reimbursement or exemption is fixed at a limit of a fraction of the contributions paid by the business. The aim of this system is to encourage the

businesses to train their employees while at the same time favouring the establishment of a training market. This method of taxation exists, in various forms, in a large number of countries.

This dichotomy between the two major categories of system, although quite attractive in its simplicity, does not fully reflect reality. In many countries the regime currently in force incorporates elements of both types. In this way "hybrid" systems may correspond to a variety of objectives: financing a public training system, promoting company-based training or encouraging private offers.

One of the advantages of instituting a tax on salaries in order to finance training is the high degree of flexibility that the system allows. Hence, it can be easily adjusted by playing on rates and types of businesses subjected to the tax, according to the aims being pursued and the economic context. The rates vary from 0.5% to 4% depending on the country. They also evolve according to time, generally being reduced, taking account of changes in the businesses' attitude towards training.

The relative simplicity of this method of finance, its high raising capacity and its consistency with training needs, explain why many countries have adopted it. It can be found in the developing world and in transition countries but systems of this kind exist, or have existed, in many OECD countries as well.

Nevertheless this does not produce an all-purpose model. If the private sector only develops slowly or shrinks, the tax base may turn out to be far from sufficient to ensure the viability of the training system. Furthermore, the performance of the payroll tax system relies very much on a strong commitment from the social partners, a condition which is not always met.

The financing of training by users

The sharing of training costs by users is the basic principle upon which the establishment of a training market rests. Although it finds a measure of legitimacy in the analysis of rates of return, the full application of this formula runs up against the need to respect equity (J. Middleton, A.Ziderman, A. Van Adams 1993).

In fact, the development of a private training offer is often limited by low income levels. The Government can then compensate for this by introducing vouchers, loans or training rights (J. Delors 1996). By promoting the demand, instruments of this kind contribute to develop continuing education. Nevertheless, such systems remain scarce, especially in developing areas or countries in transition.

Even so, a noticeable development of the private sector in adult education has been observed in most countries. This movement results largely from the existence of a demand which is not satisfied by the public sector. In addition, in countries which have set up a Training Fund, the procedure for granting resources on a competitive basis laid the ground for market mechanisms.

This trend calls for new forms of State intervention. Governments are placed in a new situation in which they have to regulate the emerging training market. The solution appears to lie in a combination of incentives, standards setting and control.

Far from being spontaneous, a training market requires that many conditions are met, especially the transparency of training provision and the absence of monopoly. Respect of these criteria involves, at least in the initial phase, government intervention to inform and protect users, particularly the poorest users. This concern for transparency is addressed by the accreditation of training centres and programmes. Accreditation also contributes to the quality of training delivery.

The concept of the "training market" does not refer only to the development of private provision; it also applies to public institutions in the framework of increased decentralisation and management autonomy. Such a change often involves adapting the legal framework within which the institutions operate and reforming their status.

2. THE INTERNATIONAL PANORAMA

Rationalisation and reform in Africa: selected examples

- **Financing a context of crisis**

Many countries in Africa are experiencing major changes in the financing and management of vocational education. The increased scarcity of public resources everywhere has brought about appeals to other sources, particularly from businesses and from users.

Today, therefore, most African countries can no longer maintain a system of vocational education which is costly and poorly adapted to the needs of the labour market. This situation is at the root of many reforms which link structural and pedagogical measures with a revision of the financing system. In this context, reforming the mechanisms for collecting and allocating resources has a double

objective: consolidation and flexibility. This logic requires closely involving businesses, both with regard to finance and as far as regulating the system is concerned (D. Atchoarena & F. Caillods, 1995 ed., D. Atchoarena, 1997 ed).

In a growing number of countries, governments have turned towards a payroll tax in order to solve their problem of finance and to involve businesses in training. These experiences show contrasted results. While some examples confirm that the system does have the capacity to build up a substantial volume of resources, they also show many discrepancies in the management and allocation of the funds collected. Information is however insufficient to carry out a true comparative assessment of the various options used, particularly with regard to the structure and the operation of the Funds. Despite their limitations, the experiences of Côte d'Ivoire and of Mauritius supply both rich and diversified examples in this regard.

