

Promoting skills development



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Report of an Interregional Seminar
on 'Assisting the design and implementation of
Education for All skills development plans:
skills development to meet the learning needs of the excluded'
Paris, 22-23 January 2004



International Institute for Educational Planning

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Preface

A focus on skills development brings an original perspective to two inter-related components of UNESCO's work, the Education for All (EFA) movement and the reform of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) policies. Skills development provides a fertile arena for research and an innovative approach to planning and policy implementation within EFA National Action Plans.

This book was prepared from the papers, presentations and discussions associated with the project 'Assisting the design and implementation of Education for All skills development plans: skills development to meet the learning needs of the excluded' and the interregional workshop on this topic held in Paris on 22 and 23 January 2004.

The project itself represents fruitful collaboration between UNESCO's Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education and the International Institute for Educational Planning. The synergy created contributes to supporting Member States in their efforts to achieve the EFA Dakar goals, most particularly goal three: ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. The project advocates for a more comprehensive approach to EFA by the international community.

It is intended that this report will both advance understanding of the issues and be a useful tool for Member States who wish to address the needs of disadvantaged groups, including the rural poor, ethnic and linguistic minorities, as well as the growing numbers of out-of-school and out-of-work youth.

This publication is seen as a contribution to a challenging and overlooked issue that will require sustained efforts by all partners, including UNESCO, for years to come. Without doubt, skills development offers a useful and promising approach with implications for everyone involved in Education for All.

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List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ANPE	<i>Agence nationale pour l'emploi</i>
CCNGO	Collective Consultation of Non Governmental Organizations
CED	<i>Centres d'éducation pour le développement</i>
CFA	<i>Communauté financière de l'Afrique</i>
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CPS	<i>Cellule de la planification et de la statistique</i>
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DSRP	<i>Document stratégique de réduction de la pauvreté</i>
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ED/STV	Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education, UNESCO
EFA	Education for All
EQJA	<i>Éducation qualifiante des jeunes et des adultes</i>
FAETFP	<i>Fonds d'appui à l'enseignement technique et à la formation professionnelle</i>
FAFPA	<i>Fonds d'appui à la formation professionnelle et à l'apprentissage</i>
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAPED	<i>Forum africain des parlementaires pour l'éducation</i>
FNCCI	Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industries
FTI	Fast-Track Initiative
GER	Gross enrolment rate
GTZ	<i>Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Germany)</i>

HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
IDA	International Development Association
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	The New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NTF	National Training Fund
OEF	<i>Observatoire de l'emploi et de la formation</i>
PDEF	<i>Programme décennal de l'éducation et de la formation</i>
PEJ	<i>Programme emploi-jeunes</i>
PRODEC	<i>Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation</i>
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SME	Small and Medium-size Enterprises
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TAT	Traditional apprenticeship training
TITI	Training Institute for Technical Instruction
TOT	Training of trainers
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training

UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPC	Universal primary completion
UPE	Universal primary education
VDC	Village Development Committee
VTCD	Village Training Centres for Development
WB	World Bank
WCEFA	World conference on Education for All
WG	Working group
WEAN	Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal
WGNFE	Working Group on Non-Formal Education

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Executive summary

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes is one of the six Dakar goals to achieve Education for All. In 2003, within the framework of Dakar follow-up, UNESCO's Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education (ED/STV) and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) initiated a project to reinforce institutional capacities and to support policy formulation in four developing countries: Lao PDR, Mali, Nepal and Senegal. The project aimed to support the integration of a vocational skills training component in EFA National Action Plans in order to meet the specific needs of excluded groups such as out-of-school and out-of-work youth and the rural poor, including girls and women.

This book presents the main findings of the work accomplished in the four countries and the proceedings of an interregional seminar held in Paris on 22 and 23 January 2004. The seminar programme consisted of country presentations, thematic discussions and sessions which set skills development in the context of international policy debates. The seminar provided a valuable platform for the multi-level exchange of ideas on how to improve the contribution of vocational skills training to the social and economic integration of disadvantaged groups.

The country presentations highlighted issues faced by policy-makers in their efforts to integrate a skills development strategy within EFA National Action Plans. On the whole, the country studies show that focusing skills development interventions towards the pressing needs of the informal sector and rural areas constitute two main policy directions. Within this common agenda, the target groups vary according to national contexts. In Lao PDR, an emphasis is placed on ethnic minorities. Mali pays increasing attention to informal sector apprentices. Nepal provides an interesting illustration of the debate on affirmative action to better reach low castes (the *Dalits*). In Senegal, several priority groups are identified in the informal sector and in rural settings.

Thematic discussions on meeting the needs of the informal sector, linking skills development to poverty reduction in rural areas and reshaping technical and vocational education highlighted common areas of interest and concern. These included the recognition and certification of skills for the informal sector, the need to improve access to skills for rural people and the problem of financing skills development.

Conceptually, skills development focuses attention on learning outcomes rather than on education and training inputs. In practice, skills development involves not only ministries of education but also ministries of labour, agriculture and others as well as civil society organizations. Thus, an intersectoral, collaborative and consultative approach to policy formulation and implementation is essential. On policy agenda, the inclusion of a skills development component in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and EFA National Action Plans represents an important step towards addressing the needs of excluded and disadvantaged groups. The promotion of skills development also depends upon political will to mobilize national and international funding.

Beyond the national level, participants recognized the potential of a skills development approach to contribute to the success of the EFA movement as a whole. The country studies, thematic discussions and contributions on the role of the international community suggest that greater attention to skills development can inspire a more comprehensive vision of Education for All.

Introduction

Promoting skills development represents a key instrument to facilitate the social and economic integration of excluded groups. In 2003 UNESCO's Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education (ED/STV) and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) provided support to four Least Developed Countries (LDCs) – Lao PDR, Mali, Nepal and Senegal – to effectively integrate a vocational skills training component in their Education for All (EFA) National Action Plans. This is the report of a two-day interregional seminar held in Paris on 22 and 23 January 2004 which reviewed the outcomes of the work accomplished in these four countries. The seminar provided a platform for the exchange of ideas on how to improve the contribution of vocational skills training to the social and economic integration of excluded and disadvantaged groups.

Most of the 45 seminar participants were from countries that are actively involved in reviewing their skills development policies in the framework of EFA. In addition to officials from Lao PDR, Mali, Nepal and Senegal, representatives also came from Bangladesh, Cambodia and Niger: three countries that are also interested in skills development policies and their linkages with EFA National Action Plans. Most of the country participants were from ministries of education and included EFA coordinators and education planners in formal and non-formal education. Representatives of bilateral donors, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNESCO's education sector also played a full part in the seminar.

This report synthesizes the material presented and discussions that took place. The two-day seminar provided an opportunity to take stock of the main achievements of the project and to highlight some key themes and challenges for the future.

Dakar goal 3, “ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes”, provided initial impetus for the project and acted

as a reference point throughout the seminar. With worldwide attention focussing on poverty reduction and the needs of excluded and disadvantaged groups, policies designed to support skills development have a strategically important role to play. This seminar enabled participants to reflect on the relationship between skills development and poverty reduction. It clearly demonstrated the importance of skills development policies within the EFA movement.

Participants identified some conceptual issues and several policy options for skills development. They called for a more integrated, intersectoral and collaborative approach towards EFA. A focus on skills development may help to contribute to an expanded vision of EFA more closely aligned to the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All.

This book is intended for use as an advocacy tool for promoting greater attention to skills development issues in the Dakar follow-up process. The organization of this report reflects the structure of the seminar itself. There are five chapters. The first sets out the background issues, context and rationale for the project as a whole. The second chapter reports on the four country studies on skills development and the main points to emerge from the presentations. Observations from the other participating countries are then considered. The third chapter reviews the thematic presentations on training needs in the informal sector, poverty reduction in rural areas and reshaping technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The fourth chapter discusses the place of skills development policies within the EFA movement as a whole. The fifth chapter discusses some of the emerging issues and outcomes from the project and assesses the potential future role of skills development within an expanded vision of EFA.

Chapter 1

Background, context and rationale for the project

1.1 Background to the project

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes is one of the six Dakar goals to achieve Education for All, as shown in *Box 1*. Although there is some debate on the meaning of ‘life skills’, provision of vocational skills training no doubt plays an important role in equipping young people and adults, especially those whose learning opportunities are limited, to lead more fulfilling and productive lives.

Giving more weight to skills development in national education strategies is also implied by the sixth Dakar goal, “improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills”. Quality and relevance are important considerations for skills development programmes; they should provide the knowledge, competencies and attitudes required by the world of work.

Box 1. EFA Dakar goals

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

- Goal 4: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
- Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Source: UNESCO, 2000.

Yet, as the 2003/2004 *EFA Global monitoring report: gender and Education for All, the leap to equality* reveals, efforts made by developing countries tend to concentrate on universal primary education and literacy. Governments generally give much less attention to skills training for youth and adults. Numerous initiatives are taken by different actors to reach and empower marginalized groups through non-formal and basic vocational training, but they are often implemented on a small scale and are not recognized education programmes within a comprehensive national strategy. It appears that many countries find it difficult to include a skills development perspective in their EFA National Action Plans. This may partly be explained by gaps in existing information systems. Monitoring skills development efforts is a complex task as multiple types of programmes are offered by different providers and at various levels. Assessment of learning achievements is a complicated issue. The complexity of skills development requires specific monitoring instruments and particular planning approaches, involving wide intersectoral and inter-ministerial consultation and co-ordination. Specific attention is much needed to reinforce national planning capacities in this field.

Just as national governments have tried to combine MDGs, PRSPs and EFA National Action Plans with varied success, agencies are also working to develop more integrated approaches towards education. Within the international community, some progress has been made towards a more comprehensive approach to EFA. Achieving Education for All at all levels

and throughout life involves a broad strategy, as indicated by the six EFA Dakar goals. However, donors and international organizations have often conceptualized basic education narrowly, over-emphasizing formal primary education.

1.2 Strategy and implementation arrangements

This project provided technical assistance to four Member States among the least developed countries in Africa (Mali and Senegal) and Asia (Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal). It aimed at effectively integrating a vocational skills training component in EFA National Action Plans in order to meet the specific needs of out-of-school populations and the rural poor, including girls and women. The project thus focused on how skills training can contribute to the social and economic integration of excluded and disadvantaged segments of the population. Appropriate programmes and modes of delivery both within and outside the formal school system were proposed in the framework of the Dakar follow-up process.

Implemented in line with UNESCO's assistance in strengthening the capacity of governments to formulate and execute EFA National Action Plans, the project ensured that consultation with stakeholders on relevant issues took place throughout.

Special efforts were also made to articulate links with other relevant development frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), not only in relation to education but also in relation to poverty and gender equality as well as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

The target beneficiaries of the project were:

- (a) educational planners and managers at the national and regional levels in ministries of education;
- (b) government officials in charge of training policies and programmes in other departments (e.g. labour, agriculture, youth, women); and
- (c) other EFA stakeholders, including representatives of civil society.

The immediate objectives were:

- (a) to support ministries of education and EFA teams in formulating and reviewing a skills development strategy within their EFA National Action Plan and in planning its effective implementation;
- (b) to strengthen national capacities for EFA; and
- (c) to disseminate the outcomes of the project at the international level.

1.3 Activities

The project implementation strategy therefore involved three interrelated activities, namely: (a) policy advice; (b) capacity building at the national level; (c) dissemination at the international level.

(a) Policy advice

Support missions were conducted in each target country. These missions had the following aims: to collect relevant data; to assist EFA teams in developing a relevant strategy for skills development and in formulating an implementation plan; and to contribute to national policy dialogue with the various stakeholders concerned with skills development, including private sector representatives.

(b) Capacity-building at national level

In an effort to ensure capacity-building and ownership, a study was conducted by each national team with UNESCO's assistance. A national workshop was organized towards the end of the process to review the EFA skills development strategy and to organize its implementation and monitoring. The workshop was aimed at educational planners and managers at the central and regional levels as well as stakeholders from the various sectors concerned.

(c) Dissemination at international level

To provide a platform for the exchange of experiences of designing EFA skills development strategies between national planners from the target countries, additional interested countries and the international community, an interregional seminar was organized at IIEP in Paris.

1.4 Expected results

Immediate outputs:

- (a) Skills development strategies within EFA National Action Plans and/or national education sector plans, with particular attention to pro-poor skills development.
- (b) Concrete actions to implement EFA National Action Plans, with particular reference to the skills development component.
- (c) National consensus and partnership with the different stakeholders (e.g. different ministries, professional educators, NGOs) involved in the above mentioned exercise.
- (d) Enhanced planning and co-ordination capacity of educational planners and other governmental stakeholders.
- (e) Dissemination of lessons learned from the target countries.
- (f) General policy guidelines to induce further shifts in policy and practice in support of skills development.

1.5 Definitions and rationale

The concept of ‘skills development’ is difficult to define. As skills are contextual and contexts vary so much, a general approach to skills development is difficult to achieve. Indeed, it may be preferable to develop many approaches. Ideas about the ‘excluded’ or ‘disadvantaged’ also vary between countries, so again it is important to take context into account. The issue of cross-national comparison is also tricky, but nevertheless important for monitoring progress against EFA goals.

In these studies, ‘skills development’ has been regarded as development of the skills and knowledge needed by excluded groups in order to participate fully in the labour market. These are primarily considered to be professional or occupational skills. The term ‘excluded groups’ was used broadly to mean people, mainly young people, who are neither in school nor enrolled in training programmes. These people may be deprived of access to training due to such obstacles as poverty, language, ethnicity, class and geographical location. More specifically, each country team was able to define ‘excluded groups’ in a contextually relevant way. For example, excluded groups were defined to include ethnic minorities (Lao PDR and Nepal), low castes (Nepal) and out-of-school youth, with

special reference to apprentices working in the informal sector (Mali and Senegal).

The needs of young people who are out-of-school or out-of-education have been somewhat neglected in the Dakar follow-up process. Responsibility for the training needs of excluded and disadvantaged youth and adults has often been left to vocational and technical education, yet this sector has not been in a strong enough position to meet these needs.

This project therefore focuses on skills development, with particular attention to the learning needs of excluded and disadvantaged groups. In their research studies, each of the four countries looked at how to develop a specific strategy for young people and adults who have been left out of education and training. Beyond the sharing of experience between participating countries, it is hoped that this project will contribute to the development of an expanded vision of EFA.

Chapter 2

Country presentations

2.1 Overview of the four studies: Senegal, Lao PDR, Nepal, Mali

Senegal: skills development for youth and adults: context and current situation

- Socio-economic and demographic context

While there has been some improvement in the socio-economic indicators for Senegal in recent years, the economic growth may not be sustainable and the benefits are not shared across the country's population. The economy remains fragile due to low productivity in agriculture and insufficient competitiveness in the productive sectors. Low investment, weak agriculture and a poorly developed industry are the characteristics of this economy, resulting in joblessness and underemployment. In terms of the target group, 56 per cent of the population is under 20 years of age and 46 per cent of this group live in urban areas. The number of out-of-school youths (aged 13 to 18 years) without basic education and training is estimated at more than 1 million. The population is growing faster than the number of jobs and 53.9 per cent of the population can be considered poor. Most of the poorest people are living in rural areas or in the areas surrounding cities. The national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) regards strengthening the education system as central to Senegal's socio-economic development.

- Education and skills development

Sustainable economic growth is threatened by low levels of education and training in Senegal. As elsewhere, most attention has been given to achieving universal primary education and developing early childhood education. There is a noticeable gap when it comes to addressing the needs

of excluded and disadvantaged groups and many young people have not benefited from vocational education and training.

The main target groups for skills development in Senegal are:

- (a) apprentices (estimated at 650,000);
- (b) excluded groups in urban and rural environments;
- (c) the young people of the *daaras* (Koranic schools);
- (d) illiterate adults;
- (e) poorly educated girls; and
- (f) handicapped people.

People excluded from basic education make up a huge cohort of youths and adults severely disadvantaged in terms of their socio-economic integration. Skills development for youth and adults is therefore urgently needed in Senegal. National development strategy papers and education and training policy papers now focus precisely on this group. The PRSP and the Ten-Year Plan for Education and Training (*Programme décennal de l'éducation et de la formation* – PDEF) recommend a programme of skills development for youth and adults (*Education qualifiante des jeunes et des adultes* – EQJA). However, implementation of initiatives is difficult in a country in which the so-called ‘informal’ sector is not adequately taken into account in public education and training policies – even though it provides most job opportunities for the target groups. Traditional apprenticeships, despite their pedagogical shortcomings, are the main means of developing skills for the informal sector. Yet they are not regarded as an endogenous component of national vocational training policies and are not receiving the government support they deserve.

In its PRSP, the Government of Senegal aims to reduce poverty by 2015 through redistributing economic growth and improving access to social services and production within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The EQJA involves basic education at lower school level and apprenticeships for both youth and adults. The government advocates an integrated approach to EQJA that brings all sectors together and in which skills development must not only complement learners’ general academic education but also provide initial qualifying vocational training. New strategies may be necessary to better train artisans and work with cottage industries to provide for the acquisition of skills.

Entrants to public and private vocational training in Senegal usually come from middle school or are recent secondary school graduates. Furthermore, only about 60 per cent of the places available at high level formal training centres are currently filled.

There is some international co-operation in the field of skills development involving multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and the ILO, bilateral donors and development foundations.

Data regarding the numbers of people benefiting from skills training programmes are inadequate. However, the needs greatly exceed current levels of provision. The concern is to help members of excluded groups to become socialized and access labour markets. Although some responsibility for supporting skills development has now been transferred to authorities in the medium size cities, limited resources are available to support skills development.

Field surveys performed within the framework of the Senegal country study show that the most effective training practices are delivered through small-scale programmes involving trade organizations, associations and local government, mostly operating alone or sometimes working alongside the formal vocational training sector. However, this multipartner approach is not entrenched in the culture of the administrations concerned and commitments set out in the strategy papers remain ineffectual. Overall, the conditions required for implementation of more ambitious skills development programmes in Senegal are still lacking.

■ Recommendations for follow-up

The Senegal study recommends four lines of action:

(a) To redefine EQJA

It is necessary to reconsider what is meant by providing skills to excluded groups. This can be considered a process of acquiring knowledge, language skills, mathematics, life skills and skills for productivity by those whose access to education has been limited.

(b) To develop EQJA in the education and training system

Senegal's EFA National Action Plan should identify strategies to improve access, the quality of education and how education is managed. It is necessary to establish relationships between the various providers and involve other ministries in EQJA.

(c) To increase financing

The resources for EQJA should be increased. A support fund for vocational training should be implemented during the period 2004-2007 (as suggested by the PDEF). A fund for experimental activities in the development of TVET could be created. There is a need to mobilize a share of national and international resources intended for EFA specifically for EQJA. Donors must be mobilized to finance skills development.

(d) To improve mobilization, co-ordination and follow-up

- Rapid implementation of significant actions and refocusing of those in progress;
- elaboration of a national strategy (to include a state-of-the-art survey, and definitions of programmes...);
- search for financing;
- development of evaluation systems;
- support of system-wide organization, including a steering committee and dialogue with stakeholders;
- creation of a special unit to secure the mobilization, co-ordination, activation, monitoring and evaluation of skills development. This unit would be located in the Planning Department of the Ministry of Education and enjoy strong and acknowledged political support from the different actors concerned, both public and private.

The PDEF is underway, with certain mechanisms in place for monitoring. It is suggested that the Ministry of Education take stock now to identify the most urgent things to be done, re-orienting policies where necessary. A carefully formulated national strategy is needed and monitoring and evaluation systems could be improved. Greater central co-ordination may open the door to further partnerships.

It is now necessary to follow up on the various policy documents relating to education and training in Senegal. This will involve authorities assuming more responsibility for training in the informal sector, including the development of good quality apprenticeship programmes.

Lao PDR: skills development for disadvantaged groups: review, issues and prospects

■ Socio-economic and demographic context

Lao PDR is in the process of formulating policies in relation to the MDGs. The long-term development goal is for the country to leave the category of LDC by 2020. This is the focus of government policy to guarantee the rights of all peoples in Lao PDR and foster national unity. The country wants to safeguard its social, economic, political and cultural identity and progress from subsistence agriculture to a production and service economy. As Laotian society is moving towards a more market-oriented economy, structural transformation towards people-centred and sustainable development is underway.

Lao PDR has a very ethnically diverse population. The majority of the population (66.2 per cent) belong to the *Lao-Tai* ethno-linguistic group. There are 49 recognized minority ethnic groups, categorized into four main ethno-linguistic groups: *Tai-Kadai* (eight ethnic groups), *Mon-Khmer* (32 ethnic groups), Sino-Tibetan (seven ethnic groups) and *Hmong-Yu Mien* (two ethnic groups).

The cultural diversity of Lao PDR is seen as part of the richness of the society. However, many people live below the poverty line and there are major development challenges. Geographically, Lao PDR has no direct access to the sea and the population is scattered along the banks of rivers and across plains. The mountainous conditions along with one of the lowest population densities in Asia make it difficult for social services, including education, to reach a significant part of the population.

Lao PDR is predominantly a rural society with an economy based on agriculture. The top priorities of the government are to improve social conditions and enhance income generation in rural areas. The government aims to integrate rural areas into the national market economy. Rural development is considered the key to the eradication of mass poverty and

to sustainable improvements in social well-being. Poverty eradication is central to the government's policies and strategies for national development.

The different ethnic groups have widely differing livelihood systems, which makes it difficult to identify a common denominator to determine levels of poverty. Forty-seven out of 142 districts have been identified as the poorest districts. The majority of the poorest people are ethnic minorities of the *Mon-Khmer*, *Hmong-Yu Mien* and Tibeto-Burman ethno-linguistic groups.