- *Côte d'Ivoire*

Côte d'Ivoire set itself some ambitious targets for the 1990s with regard to vocational education and training in order to contribute to economic growth as well as to combat the spread of poverty. In this context, the reform of technical education and vocational training, started in 1991, rests essentially on the redefinition of the role of the State and on decentralisation.

The Government redefined its methods of intervention on the labour market, particularly by reducing its direct involvement in the training system in favour of standardisation, incentive, co-ordination and control. Such restructuring of the training system grants a wider role to private trainers and develops a spirit of partnership with the economic sectors and the local communities.

As well as redefining the scope and instruments of intervention, the reform of technical and vocational education revised the institutional framework, especially through the setting up of a Vocational Training Development Fund (FDFP). This Fund is responsible for managing the revenue received from taxation for continuing education and that collected from the apprenticeship tax.

The introduction, in Côte d'Ivoire, of an apprenticeship tax payable by businesses dates back to 1959. Its rate was then 0.3% of the salary bill of industrial enterprises. In 1966 the contribution was increased to 0.5%. The revenue collected was meant to support public technical schools.

The adoption of legislation relating to continuing education in 1977 made an addition to the finance system. Inspired by the Ministry of Technical Education and Professional Training and benefiting from the approval of unions and employers, the bill obliged businesses to contribute the equivalent of 1.2% of their salary bill for continuing education. Nevertheless the legislation only laid an obligation on businesses to pay only one half of the tax, the balance having to be directly used in the training of their own employees.

Contributions by businesses constitute two kinds of resource. On the one hand, each business has drawing rights intended for financing its training programme ("the business part"). On the other hand, the balance forms a reserve set aside for priority training programmes for specific target groups. This dual formula was meant to finance training aimed at the informal sector or in favour of disadvantaged groups. Training advisory services supplied by the Fund and the accreditation of training providers also contributed to the structure of the training market.

Despite its assets, the Côte d'Ivoire experience in financing training encountered numerous obstacles of a structural and legal nature. First of all, the economic crisis of the 1980s had a depressive effect on the capacity of businesses to make contributions. Furthermore, in a context of public finance deficit, the funds collected for training were used for other purposes. The reform carried out in 1992 to put the system "back on its feet" particularly revised the financial mechanisms so that the resources collected were directly accessible by the Fund, without passing through a Public Treasury account.

Despite the incidents which have marked its development, this system for financing training, restored in 1992, seems to have made an effective contribution to promoting training and putting together a private offer. This experience, by its innovative character, was thus a source of inspiration for the African continent. The steps taken recently by several countries in the area bear a clear witness to this (see for instance the reforms undertaken in Chad, Madagascar, Mali and Togo, but also in South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe).

- *Mauritius*

The development of the Mauritian economy is often considered as a success story. Within a relatively short period of time, a plantation economy was transformed into a dynamic exporter of manufactured goods. At the end of the eighties, Mauritius could proudly show an economic profile totally transformed, with a diversified product range resting on the three pillars of agriculture, industry and tourism, and a labour market which, at one point, suffered from a shortage of labour.

It is in this context that the Law of 1988 relating to vocational education established the Industrial and Vocational Training Board whose aims were especially to finance, provide and promote vocational training.

In accordance with the 1988 bill, amended in 1991, the Council consists of a Chairman nominated by the Prime Minister, a Vice-Chairman nominated after consultations with the Federation of Employers, six representatives from various ministries and six representatives from the private sector nominated by the Minister responsible for vocational training.

Today, the activities of this institution go beyond training delivery and include advice to businesses, certification of competencies, and the accreditation of training providers. The accreditation is subjected to quality criteria relating to premises, equipment, the contents of training units and the qualification of training staff. The publication by the IVTB of a directory of accredited training bodies contributes to transparency, an essential condition for the good operation of a training market.

The financing of vocational training is based on the principle of joint financing between the State, employers and users. Employers' contributions are supplied by a payroll tax. Government also participates in financing the IVTB. Registration fees constitute only a very small part of the resources.

The tax rate represents 1% of the salary bill. The tax is paid into the IVTB's account by the Ministry of Social Security when pension contributions are collected. This method of collection, which identifies the contributions for training to other social contributions, is very similar to the concept of "training insurance" already mentioned.