Ethnic minority populations face special challenges in Lao PDR. Geographical and cultural constraints often limit the access of ethnic minorities to both education and health services. Women and girls are especially limited in their access to social services. For example, in many households with limited resources girls are often required to stay at home to help with household tasks, while their brothers attend school.

■ Education and skills development

The National Literacy Survey in 2001 indicated that 54.8 per cent of the population aged 15 to 59 years is illiterate. More than 1 million illiterate people (of whom 60 per cent are female) are in the Non-Formal Education (NFE) programme target group (15 to 40 years). The proportion of illiterate people living in rural areas is 59.2 per cent, compared to 36 per cent in urban areas. With the exception of the *Tai-Kadai* group, differences between male and female literacy rates are significant. Typically, men are more than twice as likely as women to be able to read and write; in some ethno-linguistic groups the difference is more than five times.

The education barriers faced by rural ethnic minority populations are often related to supply and relevance. In general, provinces with large ethnic minority populations have many villages without schools at all. A greater proportion of children in these provinces do not complete primary school and there is a lack of qualified teachers. Despite ethnic minority children having been enrolled in school, the drop-out rate is very high, particularly in the first 2 years of schooling. This might be because the curriculum is not geared towards the needs of ethnic minority children. Many teachers do not originate from the communities in which they teach and as they usually do not speak the local language, they have difficulty communicating with and teaching local children.

A Labour Migration Survey concluded in three southern provinces of Lao PDR indicated that 7 per cent of the total sample households of the three provinces have members on the move. Young people are the most likely age group to migrate, to escape a life of subsistence farming and take advantage of opportunities for better livelihoods elsewhere. This has left some families and communities without the strongest and most productive members of the labour force. Many migrants never return home and it is estimated that less than 50 per cent of migrants keep in contact with their families. Migration has become a risk mitigation strategy for many disadvantaged youth in Lao PDR. Semi-skilled and skilled labourers seek employment in neighbouring countries, particularly Thailand, in order to increase their incomes and support their rural families. People migrate to Thailand relatively easily as there is no language barrier. Diverse factors including natural disasters, poverty, unbalanced population growth and strains on education and employment opportunities have resulted in a dramatic acceleration in migration.

Despite many gains in the socio-economic development of the country, the special challenges that disadvantaged groups face limit their access to vocational skills. The government's interventions towards addressing this issue include non-formal education (NFE) programmes through the provision of literacy and basic education classes as well as basic vocational and rural skills training combined with the establishment of micro-finance schemes at village level. Such programmes have the support of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, development agencies and numerous NGOs. To date there are 235 Community Learning Centres facilitated by three regional NFE centres and 47 formal TVE institutions, including 12 private institutions.

The main United Nations agency supporting skills development in Lao PDR is the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). In total, nine out of the 18 provinces have FAO projects. The main FAO project, the Special Programme for Food Security, is designed to promote food security through integrated farming practices including the growing of rice and vegetables. This programme reaches 30,000 farmers and has been evaluated as one of the most successful projects for integrated rural development. Another project supported by FAO is the Integrated Pest Management project (IPM), which uses the Training of Trainers (TOT) and Farmer Field School approaches.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare runs provincial Skills Upgrading Centres and has set up mobile training teams to provide short courses to unemployed youth at the village level. In addition, the Poverty Reduction Fund Project (financed by a World Bank loan) is working in 10 districts of three provinces.

The Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Health are also involved in skills development. A National Training Council has been established to facilitate co-ordination among different key ministries to improve the quality and provision of TVET.

In Lao PDR, TVET is financed mainly by public expenditure with the financing responsibility shared between central and provincial levels. Contributions are also made by foreign donor agencies, NGOs and communities. Generally, vocational education and training is expensive and many parents cannot afford it. There is no training loan fund scheme.

The potential importance of TVET for national development in Lao PDR is well understood. There is a widespread view among planners in Lao PDR that at present education does not help youth to gain vocational skills. A problem with the transferability of student's qualifications was also identified. Furthermore, the current provision of vocational education has not evolved to match the changing needs of the labour market. In any case, due to the low social value of vocational trades and occupations, more and more parents would like to see their children achieve higher education.

The Lao PDR draft EFA National Action Plan attempts to integrate vocational and basic education for skills development through:

- literacy courses for children and adults who did not complete school;
- basic primary courses for young people and adults; and
- vocational and skills development courses.

These programmes are designed to address specific targets, however clear articulation is still lacking between the formal and non-formal education systems.

■ Key findings and recommendations

(a) Strains on education

- Natural disasters, poverty and unbalanced population growth create strains on education and employment opportunities, contributing to the increased migration of disadvantaged children and youth;
- Awareness raising about the importance of education among parents, especially those that are poorly educated and those living far away from schools is of prime importance.

(b) Non-formal education programmes

- NFE courses should be closely linked with rural skills training programmes;
- Some form of family support through the promotion of income-generating activities is critical for the success of NFE programmes for poor families;
- Official recognition (with certificates) for graduates of NFE programmes is necessary.

(c) Design of rural skills training

- There is a high rate of imitation of livelihood enterprises and micro enterprises;
- Competition among small producers is fierce and the income generated remains low;
- Skills development together with other support activities (improved technologies, product development, development of market linkages, etc.) is crucial to diversify production, enhance product quality and increase productivity.

Most existing rural skills training programmes aimed at the alleviation of rural poverty are supply-driven. Little if any consideration has been given to the context in which they take place and the specific circumstances of the target group at which they are directed. For rural areas, the objective should not so much be to provide skills training for wage employment but rather to contribute to the creation of self-employment and the development of small enterprises and livelihoods.

Provision of training for marketable skills requires some form of explicit analysis of the local economy and available early-return employment opportunities. This can be conducted through Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) type labour market research. Training programmes should pay close attention to the characteristics of the target clients and the contexts in which they are implemented.

It may be advisable to develop user-friendly programmes in terms of course duration (short), location (close to trainees) and time schedule (part-time, with classes held during afternoons/evenings and weekends). Preference might be given to outreach training courses over centre-based skills development programmes, to the extent that such programmes are feasible. Local instructors such as local master-crafts people have advantages over external instructors in terms of their acceptance by the trainees, understanding of local languages and customs, business experience and post-training counseling.

To enhance the relevance of education and skills training programmes for self-employment, programmes should pay attention to entrepreneurship and basic management. These programmes should be well linked to micro-credit, technology, marketing and other relevant support services.

Nepal: review of the current status of policies, strategies and programmes

■ Socio-economic and demographic context

Nepal has a population of 23,151,423. The overwhelming majority of Nepal's population live in rural areas. Sixty-five per cent of the population depends on agriculture, mostly subsistence farming. Around 38 per cent of the population live in absolute poverty. Nineteen per cent of children in Nepal never enrol in a school and about 35 percent drop out without completing primary education. In total, around 2 million children aged 5 to 14 years (41 per cent of this age group) are working, mostly in agriculture.

In Nepal, certain population groups are excluded from the mainstream as they are low caste *Dalit* people in the Hindu caste system. Twenty-three social groups within this category have been identified by the government for educational incentive programmes. According to the 2001 census, about

16 per cent of the population is *Dalit*. The census also shows that Nepal consists of 102 ethnic groups. Some ethnic minorities are excluded from the mainstream as their lifestyles, languages and cultures distinguish them from the dominant national language and culture. There are also significant segments of the population who are disadvantaged due to geographical isolation. In addition, women in most communities are marginalized as a result of stereotyped gender-biased perceptions.

Since 1990 more consistent emphasis has been given to the needs of disadvantaged communities. This has been supported by the development of democratic norms and values. These in turn have enabled greater decentralization, local self-governance, participatory action and collaboration among governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and community based organizations.

■ Education and skills development

Nepal's EFA National Action Plan 2002-2015 incorporates skills development within the country's strategy to achieve Dakar goal 3. Life skills education is included with the aim of enhancing the contextual knowledge and skills of people from different sections of the population through formal, non-formal and informal approaches on a continuous basis. Life skills education emphasizes skills for employment and the need to foster different approaches towards people according to their ages and needs.

The EFA National Action Plan has listed separate strategies for addressing the life skills needs of different groups:

- primary school age (6 to 10 years);
- out-of-school youth (11 to 15 years);
- youth and adults over 15 years, disabled groups, special disadvantaged communities and senior adults.

The plan also recognizes the importance of creating appropriate spaces for the meaningful involvement of stakeholders. The skills development component involves utilizing existing provision such as schools, TVET institutions, non-formal education, community learning centres and other local and community based provision. The plan emphasizes the need to consolidate specialized enterprises using traditional or local skills. As

poverty is the most overwhelming issue, courses focus on marketable and transferable skills. The overall aim is to increase employment opportunities and to provide access to skills development for poor and disadvantaged groups in society.

The tenth national development plan, which is also Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), emphasizes technical education and vocational training as the main strategy for human resource development and poverty alleviation as well as for meeting the skills needs of young people and adults.

The country study showed that there are several issues and challenges in addressing the skills needs of excluded people in Nepal. First, there is a lack of focused provision for the people who need it most – those who are excluded, poor, lack school education and are illiterate. Secondly, the provision that exists is often inadequate, scattered and beyond the reach of the excluded due to cost, level of training and entry requirements. Thirdly, existing programmes often lack relevance for the social and economic contexts of excluded groups. Most training programmes are conventional, focusing on jobs in the formal sector and particularly in the government sector. These programmes are not directly useful for enhancing self-employment or for contributing to traditional income generation activities.

Although national policies and plans emphasize skills development, the institutional arrangements and the budget provisions required to implement the policies and plans are seriously lacking. The total direct funding allocated is insignificant. In 2002/2003 the total direct budget allocated for technical education and vocational training represented only 1.4 per cent of Nepal's total education budget.

Under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) system, there are currently 11 technical schools, three polytechnic schools, two Village Training Centres for Development (VTCD) and 15 Annex Programmes. Privately run technical schools (110 across 47 districts) operate in affiliation with CTEVT. The Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI) provides training for instructors in TVET programmes. Most of the institutions providing skills training are limited to a small target group under School Leaving Certificate (SLC) level (grade 10 youths, around 16 years of age). The total capacity of the institutions providing skills development programmes is estimated to be about

50,000 participants per year, whereas the number of new entrants to the employment/labour market is about 300,000.

The Ministry of Education and Sports has expanded Annex Programmes in order to offer technical education and training at additional secondary schools. These programmes provide students with a general orientation to various vocational areas. One vocational education subject has now been incorporated in the school curriculum at the secondary level, making up about 14 per cent of the total curriculum.