Until 1996, the mechanism for financing training combined a tax allowance of 100% on taxable revenue and the repayment, by the Fund, of part of businesses' expenditure on training. The purpose of this mixed system was to encourage employers to develop training.

In spite of some difficulties resulting in the adjustment of the funding formula, the legislation introduced in 1988, and the financing mechanism linked to it have contributed to the development of a training market.

- **How can training needs be satisfied in the informal sector?**

The systems for financing vocational training give priority to addressing the needs of the modern economy. Yet, in developing countries, the informal sector employs most of the work force.

Increasing recognition of the importance of the informal sector and of the contribution that it makes to the economy and to fight poverty has led to greater attention being paid to training informal sector workers, particularly women. Improving their labour productivity and living conditions as well as the apprenticeship system are growing concerns. In this respect, some experiences (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Mali) have shown that the existence of a Fund and mechanisms for mutualising the resources can, under certain conditions, allow to finance training for non-contributing members, particularly in the informal sector and amongst micro-entrepreneurs.

Another way consists of investigating the possibility of extending and consolidating traditional apprenticeships. In sub-Saharan Africa this is the main method by which know-how is passed on and training is financed in the informal sector, to say nothing of its social role.

Recent work which brought together the OECD's Development Centre, the World Bank and the ILO on the acquisition of skills in very small businesses in West Africa, has also shown several channels through which government authorities can become involved (S. Birks and others, 1994). First of all, the report underlines the inability of public training institutions to reach very small businesses. In this context, traditional apprenticeship fulfils a key function. Improving it would require a system of incentives directed at apprentices, apprenticeship masters and training institutions. Such an approach would consist, in particular, in establishing closer links between training centres and their local environment, whose informal economy is an integral part..

When dealing with strategies for the informal sector, some experiences show the establishment of a genuine partnership between representatives of the informal sector and the State. In this way, in Kenya, the setting up by the World Bank of a Training Fund for small business operators illustrates the potential for participation by micro-entrepreneurs' associations from the informal sector (J. A. Kali).

Closely related steps are currently being taken in other African countries, particularly in Mali, to introduce the principle of dual training of apprentices in the informal sector.

Despite numerous and sometimes original initiatives, progress on the whole has been slow. Addressing the training needs in the informal economy thus remains something of a problem. In particular, financing issues are still hard to solve.

Between modernisation and social cohesion: the Latin American case

- **Characteristics and development of the Latin American model**

The vocational training system developed by Brazil during the forties has spread progressively through the other countries of Latin America. It is a system founded on an autonomous agency financed by a payroll tax and controlled, in the case of Brazil, by employers. Starting from this initial scheme, various countries in the region created a specific system. The respective responsibility of the State and of businesses, the role of unions, legal status and the methods of financing vary from one case to another. However, in spite of these variations, the basic underlying principles and the common characteristics of most of these vocational training agencies could be described as follows:

- i) although created through a State initiative, they involve the businesses in the management and financing of training;
- ii) the target groups consist primarily of young people (initial vocational training) and working adults (up-skilling, retraining);
- iii) finally, their financing is based principally on a payroll tax paid by businesses.

An analysis of the activity of the vocational training agencies in Latin America reveals that the fragmentation process in the labour market, and the financial crisis, have driven them to diversify both their target groups and their resources. The need for competitiveness and globalisation requires that the labour in export sectors be highly productive and therefore highly qualified (Brazil, Argentina and Chile). This requirement for international competitiveness and "openness" implies that businesses are increasing the portion of their resources invested in training. Conversely, the fragmentation process in

the labour market shows training needs in the fringes of the economy that are poorly structured and vulnerable. In this way, in some countries (Costa Rica (INA), Venezuela (INCE), Colombia (SENA), Jamaica (HEART)), the training agencies have financed the setting up of programmes intended for workers in the informal sector. Nevertheless, this tendency is far from becoming generalised and certain training agencies, such as the SENAI in Brazil, remain essentially directed towards the modern sector.

An inventory of the sources of finance most commonly used by vocational training agencies shows that resources have progressively become more diversified. In fact, in most cases, the increasing scarcity of public resources and the decrease in wage employment have reduced traditional sources of finance for vocational training, namely payroll taxes and public grants. The diversification of resources and activities has allowed a lesser degree of vulnerability. The sources and channels of finance commonly used include:

- i) taxes on salaries;
- ii) tax allowances;
- iii) public grants;
- iv) grants or scholarships awarded by the State;
- (v) contributions originating from local authorities;
- vi) joint finance agreements;
- v) registration fees;
- vi) grants from businesses;
- vii) the sale of services, like training advice.

The financial formula is highly variable, depending on the national context. However, in general, payroll taxes and public grants make up the "hard core" of the resources.

Unlike standard sources of finance, obtaining most of the new types of resource requires an active strategy. This means a significant change in management methods and in the relationship with businesses. Businesses increasingly become a key partner.

As well as diversification of activities and resources, a closer link between supply and demand is needed. Budgetary austerity and the requirement to search for new finance are now contributing towards bringing together supply and demand in training. Globalisation and structural adjustment are

causing new needs to emerge (introduction of new technology, redeployment of part of the labour force, need for flexibility).

While in most Latin American countries reforming the financing mechanisms remains a slow process, a country like Chile undertook drastic changes. The Chilean situation is characterised by a vocational training system related to the Ministry of Employment through the SENCE (Servicio Nacional de Capacitacion y Empleo). During the sixties, Chile established a training agency, the INACAP (Instituto Nacional de Capacitacion) but it was privatised and today functions in the same way as the other training providers. The Chilean strategy consisted in transferring management responsibilities to the private sector while at the same time maintaining a public source of finance. In this context, the allocation of public resources for training results from a competitive process involving various training providers. At the same time, systems have been put in place to promote the continuing education of the workforce. These incentives include tax advantages but also take the form of groupings of small and medium-sized businesses known as OTIR (Organismos Tecnicos Intermedios Reconocidos) in order to generate suitable economies in the financing of training and to federate demand.

This rapid overview of the changes taking place in Latin America indicates an extensive diversification in the supply of training, both public and private. This dynamic has increased the number of partners involved in training and has changed the distribution of responsibilities between them. Among the emerging trends, a growing involvement of Ministries of Labour is noticeable in the training of disadvantaged groups.

- ***Training in the fight against poverty***

Since the beginnings of industrialisation, the training system in Latin America has been based on the vocational training agencies, which were generally public but involved employers, and were financed by a payroll tax. Today, the exclusion of a sizeable part of the working population from wage employment raises the question of whether this model is still relevant.

The themes of poverty, unemployment and social integration are an increasing concern for policy-makers. In the context of social policies, education and vocational training are considered important tools for fighting poverty and ensuring social cohesion.

However, it is clear that education and training can only be a secondary force, the root of the problem being first and foremost macroeconomic. Nevertheless, it is also understood that economic growth is not sufficient to reduce poverty (e.g. Chile and Argentina) and that targeted policies must be put in place for the most vulnerable sections of the population. In this context the existing programmes clearly reflect the diversity of the disadvantaged groups, including marginal urban communities, illiterate adults in rural areas, cultural and linguistic minorities and young people at risk.

Programme goals are also diversified. Although income generation is at the heart of the strategies for fighting poverty, these actions are not limited to an economic dimension but include participation in the social life and active citizenship. In this way, labour market integration is not only considered to be a source of income, but also a central element of social cohesion. The aim of poverty alleviation strategies is therefore global in its nature.

The current Latin American experience in implementing training strategies for combatting poverty reflects four major features:

- * The increasing involvement of Ministries of Employment;
- * The key role played by non-governmental organisations. Rather than being just a relay, non-governmental organisations appear to be a main partner in the process of identifying target groups and in designing, implementing and sometimes financing programmes;
- * The importance of the territorial dimension and of community participation. This step probably shows a concern for ownership and effectiveness: the local level facilitates the identification of needs and the linking of action undertaken by the various partners.
- * Learners' participation is also a major characteristic of the programmes for disadvantaged groups. These are not only a target for programmes but agents of social transformation. More important still, in this perspective, access to employment or self-employment is not viewed merely at an individual level but within a community. In other words, programmes give as much importance to social benefits as to private benefits, if not more.