Other current initiatives in Nepal include:

- advocacy from various commissions and civil society groups to provide skills training to the disadvantaged;
- reorienting the focus of CTEVT from technical education to vocational skills training for the excluded;
- partnership with the Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) to develop four trade training centres to address the needs of workers and industries; and
- establishing one model vocational school in each district within the current plan period.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is involved in a new project targeting poverty reduction through skills training for disadvantaged and deprived youths. It is proposed to increase the income generation capabilities of youth through improved access to well co-ordinated, demand driven skills development training together with post-training services. There is currently a quota reservation scheme to support access to skills training by people from disadvantaged caste and ethnic groups. For example, 10 per cent of the places in technical schools are reserved for *Dalits*. In addition, scholarships are provided for disadvantaged people to receive technical education and special sponsored vocational training programmes exist for people with special needs.

The Employment Promotion Commission and several government ministries are involved in either supporting or providing skills training. The Department of Labour, for instance, delivers programmes designed to support cottage industries and small businesses. The Centre for Non-Formal Education provides various functional literacy programmes that include skills development at the grassroots level. Community Learning Centres

are being developed to promote community based support systems for continuous learning and skills development.

Other training providers include: Skill Nepal, United Mission to Nepal, the Integrated Development Service, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), UNESCO, ILO, UNFPA, FAO, Training for Employment, GTZ, Plan International, Maiti Nepal and WEAN. Despite all these activities, the scope of their work is not sufficient compared to the needs of the country. Many programmes claim to focus on disadvantaged populations, however the precise target is often not so clear and efforts tend to be poorly co-ordinated.

In the context of Nepal, defining the ‘excluded’ assumes a need for affirmative action. Unfortunately, the policy emphasis of the government is often not supported with matching financial provisions and there are resource constraints for the consistent and continuous development of the sector.

- Issues and recommendations for follow-up

Co-ordination and collaboration

Various training programmes are needed at various levels in terms of competencies, duration and so on. However, at present due to the absence of co-ordination and collaboration between the agencies involved in skills training efforts are often isolated and not harmonized with Nepal’s national policy framework. Consequently skills needs are not well matched with current provisions, resulting in duplication, wastage and low quality. It seems that there is still a lack of capabilities within the existing system to carry out the co-ordination work at a pace that can meet national needs. Clear policies are required to situate skills development and TVET within the national structure of education and training and to ensure dialogue with representatives of disadvantaged groups.

Sustainability of the training system

Non-degree vocational training and short-term skills training programmes have traditionally been targeted towards disadvantaged sections of the population. These courses are often run with funds from donors, NGOs and INGOs. Regrettably, the uncertainties associated with such financing frameworks do not permit sustainability.

Suggestions for national action

There is a need to supplement Nepal's EFA National Action Plan by taking into account the skills development needs of excluded groups in view of labour market opportunities, the informal economic sector and emerging trends in employment. Appropriate attention must be given to the roles of different stakeholders. In the context of Nepal, the following points should be considered for skills development in the framework of EFA:

- (a) There is a need to develop special programmes for those who are excluded due to physical and mental disabilities. The potential and possibilities for these groups must be assessed.
- (b) There is a need to recognize and accredit specific skills possessed by different communities in Nepal. This will not only help preserve and use national potential but also support skills development among the many different excluded groups and particularly the *Dalits*, who are occupational groups.
- (c) National co-ordination and professional support should be strengthened with schemes for capacity development. The role and responsibilities of CTEVT should be reviewed and reformed based on mutual consensus and the commitments of stakeholders.
- (d) There is a need for a policy focus on skills training programmes for the creation and development of enterprises in the informal sector. Training programmes contributing to the creation of small businesses and self-employment should be enhanced. Comprehensive post-training support should be developed to cover finance, technology, supervision and information.
- (e) Technical education and skills training policies should be revised to focus on rural needs, the needs of the excluded and contextual changes in the country. There should be sufficient resource allocation and institutional mechanisms to implement these policies.
- (f) A financial mechanism should be developed to support skills development and post-training support.
- (g) There is a need to review the current budget allocation to education as well as allocations within the education budget to make them more justifiably balanced in funding the different sub-sectors of education.
- (h) There is more scope for mobilizing Community Learning Centres to direct training services at the community level towards the poor,

marginalized, women, minority castes, unemployed and special needs populations. The contributions of non-formal education (NFE) cannot be ignored when addressing the need for the development of life skills education. NFE programmes can be re-engineered in terms of contents and methods so as to fulfil the objectives of EFA and life skills education. It is necessary to ensure dialogue with representatives of disadvantaged groups in order to identify their needs and monitor delivery and impact.

- (i) Skills development is not only the responsibility of government. There is a need to develop fora for promoting skills development at the national, district and community level. The NGO sector should be encouraged to participate more in skills development and to join with the government's initiatives.
- (j) For more efficient use of the available resources and for better co-ordination among providers there is a need for a National Training Fund (NTF) managed by a board that can assess performance and decide the fund provision.
- (k) A broad coalition may be required that includes the government sector as well as external support to mobilize funds and expertise. The board should regulate fund flows based on an assessment of the targeted needs of disadvantaged groups and on performance assessments of the service providers.

This country study opened up many issues and identified needs. There is nonetheless still a lack of detailed information on many aspects of skills development. To summarize, key challenges facing skills development in Nepal include:

- the lack of resources for investment;
- continued inertia of administrative systems including education;
- non-functioning Village Development Committees (VDCs); and
- identifying sustainable funding.

Mali: observations, issues and perspectives

■ Socio-economic and demographic context

Mali, in the heart of West Africa, has a population of 12 million which is unevenly distributed across the country. Sixty-five per cent of the population occupies 11 per cent of the territory and more than 75 per cent

live in rural areas. Mali's population is among the poorest in the world and there are major differences in economic development between rural and urban areas. Government programmes intended to reach the rural poor sometimes face additional challenges due to rural-urban migration. People living on the edge of cities constitute a growing vulnerable target group. In Mali, ethnicity and religious affiliation do have a significant influence on social integration. Indeed, it seems that traditional values can contribute to social cohesion and solidarity towards disadvantaged groups.

Aside from land owned by the government, most of the land and resources in Mali are managed by communities and families. The economy is mainly agricultural and in terms of primary production Mali is now the main producer of cotton in Africa. However, agricultural production is fragile due to the uncertain climate and frequent occurrences of drought. Mali's service sector is dominated by the informal economy and the economy as a whole is weak and highly vulnerable to shocks.

■ Education and skills development

Convinced that education and training are essential factors of economic growth and equity, Mali adopted the Jomtien Declaration in 1990. Ten years later the country reaffirmed this commitment by supporting the Dakar Framework for Action.

Like many other developing countries, Mali has realized that substantial efforts on its part are needed if it is to reach targets for universal primary education and to satisfy its skills development needs, particularly in favour of groups that are disadvantaged or deprived of schooling.

The Government of Mali has made some efforts towards skills development through formal and non-formal education. However, many challenges exist in relation to poverty and rural-urban migration.

The three excluded groups targeted by the Mali country study include:

- illiterate youth and adults;
- school drop-outs; and
- young people, teenagers and adults with few basic skills who require vocational training in order to establish and practice a trade.

In 1998, the country embarked on an overhaul of its education system and began to implement a ten-year programme for educational development (*Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation* – PRODEC).

The first priority of PRODEC is to provide quality basic education for all and hence to accommodate as many young Malians as possible in the 'basic cycle', i.e. nine years of basic education. A special effort is made to provide schooling for girls, who attend school in fewer numbers than boys and are more often illiterate. This priority action is bringing appreciable rises in enrolment rates and in the number of pupils in school at the first level of primary education. The gross enrolment rate (GER) for the first primary level, which stood at 7 per cent in 1962, rose to 30 per cent in 1991 and to 50 per cent in 1998. In the last few years increases have been particularly marked, with the GER reaching 60 per cent in 2000 and 68 per cent in 2002. An effort on this scale has its costs: The education sector currently accounts for 30 per cent of the overall central government budget compared to 24 per cent in 1998.

Even with such increases, many young people are deprived of schooling or will leave school without acquiring the skills needed to find a job. The state cannot achieve everything by itself, but it should encourage the development and diversification of existing mechanisms for non-formal education and vocational training.

The desire to upgrade and expand non-formal education was given practical expression in the policy on Centres of Education for Development (*Centres d'éducation pour le développement* – CEDs). As indicated by the objective 'one village, one school and/or one CED', the non-formal education system was supposed to provide a minimum education to at least 50 per cent of those 9-15 year olds who had no access to school and to raise the adult literacy rate from 23 per cent to 50 per cent. Today the non-formal education system, which is allocated only 1 per cent of the education budget, consists of 600 centres managed directly by the Ministry of Education and 88 centres run by Plan International. A total of 15,000 young people are enrolled in CEDs, which is far short of the objectives laid down in PRODEC. The policy implemented by the state requires the increased involvement and mobilization of partners, communities and NGOs.

The second priority of PRODEC is to develop a vocational education system suited to the needs of the economy. The vocational education sector comprises the technical education and vocational training system, a purely centre-based component of modest size (40,000 students) and an apprenticeship scheme which takes a range of forms, some of which are more highly developed than others and including traditional apprenticeship and dual forms of apprenticeship with the support of NGOs such as Swisscontact. Vocational education had long been neglected by the state. To remedy this situation, in 1995 the government created a specific project to strengthen vocational training (*Projet de consolidation de la formation professionnelle*), with assistance from the World Bank and France. This project has the following three components:

- (a) initial vocational training;
- (b) a support fund for vocational training and apprenticeship (*Fonds d'appui à la formation professionnelle et à l'apprentissage – FAFPA*) ; and
- (c) a training and employment observatory (*Observatoire de l'emploi et de la formation – OEF*).

The support fund for vocational training and apprenticeship (FAFPA), founded in 1997, was initially financed by the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA). The fund has given fresh momentum to apprenticeship, although in more modern, structured and better-controlled forms. Training of apprentices generally lasts 3 years and often includes some initial literacy training. The FAFPA's resources are now derived from a vocational training tax levied on companies in the formal sector. The fund covers between 75 and 90 per cent of the costs of such training.

In addition, a youth employment scheme (*Programme emplois-jeunes – PEJ*) administered by the Ministry for Vocational Training and Employment was launched in 2003, with a five-year projected budget of 18.5 billion CFA francs. This project, which is included in Mali's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), is intended to offer the 15 to 40 year age group as many employment opportunities as possible in both wage employment and self-employment.

■ Recommendations for follow-up

Despite recent efforts, Mali's current vocational training system remains under-developed, dominated by the private sector, NGOs and trade associations and highly concentrated in urban areas. The initiatives described above are driving the transition from purely centre-based vocational training to more suitable forms that place greater emphasis on skills acquisition.

Decentralization is currently underway but for the time being the 15 regional academies do not have all the competences necessary for the successful transfer of roles and responsibilities. Diversification of training provision needs to be undertaken on several fronts. In addition to catering for secondary school pupils, vocational training should be made more available to disadvantaged and excluded groups, particularly in rural areas. The vocational training system also requires several new streams in order to counterbalance the predominance of training for the services sector.

Vocational training institutions, NGOs and training centres are seeking official recognition and certification of the skills they provide to learners. However, like the central government they suffer from a lack of resources, both human (qualified training personnel) and financial. At the present time there is little co-ordination between donors or providers and skills development provision is rather fragmented. Some NGOs are working without any government co-ordination. Furthermore, training programmes are not always internally consistent. This situation calls for a more coherent approach at national level to diversify and harmonize provision.

The effective implementation of Mali's skills development strategy in the framework of the EFA National Action Plan will require increased mobilization and technical and financial support from all partners involved in the EFA process. Such support is all the more important in that it is directed as a matter of priority towards the most deprived and economically distressed segments of the population.

2.2 Contributions from other countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia and Niger

The interregional seminar was enriched by delegates from three other developing countries who were invited to share their experiences of

integrating skills development policies within the framework of EFA: Bangladesh, Cambodia and Niger. Their presentations highlighted some interesting issues and were illustrative of the broader challenges facing developing countries, especially those struggling to meet EFA targets.

Bangladesh

The population of Bangladesh is 132 million, composed of 11 ethnic groups with distinctive identities, social backgrounds, languages, heritages and cultures. The government's policy commitment to Education for All is vested in the national constitution of Bangladesh. The first National Action Plan for education was prepared as a follow up to the World Declaration on Education for All. The second National Action Plan (2003-2015) is currently being prepared.

The government has improved the schools' infrastructure and introduced incentive programmes for poor families to send children to school. Six million children have benefited from these programmes and schooling has increased. The country has also developed programmes for the improvement of education management systems. The quality of primary education is not at the desired level, but it is gradually improving.

In Bangladesh there are 6.3 million working children. Excluded and disadvantaged groups include poor working children in urban slums and remote areas, refugee children, ethnic minorities and disabled children. Children in remote rural areas and refugee children are at particular risk of being marginalized from education. It is estimated that there are 1.6 million children with some form of disability, yet only 64 residential schools are run by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The Department of Youth Development, in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, provides skills development programmes to young people through its 301 youth training centres. Bangladesh has non-formal education programmes as part of a nationwide campaign for social mobilization. Non-formal youth programmes are intended to belong to local communities themselves and to create a positive learning environment for excluded groups.

A project offering basic education for hard-to-reach urban children is being implemented in six districts. This project is based on an ‘earn and learn’ strategy to reach 351,000 urban working children aged 8 to 14 years.

Strategies for the future recognize that:

- education for excluded groups requires a process of ongoing change based on a clearly articulated set of principles;
- community teachers can be mobilized to encourage families to send children to school and maintain regular attendance;
- integrating special education training into in-service teacher training would raise awareness and give teachers adaptive techniques for use in the classroom;
- activities to be undertaken for excluded groups have been articulated in EFA National Action Plan (2003-2015); and
- the EFA National Action Plan will provide a vision for primary and non-formal education up to 2015 in line with Dakar goals.

Cambodia

The economy of Cambodia depends mainly upon agriculture. The country is still recovering from war and the education status of the country is still poor in terms of modernization and human resource development.

After the World Education Forum on EFA in Dakar, the Ministry of Education developed a policy of life skills education. Cambodia has defined life skills as “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life”. Life skills education is included in the EFA National Action Plan 2003-2015 for formal and non-formal education, primary education, secondary education and teacher training centres. Life skills education at the primary level includes mine risk education and HIV/AIDS education.

Delivery modalities for life skills education is to include formal education (Grade 1-12) and non-formal education for school drop-outs and adults, with a focus on women and girls, through Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Learner-centred teaching methods are to be adopted for life skills education and, in the non-formal sector, emphasis is to be placed on experiential learning. Reinforcement of in-service training for teachers is being implemented and specific training for teachers of life skills has

already been given in such areas as farming, hygiene, sanitation and human rights.

Many organizations are involved in life skills education within the framework of EFA. These include:

- the Department of Pedagogy Research, responsible for curriculum development;
- the Department of Teacher Training, responsible for pre-service teacher training;
- the Department of Primary Education and the Department of Secondary Education, in charge of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Life Skills Education Programme;
- the Department of Non-Formal Education, responsible for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Life Skills Education Programme.

Other ministries, NGOs and international organizations are also involved in developing Life Skills Education Programmes, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNICEF, UNFPA and CARE.

In view of all this activity and involvement, much more co-ordination between ministries, NGOs and international organizations is needed. There is a serious lack of resources and to date monitoring and evaluation have proved ineffective. Life skills education is still not responsive enough to the needs of the formal and non-formal sectors of the economy. One of the key issues at the present time is the training of inspectors in assessing, monitoring and evaluating life skills education.

Cambodia's future plan for life skills education involves:

- extending Community Learning Centres;
- increasing vocational training for youth, girls, and adults;
- establishing vocational training centres in rural areas;
- providing scholarships to poor school drop-outs;
- identifying marketing needs; and
- mobilizing increased support from all stakeholders.

Niger

Seventy-nine per cent of Niger's population of 11 million is under 35 years old. The country is very poor and many young people migrate to urban areas in search of employment. In view of this situation, the government created a Ministry for Youth to address the problems of youth unemployment and delinquency.

This Ministry has tried to address these issues through a special training centre located 30 km from the capital and established by the President of the Republic. This centre offers six month vocational training programmes in, for example, plumbing, construction and electrical engineering. At the end of each programme the young people leave with a toolkit to set up their own businesses. So far, 1,500 students have participated in these programmes.

Another vocational training centre, the *Centre technique Kalmaharo* (CTK) recruits young people who have a *Brevet* (diploma) or equivalent for a three-year programme to become skilled workers. In collaboration with the *Agence nationale pour l'emploi* (ANPE), these young people are placed in government enterprises or private firms for a training course of a few months.

Facilitating the integration of young people into the labour market takes place through the following initiatives intended to reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth:

- partnerships with businesses for training;
- loans allocated to graduates without a job according to their needs to help them to set up their own businesses;
- loans to women under the Presidents' resource programme;
- European funded agricultural training projects; and
- youth training and rehabilitation programmes (for example: *Formation initiale professionnalisante pour les jeunes*).

Niger has produced a 10-year plan for education. However, in the framework of EFA, Niger is facing many challenges including gender disparities, quality and access. The Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) in formal education are relatively low: 42 per cent in primary and 33 per cent in secondary school. By 2015 the GER in primary education is only expected to reach 85 per cent.

Niger has 49 TVET institutions in the capital Niamey and only three in the rest of the country. Furthermore, all of these are post-secondary institutions: Only 10 accept lower secondary school leavers. Until recently all of these TVET institutions offered various diplomas with their own standards. However, there is now a national system of certification in place.

Regarding the place of TVET within EFA, technical and vocational training is always considered the poor relative to general education. Despite this, the Government of Niger recognizes that technical and vocational education requires more attention. Niger has six new TVET institutions and is currently creating three University Institutes of Technology. The transition from training to work remains problematic and there are not always suitable employment opportunities for graduates of these programmes. The government therefore tries to generate new employment opportunities, particularly for people from excluded groups.

Chapter 3

Thematic discussions

3.1 Meeting the training needs of disadvantaged groups in the informal sector¹

While many people agree that it is important to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups there are multiple views about how this might be achieved. In particular, far more attention is now being given to the informal sector than in the past due to the fact that the idea of fighting poverty has taken on great significance.

The informal sector will undoubtedly exist for a long time. Indeed, it represents an important dimension of the economy by providing employment and generating income for the poor. The informal sector is controlled by ordinary people: It is a productive system without the accumulation of capital. In some ways the informal system actually redistributes capital. It enables a significant number of young people to become self-employed and therefore contributes to the sustainable integration of youth into the world of work. Improvements to traditional apprenticeship, including continuing education for ‘masters’, is contributing to modernization of the informal sector.

When people build up the informal economy they are actually fighting poverty: This can be considered a form of self-help. Apprenticeship is an integral part of this process. Indeed, the terms ‘handicraft’ or ‘cottage’ industry may be preferable to the term ‘informal’, as these terms have greater legitimacy. Such micro-enterprises are often very original and indigenous. Some of them, for instance in furniture-making, are organized like small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). These businesses should therefore be able to benefit from existing support programmes for small business.

1. This section is based on the presentation given by André Delluc, IIEP-UNESCO consultant.

In fact, it is worth asking why the education system has not fully taken the informal sector into account before now. Perhaps one of the reasons why the informal sector has been neglected by educators is the historically weak relationship between education and employment.

In terms of policies to address the needs of the excluded, it is desirable to bring additional opportunities for skills development to disadvantaged groups. It is recognized that each occupation has its own distinctive features and that the skills needs of each trade are different. There are undoubtedly knowledge gaps within the informal sector and this sector must be linked with the specialized know-how that exists. To work within this sector, training courses for both youth and adults are much needed. For example, young people must also know how to start their own businesses. Such training appears essential for modernization of the informal sector.

The concept of skills development for disadvantaged groups might include participants in informal sector training such as apprentices as they have entered a system that is not highly valued by the public authorities. Various groups in society may be excluded in different ways and the skills needs of each group may differ. Education and training should therefore be carefully adapted to the needs of the various disadvantaged groups. For training in the informal sector to become sustainable it may be necessary to move towards certification and validation of skills. The *Chambre des métiers* (Chamber of Crafts) in Mali, for example, now recognises six levels of skills. In Togo, the state has taken charge of apprenticeship through certification and validation and there is a specific budget for supporting training in the informal sector.

Finally, in terms of the link between education and work it appears unfortunate that formal education tends to concentrate so many resources on preparing the very few people who are likely to go on to study at university level. The current model of formal education does not appear to cater for a wide diversity of learning needs, including the training needs of the informal sector. It would therefore seem preferable for the education system to have many more colours on its palette than merely academic education.

3.2 Linking skills development to poverty reduction in rural areas²

Within the EFA movement there are a number of Flagship Initiatives, including Education for Rural People (ERP). An EFA flagship is a structured set of activities carried out by voluntary partners under the leadership of one or more agencies and which intends to address specific challenges in achieving the EFA Dakar goals.

The Education for Rural People flagship was launched by the Heads of FAO and UNESCO during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (September 2002). It intends to bridge efforts to reach Millennium Development Goal 1 *to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger* and Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 *to achieve universal primary education and to promote gender equality and empower women*. The ERP initiative is a call for collaborative action to increase the co-ordination of efforts targeting the educational needs of rural people.

The ERP initiative seeks in part to address rural-urban disparities, which are a serious concern to governments and the international community. Around 70 per cent of poor people in the world live in rural areas. Education is a basic right in itself and an essential prerequisite for reducing poverty, improving the living conditions of rural people and building a food-secure world. Yet children's access to education in rural areas is still much lower than in urban areas. In rural areas the quality of education is poorer and adult illiteracy is much higher. Consequently, educating rural people is one of the main challenges facing the drive to achieve Education for All.