In an increasing number of countries, governments are involved in poverty alleviation programmes. In this way, in Honduras, the Public Training Secretariat and the Institute of Professional Training (INFOP) have put in place an innovative "education for work" project, the POCET, which is aimed at

poor rural communities. Based on a participative local development approach, this project is attempting to bridge the barrier between education and vocational training by promoting an integrated vision of adult education.

Chile launched in 1990 a huge youth training programme (Programa de Capacitacion Laboral de Jovenes) with co-financing from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Chilean Government. The action taken in this programme is based on the principle of dual training: in addition to institution-based training, young people are placed with businesses in order to gain professional experience lasting from four to six months. In this strategy, employers get actively involved in preventing youth at risk to be excluded from the labour market.

The difficult reform in transition countries: the situation in Central Asia and Mongolia

- **Surviving the transition process**

Since 1991, the year of their forced birth due to the break-up of the USSR, the five Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan and Turkmenistan), have undertaken deep transformations for the reconstruction of their education system. Discernible at all levels, the movement is particularly pronounced in the field of vocational education. This context and trend also apply to Mongolia, which shares many characteristics with the neighbouring Central Asian republics.

In spite of great achievements, the education system inherited from the Soviet failed to adjust to the requirements of the market economy and of democratic life. The new labour market conditions were first reflected in the partial or total redundancy of a large number of employees and in the collapse of demand for labour. As a result, the need for vocational education dropped sharply.

In the light of the magnitude of these changes, and their sudden nature, the Central Asian republics and Mongolia have taken drastic measures to adapt their vocational education system and find the financial resources necessary for operating it (G. Prokhoroff and D. Timmermann 1997). This reform process began in 1992 with the adoption of new Constitutions which were subsequently complemented by laws relating to education. These laws specify in particular the goals, structures and financing of vocational education. The new legislation also lays down the conditions for the provision of adult education by public vocational education institutions.

Rationalisation of the management of the system appears to have been a major priority. During the Soviet era, technical education was administered by a large number of government bodies. This institutional diversity is now tending to give way to a rearrangement of responsibilities, centred around a single Ministry. This movement, which is not always stable, has created different arrangements which entrust technical education and vocational training in the Ministry responsible for education (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Tadjikistan), in the Ministry of Labour (Kyrgyzstan) or in a public body specially put together for this purpose (the SENET in Turkmenistan). One could see in the choice made by Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan to take the preparation of workers and employees away from the Ministry of Education, a strategy to link vocational education with employment policy and, in the longer term, with employers.

State reform also involves a new distribution of responsibilities between the various levels of administration, particularly with regard to finance. In this way, with the exception of Turkmenistan where there is no intermediary between the central level and the institutions, the regional authorities are enjoying a growing responsibility with regard to management, allocation of finances and definition of curricula.

However, this trend towards decentralisation raises new problems due to the weakness of the central level.

- **From hard budget constraint to competitive labour and training markets**

Apart from significant cuts, the question of finance has first and foremost compelled countries to alter the structure of their budgets. Traditionally, the cost of vocational education included social expenses as well as grants, and meals allocated to all students. While certain countries, such as Mongolia, have carried out a radical reform, suppressing grants and catering facilities, others have tried to preserve for as long as possible the social aspects of technical and vocational education. In Kyrgyzstan, these items in 1995 still represented 43% of the expenditures of vocational schools. The issue is one of shifting from a policy of undifferentiated social aid, which is currently too expensive, to a system which combines equity and efficiency.

In order to alleviate the financial crisis, vocational schools are making an effort to diversify their income. These additional resources would in 1995 have represented some 20% of operating expenditure in Mongolia and Uzbekistan, 16% in Turkmenistan and 10% in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. A major proportion of this income arises from the schools productive activities. A legacy of the previous system, this practice has thus found a new legitimacy in the current context. While it is

very difficult to appreciate the effect these activities will have upon the quality of education, their contribution to the survival of the establishments cannot be doubted. In particular they allow an improvement in trainers' salaries, which are currently very low, and indeed allow the students to be paid. The sustainability of this strategy depends on the prevailing conditions of competition in the market for goods and services. It is reasonable to anticipate that while the economy is in better health, the products manufactured by the schools will no longer be competitive. In this respect, the question of knowing whether products manufactured by technical schools should benefit from a tax exemption is a subject for lively debate between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

The scarcity of resources and the changing role of the State also affect spending patterns. The allocation of budgets, on the basis of past expenditure or according to training standards, has put a greater emphasis on inputs than on outputs. Countries now tend to develop a budgetary environment in which vocational schools are encouraged to adapt their supplies to the needs of the labour market. Kazakhstan has for instance introduced a new formula in accordance with which the training centres are financed on a competitive basis according to their planned activities. Used for programmes for training the unemployed, this procedure could influence the entire financing system for vocational education. This experience has shown that the private centres often show greater flexibility and initiative in launching new training programmes. Still in their very early stages, these developments are allowing glimpses of new requirements for the State. In abandoning the monopoly on training offers, it must define new rules of finance, introduce accreditation procedures for centres and for training programmes, set up quality control systems and, probably, review the system of certification.

However, the current situation does not favour the promotion of continuing education. The demand for qualified people is low, taking account of the economic situation; and moreover, for many occupations, the labour market will remain saturated for some time. Furthermore, the State is no longer in a position to pay, and neither indeed are businesses; while individuals have seen their resources severely curtailed by unemployment and the general fall in purchasing power. In this context adult education is very much dependent on employment policy and the funds dedicated to it.

Once this transitional stage has been passed, the most important question will be that of finding mechanisms likely to transfer part of the responsibility for continuing education to new partners. Initially these will probably be the employers, as already the case in several countries in Central and Eastern Europe (F. Caillods, O. Bertrand and D. Atchoarena, 1995).

3. EMERGING TRENDS

The diversity and consistency of systems

The comparative analysis of systems for financing vocational education does not escape from the usual snags and pitfalls of international comparisons. It may therefore appear somewhat artificial to bring together national systems which are the product of a particular combination of historical, economic, social and cultural factors. The source of funds, the collecting mechanisms, the way resources are managed and allocated and the distribution of responsibilities between the partners reflect above all a national pattern. Nevertheless, the similarity of constraints and of instruments favours the emergence of points of comparison on an international scale.

The selected countries present marked contrasts in the way vocational education systems are organised and financed. A distinction can be drawn between the countries in which vocational education is provided primarily by the education system (Côte d'Ivoire, Central Asia, except Turkmenistan and Mongolia) and those which have chosen to build an autonomous training system, linked to employers and delivering both initial and continuing vocational education (Mauritius, Latin America, Turkmenistan). In all cases the development of private provision, in the context of a market approach, appears to be asserting itself even though its size remains highly variable. Enterprise-based training is a concern everywhere but its implementation varies greatly between countries and is very difficult to measure.

The modes of providing vocational education influence the financing system to a large extent. It would, for example, be inconsistent to finance primarily through public resources a training system mostly controlled by employers. On the other hand, one would not expect businesses to finance, to any great extent, a training system fully controlled by the State without private sector involvement. Cost sharing implies a sharing of responsibilities. Therefore, the analysis of financing systems cannot be completely dissociated from the institutional framework in which vocational education policies take place.

Other factors influencing the funding formula include:

1. the size of the private sector, which defines the possible scope for partnership;
2. the economic policy currently in force, particularly with regard to taxation;

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3. the level of maturity of the partners regarding training issues;
 4. the state of social dialogue;
 5. and finally, the objectives of the financing system (promoting company-based training, expanding the public vocational education system or establishing a market for training).

However, apart from these differences, which reflect particular social and economic aspects, current developments show convergent movements.

The emergence of the market

The application of market principles for financing training is a common feature in many countries, in Africa, Latin America or even (albeit still in an embryonic state) in Central Asia. Nevertheless, this liberal path remains limited by the high costs of training. The implementation of a market-oriented strategy therefore requires new forms of public policies. While reducing its hold role on the supply side, the State increasingly provides incentives and regulations to stimulate and structure a training market.

The search for partnerships

In essence, vocational education is a very favourable area for social dialogue. It is in fact at the crossroads between economic development strategies, the need for competitive enterprises and the aspirations of individuals towards social and employment upward mobility. In this context, public policies try to combine the search for economic competitiveness with the social concern for marginalised groups.