It can be helpful to take one step back from education and training to place education goals in a broader development context. The EFA movement must be located within the vision of the Millennium Development Goals. It is necessary to consider the various goals of the MDGs as it is important to adopt a global perspective. If the first MDG (to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) is not addressed then neither will the other MDGs. Unless EFA is achieved, poverty reduction will not be reached. Food security means rural development and therefore unless there is a focus on the rural poor, EFA will not be achieved.

2. This section is based on the presentation given by Lavinia Gasperini, FAO.

EFA and skills development must not be addressed in a vacuum but rather as part of a global effort towards sustainable rural development. In developing countries agriculture is the main activity, although it is evident that off-farm activities (e.g. crafts, woodcarving and tourism) are increasingly important. Such trends need to be acknowledged. It might become necessary to focus more on agritourism and new growth areas to achieve poverty reduction and skills development that reflect labour market changes.

In a rapidly changing environment, people need skills for resilience and flexibility. Skills development can be considered a public good as well as a basic right. There are many challenges in promoting education for rural development. On the whole rural people do not protest as much as urban people and they are generally less involved in politics. Furthermore, planners and policy-makers are generally urban people who act as though agriculture has a small impact on the labour market.

To create awareness of rural issues it is therefore desirable to establish partnerships across ministries of youth, education and trade. Civil society organizations including NGOs, churches and the private sector must be involved. Reforms should recognize that agricultural education institutions are not a large scale solution. In many cases, agricultural education institutions are attended by students from urban areas. Disadvantaged youth often do not have access to agricultural education as these institutions have relatively high recruiting criteria. In terms of addressing the needs of rural people, a more holistic approach should therefore be taken. It is necessary to adopt a targeted approach with a focus on rural people. At present, development plans are often influenced by the interests of the various sectors. A preferable approach would be to start from rural people's needs in order to set policy priorities and define the policy framework, financial commitment and funding policies including delivery mechanisms and alliances. It is therefore necessary to describe, analyze and name the needs of rural people in order to access funds and human resources.

3.3 Reshaping technical and vocational education and training (TVET) within the framework of Education for All (EFA)³

The complex relationships between TVET and general education and between non-formal and formal education present multiple challenges for improving the co-ordination of skills development within the framework of Education for All.

In Mali, TVET is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. There are 40,000 people enrolled in TVET programmes in Mali, most of whom are enrolled in the private sector. Many of these students are also secondary school students and so are not generally regarded as being from ‘excluded’ groups. In this case, the availability of places on certain courses typically has more impact on the delivery of skills training than the choices or needs of individual students. Most training establishments in Mali are located in urban rather than rural areas. TVET institutions are often weak: They lack financing, equipment and proficient trainers. Furthermore, the vocational training offered in Mali does not appear to be well adapted or responsive to the training needs of the economy, which is primarily agricultural. Upon consultation, company directors in Mali observed that the training provided has little relationship to the needs of the productive sector. Directors often encounter students who have diplomas but insufficient or inadequate skills. It is therefore felt that appropriate skills development can potentially play an important social and economic role in the future.

As for the distinction between formal and informal economies, a conceptual separation between ‘formal’ and ‘non-formal’ education can be unhelpful, especially if used for comparative purposes. Apprenticeship in Mali, for example, is actually quite formalized. It may be preferable to think in terms of complementarity between the ‘formal’ and ‘non-formal’ rather than separation, even though there is a problem with the supervision and certification of apprenticeship. Skills training in the informal sector now requires greater official recognition. If these skills are certified so as to correspond to the needs of the economy and employers, disadvantaged people including school drop-outs will be better placed to earn a living.

3. This section is based on the presentation given by Paul Esquieu, IIEP-UNESCO consultant.

Aside from its flexibility and therefore its potential responsiveness, non-formal education is also more likely to reach disadvantaged groups than formal TVET programmes.

To address the question of validation, countries such as Mali and Niger are working towards validating skills development through a national certification system. In Mali, 70 different occupations have been identified with a view to validating the relevant occupational skills and training. From being ‘diploma factories’, TVET institutions are now moving towards setting up training modules and work-study programmes. Ideally young people should leave institutions with both knowledge and skills.

In contexts such as that prevalent in Mali, it is sometimes argued that one way of developing relevant knowledge and skills might be for TVET to commence earlier, alongside general education, rather than starting when a student has already been at school for 9 years. In this way students could acquire some certified level of skills before leaving primary education. Opportunities for training within companies and for moving between work and training could also be increased. In Mali it is recognized that the private sector can make an important contribution in various ways to training and skills development. Companies can participate both technically, through training and apprenticeship and through financing.

While the separation between ‘formal’ and ‘non-formal’ training may be problematic, it might not be possible to manage the non-formal system in the same way as the formal system, not least because there are so many actors involved. In Lao PDR, for example, the relative roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour are a significant issue for skills development policies. The Ministry of Labour, for example, is involved in vocational training, guidance and counseling. Whereas in some countries the same government department is responsible for both formal and non-formal education and training, in other countries there are two or more different departments. This can create some problems as the respective authorities must come to an agreement before skills development policies can be integrated within the framework of EFA National Action Plans.

The development of technical and vocational training inevitably has an economic dimension. It may be necessary to give greater consideration to who should pay for TVET. Vocational skills will benefit companies and

yet the use of earmarked payroll taxes to finance TVET is very limited. Training courses are often expensive and in developing countries it may be unrealistic to expect poor families to finance TVET. For this reason, governments, non-governmental organizations, donors and private enterprises may need to participate in financing. Training providers can also generate income through diversifying their activities and selling courses and services to companies.

There is potential for TVET institutions to be opened up to the wider world, while taking the wide range of contexts into account. Within countries it is important for TVET institutions to address the needs of rural areas. Various forms of occupational training may be offered by TVET institutions and many countries are now heading towards a more diverse situation in which ongoing training is provided alongside remunerated work. Further ways of overcoming the conceptual separations between formal and non-formal, institution-based and work-based training need to be found in order to move further towards complementarity.

Chapter 4

Skills development and the EFA process

4.1 Co-ordination and monitoring⁴

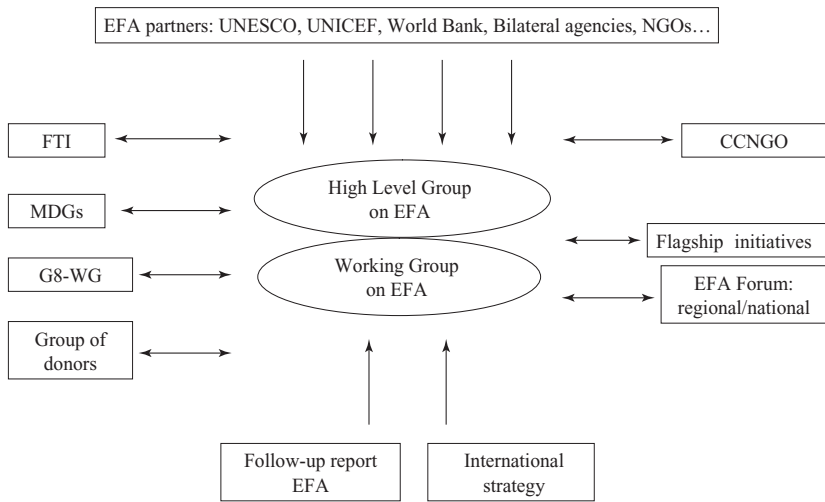
The World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 achieved renewed international engagement with Education for All and generated consensus on key policy mechanisms and strategies for accelerating progress towards EFA by 2015. The Forum also highlighted the need to integrate EFA within the framework of the global struggle against poverty. The World Education Forum also guaranteed financing for EFA by declaring that “no countries seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources” (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000: 18).

International co-ordination

The UNESCO Dakar Follow-up Unit⁵ facilitates co-ordination between partners and seeks to maintain the dynamic of co-operation for the realization of the six Dakar goals. The Unit has helped to shape the ways and means through which co-ordination can take place, as shown in *Figure 4.1*.

4. This section is based on presentations given by H. Mputu Afasuka, UNESCO Dakar Follow-up Unit and J. Van Ravens, EFA Global Monitoring Report Team.
5. In February 2004, the Dakar Follow-up Unit was re-designated the Division of International Co-ordination and Monitoring for Education for All (ED/EFA).

Figure 4.1 EFA international co-ordination: emergent architecture



Legend:

FTI: Fast-Track Initiative

MDGs: Millenium Development Goals

WG: Working group

EFA: Education for All

G8: The G8 member nations are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

CCNGO: Collective Consultation of non-governmental organizations

Source: Mputu Afasuka, 2004.

There is a division of labour between international organizations: For example UNICEF leads the way in promoting education for girls and women and gender equality. The World Bank is in charge of activities supporting reforms within the Fast-Track Initiative. The World Food Programme supplies food with the intention of attracting children to school and increasing retention. The International Labour Organization attempts to contribute to the acceleration of EFA through improving the status of teachers.

To assist international co-ordination, UNESCO ensures that partners have the same interpretation of the EFA calendar and that EFA is well articulated in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and PRSPs. The Dakar Follow-up Unit aims to achieve better

harmonization and greater coherence between donors and reinforce co-operation between UN agencies. A High Level Group on EFA has been established to sustain and accelerate the political momentum for EFA and serve as a lever for the mobilization of technical and financial resources. This brings together some 30 ministers of education and international co-operation, heads of agencies and civil society organizations. Another body, the international Working Group on EFA (WGEFA), is comprised of representatives of governments, regional bodies, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and non-governmental organizations. It exists to provide technical guidance and promote partnership and information exchange between all partners in the drive for EFA.

UNESCO works in close partnership with civil society through consultation with hundreds of NGOs. This work includes promotion and communication about EFA, mobilizing support for the EFA Flagship Initiatives, regional and sub-regional policy mechanisms, national fora and collaboration with donors. UNESCO also supports national policy-makers in the five pillars of EFA: planning; promotion and communication; financing; follow-up and evaluation and partnerships mechanisms.

Recent developments in relation to EFA include the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which supported an action plan for financing accelerated progress towards universal primary education (the Fast-Track Initiative), the creation of the G8 Working Group on Education, the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012). There are also a number of regional initiatives underway including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the *Forum africain des parlementaires pour l'éducation* (FAPED).

Monitoring progress towards EFA

The EFA Global Monitoring Report Team is an independent team that assesses progress against the six EFA goals agreed on at Dakar. It aims to make the process transparent, to create a sense of urgency and to be a platform for mutual learning. If, for example, some countries are making excellent progress towards EFA, explanations for this success should be found and disseminated.

Considerable attention is being given to universal primary education even though only three of the six Dakar goals relate directly to primary education. Indeed, Dakar goals 3 and 4 are both about including people who may have, for one reason or another, missed out on primary education. Goals 3 and 4 relate to skills development and progress towards these goals is more difficult to monitor than progress against more quantitative targets. Whereas international indicators exist for schooling, they do not exist for skills. It is understandable that countries would like to know who has access to skills and learning programmes. However it may not be desirable to come up with one universal definition. Skills vary to such an extent that the focus must be on appropriate provision and access to learning programmes that suit people's needs. The quality and relevance of skills development are closely linked. For this reason, when monitoring progress it is felt that international comparability should not be the main concern.