While the emergence of the tripartite formula seems to be a trend governing many reforms, it is not always a success. Partnership requires balance of powers. The existence of social dialogue must precede the establishment of a tripartite system, it must not be the other way round. In this way, many countries at first go through a phase where the partnership mainly includes government and employers (Brazil, Jamaica, Mauritius).

Financing and training governance

Training Funds are relatively original entities. In particular, the practice of mutualization is an important aspect of financing systems based on contributions by employers. The redistribution of resources, according to agreed training policies, favours the implementation of targeted programmes for specific disadvantaged groups.

Experience shows nevertheless that in order to be effective, the mutualisation of funds needs to be complemented by measures aimed at stimulating the demand for training amongst the poorest sections of the public. Furthermore, specific action must be taken to adjust the offerings of the training system to the particular needs of disadvantaged groups.

Beyond its redistributive function, the establishment of a Training Fund in an increasing number of countries offers new conditions for improving the link between supply and demand. In addition to their financial activities, Training Funds can play a key role in training governance through promoting social dialogue and providing a framework for a training market.

Due to their financial power and their links with employers, Funds are in a position to influence heavily the supply side. However, in order to guarantee fully a role of interface between supply and demand, they must develop operational structures for providing advice, guidance incentives to both employers and training institutions. Training Funds' interventions on the labour market can take various forms. Originally, the Latin American model was based on direct control of the training system by the financing body which thus occupied a dominant place in the supply of training. The current trend is towards more and more indirect involvement through provision resources and incentives but also through accreditation procedures and the definition of standards in a context where the supply is increasingly diversified (Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Brazil, Costa Rica).

CONCLUSION

The financing of adult education, particularly vocational education, cannot rest solely on the State budget. On the other hand, the temptation to rely mainly on the market is a mirage because of the increased cost of training (C. De Moura Castro, 1995). Employers, municipalities, non-governmental organisations and individuals are therefore all called upon to make contributions to this investment. The considerable costs linked to globalisation, the search for competitiveness and the preservation of social cohesion require new financing patterns.

Reflections on the financing of vocational training have long revolved around two central issues: what are the available resources? and how can they be mobilised? These questions have formed the background of the experiences have shown innovative ways in which public debate on the respective roles played by the market and the State. Recent countries' policies can support establishment of a market for training and monitor its operation. This perspective is of particular importance for developing countries and countries in transition. New forms of government the intervention are built around capacities for co-ordination, dialogue and for providing incentive. In this context, the financing of vocational education is a key variable around which the governance of the training system as a whole can be established.

It emerges, from the experience of numerous countries in Africa and Latin America, that Training Agencies and Funds can contribute to increase the effectiveness and relevance of vocational education. The sharing of costs is in fact closely connected to the sharing of responsibilities. The financial concern may also serve as a catalyst for creating new interfaces between supply and demand and for fostering policy dialogue between all the partners concerned.

However, in many developing economies as well as in countries in transition, the development of training continues to run up against the still critical situation of enterprises, as well as the absence of structured social partnerships. The establishment of an embryo partnership with employers may give the impetus necessary for defining the principles and methods for co-financing vocational education.

Finally, in all countries, new formulae need to be developed to address the needs of disadvantaged groups and pursue wider aims such as the promotion of citizenship and democracy.

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Footnotes

1. The use of the phrase 'national first language illiteracy' is a recognition that there is some truth in the arguments of, for example, Street (1991) that the use of the term 'illiteracy' is disempowering: whilst it is used to mobilise resources, it is then used to define negatively the recipients of all this activity as "those sad disempowered, uncritical, embedded, cognitively deprived and culturally deficated sets of people". But only some truth: many programmes do *not* involve negative definitions of their clients.
2. The term over-serviced - rather than industrialised-countries - is used given it is difficult for many in the West to identify with industrialisation and I, personally, find it difficult to reconcile rampant capitalism with post-modernism!

Footnotes

1. This paper has been taken from the report: UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific(PROAP): *Impact of Non-formal Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: A Four-Country Synthesized Study*, UNESCO-PROAP , Bangkok, Thailand, July 1997. For reasons of space, the graphics, tables and photographs have been excluded.