An alternative approach towards assessing progress in skills development is for countries to conduct in-depth, context specific studies. The four country studies on skills development conducted within this project, for example, achieve some transparency regarding progress in the area of vocational skills. Indeed, they contain some useful data that directly relate to Dakar goal 3. It is clear from this experience that, in the future, similar studies should be conducted in other countries in order to better understand learning needs.

One of the strengths of these country studies is that unlike much of the available material they are self-critical. New standards may gradually develop from these kinds of in-depth analyses and such work might eventually contribute to the development of monitoring tools. These studies demonstrate the kind of research that might inspire other countries to do similar work and for this reason they deserve greater international visibility.

4.2 Towards a more comprehensive approach to EFA: international policy debates⁶

Efforts to achieve EFA are taking place within complex and rapidly changing international policy debates. There is a tendency for the global spotlight to shift from one set of international agreements to the next and new initiatives may not be entirely congruent with or complementary to

6. This section is based on the presentation given by Françoise Caillods, Deputy Director, IIEP.

established commitments. While it is understandable that policy agendas change over time and that different international meetings reach different agreements, there is value in ensuring as much continuity as possible. In the case of education three international policy thrusts are of most interest, namely the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Education for All (EFA), including the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI). These will be briefly reviewed and discussed here.

The MDGs are a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women, as shown in *Box 2*. The Millennium Development Goals are now at the centre of policies for international development.

Box 2. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Source: United Nations General Assembly, 2001.

Some elements of EFA have been taken up in the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, MDGs 2 and 3 have well-defined targets for education. The target for MDG 2 *to achieve universal primary education* is to “ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”. The target for MDG 3 *to promote gender equality and empower women* is “to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015”.

There is, however, some concern among development partners that these targets for education are more restrictive than those envisaged at Jomtien and Dakar. The MDGs relating to education focus on universal

primary education (UPE): There is no mention of early childhood care and education (ECCE) or life skills. Nevertheless, all of the MDGs present a serious challenge and many are difficult to achieve without strengthening life skills. For example, empowering women involves access to livelihoods, awareness of HIV/AIDS and the eradication of extreme poverty. There are also other MDGs that cannot be achieved without life skills education. Even though only some aspects of EFA are reflected in the MDGs, these goals were never intended to replace the commitments made at Jomtien and Dakar. It is thus preferable to regard successive international agreements relating to education as complementary, resulting in an intertwining suite of strategies. The education components of MDGs, PRSPs and the Dakar Framework of Action, including EFA National Action Plans are key policy instruments. Each of these instruments is contributing to debates about how the international community can best support EFA and each instrument has relevance for promoting skills development.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in low-income countries are intended to be comprehensive road maps based on domestic and external partnerships (World Bank, 2002). A review of the first 18 PRSPs looking at the coverage given to education in these documents has been produced by IIEP (Caillods, 2003). This review tried to assess the extent to which preparing a PRSP impacted upon education policy and practices as well as the ways in which the education sector took account of poor people and their interests.

The finding of the IIEP review was that as far as education is concerned the PRSPs focused mainly on UPE. Only seven of the 18 PRSPs reviewed mentioned improving adult literacy or eliminating gender disparities. In their education chapters, few PRSPs specify how their various measures are going to target the poor. On the whole the PRSPs restrict themselves to the MDGs rather than taking in the broader visions of Jomtien and Dakar. The PRSPs give little attention to non-formal education, learning to learn or opportunities for lifelong learning.

The reviews of PRSPs imply interesting processes and trends towards an intersectoral approach. In general the parts on education in the PRSPs contain very ambitious goals for primary education. However, it is very rare for the PRSPs to detail how these goals will be achieved. There is very little mention of non-formal education for out-of-school youth and where TVET features it does not target the poor. Where reference is made

to TVET programmes, these are mainly oriented towards the formal sector of the economy.

Understandably, most of the education indicators given in the PRSPs focus on primary education. However, other chapters do give significant attention to the themes of female empowerment, rural development and the need to support forestry and fisheries. It is interesting that ministries other than ministries of education are also proposing life skills programmes and that these programmes tend to be more focused on the needs of the poor. A concern for intersectorality is evident in the PRSPs, however they do not provide details of how this is going to take place. For example, ministries of labour may be proposing micro-credit for women and training for the informal sector but few linkages are made with education policies. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that some cross-fertilization between ministries does take place.

Regarding Education for All (EFA) policies, there is the need to look again at what was said at Jomtien. The wording of the Dakar Framework for Action appears to be a little behind what was agreed on in the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All. This is most clearly evident from article 5 of the World Declaration shown in *Box 3*, which asserts that the basic needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be delivered through a variety of mechanisms. These include, “skills training, apprenticeship, and formal and non-formal education programmes in health, nutrition, population, agricultural techniques, the environment, science, technology, family life, including fertility awareness, and other societal issues” (WCEFA, 1990). Article 5 articulates a broad vision representing a more comprehensive approach towards EFA than is evident in the Dakar goals. Agencies might therefore find more support for skills development and life skills in the Jomtien Declaration than in subsequent agreements. It is worth recalling that the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 was intended to reconfirm and not to replace the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All.

Box 3. Article 5 of the World Declaration on Education for All

Broadening the means and scope of basic education

The diversity, complexity, and changing nature of basic learning needs of children, youth and adults necessitates broadening and constantly redefining the scope of basic education to include the following components:

- ***Learning begins at birth.*** This calls for early childhood care and initial education. These can be provided through arrangements involving families, communities, or institutional programmes, as appropriate.
- ***The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling.*** Primary education must be universal, ensure that the basic learning needs of all children are satisfied, and take into account the culture, needs, and opportunities of the community. Supplementary alternative programmes can help meet the basic learning needs of children with limited or no access to formal schooling, provided that they share the same standards of learning applied to schools, and are adequately supported.
- ***The basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems.*** Literacy programmes are indispensable because literacy is a necessary skill in itself and the foundation of other life skills. Literacy in the mother tongue strengthens cultural identity and heritage. Other needs can be served by: skills training, apprenticeships, and formal and non-formal education programmes in health, nutrition, population, agricultural techniques, the environment, science, technology, family life, including fertility awareness, and other societal issues.
- ***All available instruments and channels of information, communications, and social action could be used to help convey essential knowledge and inform and educate people on social issues.*** In addition to the traditional means, libraries, television, radio and other media can be mobilized to realize their potential towards meeting basic education needs of all. These components should constitute an integrated system – complementary, mutually reinforcing, and of comparable standards, and they should contribute to creating and developing possibilities for lifelong learning.

Source: WCEFA, 1990.

There are many important financial considerations in assessing what is really feasible or sustainable in education. It is ultimately the Minister of Education who must orient education towards national priorities while accessing international financing. Strategic use can be made of PRSPs to mobilize donor support for skills development. For example, Uganda placed education and training within its PRSP under the objective of sustaining economic growth, including supporting the poor. A strategic approach towards funding is important as skills development must inevitably compete with other priorities including for example the drive to improve literacy, growing demand for secondary education and the Fast-track initiative (FTI) for expanding access to primary education.

One of the key challenges for developing countries is to successfully integrate domestic and international policy agendas. This task is not made any easier by the complexity of contemporary international policy debates and the emergence of new geopolitical agendas. A more comprehensive approach to EFA, in keeping with the holistic vision of Jomtien, will require shifts in the thinking and practice of both national planners and their development partners.

Chapter 5

Main findings and future prospects

The country presentations, discussions and comments made by seminar participants reveal the range and complexity of the issues raised by the seminar theme. Each country faces daunting challenges in relation to poverty, especially in rural areas: Access and participation in basic education and literacy programmes remains a challenge. Despite the potential benefits, governments have given relatively little attention to policies and programmes for skills development. In each of the participating countries, youth make up a significant proportion of the population and the informal sector is an important part of the labour market.

The interregional seminar was wide-ranging in its scope, with interesting presentations and thought-provoking interventions and discussions. This was a rare opportunity for education planners from countries in Asia and Africa to interact with each other and with representatives of the supporting development agencies.

Seminar participants covered much conceptual terrain in relation to skills development for disadvantaged or excluded groups. The concepts of exclusion, marginality, poverty and the poor were discussed. Various types of exclusion and possible differences between excluded groups were considered. In relation to the concept of disadvantaged or excluded groups, there was consensus that the notion should be specific to national contexts and priorities.

As well as recognizing differences between countries, disadvantaged groups within countries may need specific attention. In view of the socio-economic and cultural variations between and within countries, no single strategy will suffice. Nevertheless, some general criteria have been used. These include socio-economic criteria (e.g. low income, out-of-school and out-of-work youth), socio-cultural criteria (e.g. ethnic and linguistic minorities, low caste groups) and geographical criteria (e.g. poorest districts, remote or mountainous areas). The seminar stimulated some

debate over equality versus equity in relation to the treatment of excluded groups. There is a convincing case for exploring approaches through which it is possible to direct more resources on a per capita basis towards excluded groups.

The seminar also dealt with the whole question of skills. Participants discussed the meaning of skills development and 'life skills', described by some as those skills needed for living in addition to conventional notions of literacy and numeracy. The importance of keeping traditional know-how in mind was also emphasized.

Through the Nepalese example, participants discussed social and cultural categories and the relationships between caste and trades or occupational groups. It was suggested that an anthropological approach towards skills development in Nepal might be necessary to understand such complex cultural dynamics.

The seminar also highlighted policy problems for skills development activities, particularly in relation to 'informal' but vitally important apprenticeship systems. From the country studies, questions arose about possible roles for the state and other training providers. A concern was expressed that the skills development approach might be seen as a way of delivering skills cheaply, without the necessary investment.

These issues and debates have arisen in a context in which many governments are focusing their efforts towards basic education and the attainment of measurable EFA goals. It is necessary to stress the role of skills development within EFA and its importance for excluded groups. The urgency of this work should be kept in mind, recognizing that many people are socially and economically excluded. There appears to be a strong case for prioritizing skills development within the framework of EFA. However, such is the scale of exclusion and disadvantage that governments alone do not have sufficient resources to meet the challenge of skills development.

Given the limited resources available it is necessary to identify and target the most needy groups in society such as poor people in rural areas and those people living on the periphery of urban areas. The seminar gave much attention to EFA co-ordination and the Dakar follow-up process. The country papers and thematic presentations were used to illustrate

possible approaches that could be used to promote and assess skills development. Questions relating to the monitoring of progress towards Dakar goals 3 and 4 arose. Given that skills are so highly contextual, it was suggested that it may not be appropriate to develop a single international instrument to measure the skills of adults or other social groups.

The seminar discussions provided an overview of policy frameworks for skills development. At the national level, policies typically include national development plans, PRSPs and EFA National Action Plans. Yet, it has been shown that there is often inadequate coverage of skills development in PRSPs and that to date limited attention has been given to meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups within EFA National Action Plans.

In each of the participating countries there is a multiplicity of skills development programmes and providers. However, in general there is an information gap between skills training provision and skills needs, little attention to sustainability and poor co-ordination. There is often a concentration of investment in TVET provision in urban areas and this is usually oriented towards formal sector employment. Consequently there is a lack of nationwide coverage and the skills needs of the disadvantaged, rural people and the informal sector are often overlooked.

Despite the apparent importance of skills development, TVET and non-formal education (NFE) receive marginal budget allocations. While some countries use a basket funding approach to mobilize donor support for primary education, there is no plan for a similar initiative for financing skills development. However, some specific funding instruments are emerging such as national training funds in Mali and Senegal. Other countries, including Niger, are using the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative to support the costs of skills development.

In each of the countries efforts are now underway to improve co-ordination and collaboration for skills development. In Lao PDR and Nepal the approach is towards capacity-building in the existing co-ordinating bodies. There are also efforts to capitalize on good practices as far as possible, for example the good practices of NGOs (e.g. in Nepal and Senegal). The need to support community based programmes is now well recognized (e.g. in Cambodia and Lao PDR). Most of the countries have

shown an interest in strengthening partnerships between formal schools and local communities.

There is already some evidence of positive changes arising from this project as a whole. For example, the project has helped to facilitate collaborative efforts across various departments within ministries of education such as general education, primary education, TVET, planning and non-formal education. Such intra-ministry collaboration is evident from the composition of the country teams, as shown in *Appendix 3*. The project has also prompted some promising inter-ministry dialogue for example between ministries of agriculture, labour, and youth. These collaborative efforts are starting to contribute to a better understanding within countries of the skill needs of excluded and disadvantaged groups. The process of conducting the studies has contributed in itself to an increased awareness of the current and potential role of TVET. Some concrete measures have already been taken by these countries to include or strengthen a skills development component in their EFA National Action Plans.

Each of these positive changes can be regarded as an integral part of the wider EFA process. The chosen theme of skills development has been especially helpful for promoting collaboration within and between ministries and partnerships with civil society that should assist the EFA process.

Conceptually, a focus on skills has wider significance as it shifts attention from education and training inputs to outputs and learning outcomes. Furthermore, the contextual specificity of knowledge and know-how revealed by the skills development agenda has wide-reaching implications for future understandings of general education.

While some governments are uneasy about getting involved in skills development for the informal sector, the four country papers acknowledge that the informal sector is a social and economic reality. Given the fact that the informal sector plays such a significant ‘self-help’ role in reducing poverty, supporting the development of the informal sector appears to be consistent with pro-poor policy agendas.

Improved dialogue between government, training providers and trade associations in both the formal and informal sectors is essential for skills development. Colleagues from Nepal and Lao PDR identified the need for

some kind of interface between training supply and the informal sector for decision makers to better understand skills needs. It has been shown that to mobilize and redirect resources towards training for the informal sector, informal sector skills may need official recognition and certification. This would both enhance the status of these specialist skills and introduce a training ‘ladder’ with various recognized skills levels.

A high proportion of the world’s poorest people live in rural areas and are highly dependent upon agriculture. Improving food security in these areas is an important way to address poverty and improve socio-economic resilience. Regarding skills for rural development, the seminar has showcased some well advanced initiatives such as rural sector training in Mali. The Lao PDR country study also stressed the relationship between food security and poverty reduction.

Understanding the skills needs of rural areas is recognized as an important dimension of development policy, especially as the proportion of work in rural areas that is not directly related to agriculture increases. Technical and vocational education and skills development programmes in rural areas should therefore be able to recognize and respond to the diverse needs of local economies.

Taking a broad policy perspective, skills development can be considered a public good to be supported in the interests of social cohesion and sustainable development. Developing basic skills therefore deserves public financing and cannot be achieved without sustained investment. Indeed, the low priority given to technical and vocational education in the past has contributed to the problem of under-investment and the relatively low status of TVET. A recurring theme of this seminar was the need to avoid separating basic education and vocational education and to work towards their integration, a process that implies moving towards parity of esteem.

At the local level greater coherence can be achieved by mapping skills development needs and training provision. It is desirable to know what is going on so that new initiatives can complement existing provision. Seminar participants recognized the influence of globalization and that sometimes economies are influenced by trends over which they have little control. Rural to urban migration is a major trend in many countries, fuelled by globalization and the search for modern lifestyles. While in

many respects rural to urban migration may be regrettable, it might also be an inevitable part of development processes.

In Lao PDR, Mali, Nepal and Senegal, excluded and disadvantaged groups have not been well targeted by policy-makers in the past. The challenge now is to reach excluded people so that they can access opportunities for skills development. The four country studies have shown that there are various ways of going about the reorientation of training provision for excluded young people and adults. There are various possible strategies to ensure that skills development takes place alongside and builds cumulatively upon general skills such as numeracy and literacy. Some countries are focusing skills development policies and programmes towards non-traditional audiences in urban and rural areas. In most cases the aim is that the skills acquired will help to support income-generating activities. Some of the resources generated at the local level might then be used to develop further training provision.

The question of demand for skills training deserves further exploration. In Senegal, for example, the supply of training opportunities is low compared to needs. However, the Senegal country study suggests that current provision is under-utilized to only 60 per cent of its capacity. In this case there would appear to be scope for improved responsiveness to the training needs of excluded groups. A key issue for skills development policies and plans is therefore to improve the link between training supply and demand. For this reason there is a need for a more targeted approach accompanied by appropriate monitoring mechanisms to keep track of what is going on. It would seem desirable to develop clear policies with well defined objectives in order to be able target monitoring and evaluation efforts more meaningfully.

Countries can often get more out of their financial allocations by considering their own needs and priorities – debates on relative levels of spending are open to the countries themselves. By stressing the links between skills development, poverty reduction and an expanded vision of EFA, there may be ways for developing countries to bring donors in to support skills development policies.

Looking ahead to future *EFA Global monitoring reports*, there is a convincing case for better coverage of skills development issues. This could be done in relation to goal 3, namely “ensuring that the learning

needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes” (World Education Forum, 2000). So far, *EFA Global monitoring reports* have focused on primary schooling and gender. The next report (2004/2005) will be on quality and it is then proposed to have a report on literacy (2005/2006). It was suggested at the interregional seminar that skills development should be highlighted in forthcoming issues of the *EFA Global monitoring report*. The possibility of devoting one issue of the report specifically to the monitoring of Goal 3 was also mentioned. Furthermore participants proposed that, in the future, skills development be included on the agenda of the key EFA meetings (High Level Group on EFA and Working Group on EFA).

Conclusions

Consistent with the idea expressed at Dakar that “the heart of EFA activity lies at the country level”, this project has contributed to capacity building in national EFA teams. As well as having an impact on awareness about skills development in general and the value of a co-ordinated approach, the process of compiling the country studies and participating in national and interregional workshops has strengthened in-country capacity to understand and address the skills development needs of excluded and disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, the importance of intersectoral working and developing an integrated approach to policy formulation and implementation in the area of skills development has been clearly demonstrated.

The country studies, thematic presentations and discussions stressed the potential of skills development to improve the social and economic integration of excluded and disadvantaged sections of the population and reduce their vulnerability in a sustainable way. Alternative modes of delivery both within and outside the formal school system were proposed in the framework of the Dakar follow-up.

The interregional seminar helped enrich the debate on EFA within UNESCO and with some donor agencies and other partners to improve the EFA process. However, it also identified areas for further work in this domain at both country and international level.

Looking to the future, there are still problems to be addressed. Each of the participating countries faces daunting and complex challenges in relation to poverty, particularly in rural areas and many people do not have access to basic education and literacy programmes. The labour market situation in the target countries gives rise to grave concerns, particularly regarding youth unemployment. Most new entrants to the labour market are absorbed one way or another into the informal sector.

It became clear throughout the seminar that the priority areas identified in the four countries are also relevant for many other developing countries.

These include policies and programmes for rural people, interventions targeting the informal sector and measures to broaden the focus of technical and vocational education towards excluded groups.

Internationally, much more could be done to strengthen international co-operation and co-ordination. Current international policy debates demonstrate the need for an expanded vision of EFA, closer to the spirit of Jomtien. Resources for promoting this enlarged vision of EFA are obviously a key concern and getting donors to honour their commitments to EFA remains a challenge. However, it is to be hoped that the current focus on and international support for poverty reduction may also help to mobilize donor support for integrated and sustainable skills development policies and programmes.

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Appendix 1

Country indicators

Table 1 Country socio-economic indicators

Country Indicator	Lao PDR	Mali	Nepal	Senegal
Population (thousands) / 2003 ¹	5,657	13,006	25,164	10,094
% urban population (2003) ¹	20.7	32.3	15	49.61
Population under age 15 (2001) ²	42.4	49.2	40.5	43.8
Average annual population growth rate (1980-2001) ³ %	2.5	2.5%	2.3	2.7
International poverty line: population below \$ 1 a day ³ %	26.3 (1997-1998)	72.8 (1994)	37.7 (1995)	26.3 (1995)
GDP per capita % growth (2000-2001) ³	3.3	- 0.9	2.4	3.2
GDP % growth (2000-2001) ³	5.7	1.4	4.8	5.7

Sources:

1. United Nations, 2004.
2. UNDP, 2003.
3. World Bank, 2003.

Table 2 Education indicators

Country	Lao PDR	Mali	Nepal	Senegal
Indicator				
Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP (2000) ¹	2.4	3.2	3.6	3.2
Total public expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure ²	8.8 (2000)	17.3 (1985/1987)	14.1 (2000)	33.1 (1995/1997)
Education expenditure in primary as % of total education expenditure ³	43.5** (1999/2000)	44.7** (1999/2000)	55** (1999/2000)	40.8** (1999/2000)
Education expenditure in secondary as % of total educational expenditure ³	19.6** (1999/2000)	39.7** (1999/2000)	20.9** (1999/2000)	40.8** (1999/2000)
Education expenditure in tertiary as % of total educational expenditure ³	12.3 (1999/2000)	14.6** (1999/2000)	18.8 (1998/1999)	8.1 (1998/1999)
Adult literacy rate (15 and over) (2000) ¹	64.8	25.6	41.7	37.4
Youth literacy rate (15-24 years) (2000) ¹	77.9	36.1	60.4	50.7
Net enrolment ratio. Primary. Both sexes ³	81 (2000/2001)	61 (1998/1999)	72** (2000/2001)	63** (2000/2001)
Gross enrolment ratio. Secondary. Both sexes ³	83 (1998/1999)	18** (1998/1999)	67 (1998/1999)	17.8** (2000) ⁴
Enrolment. Secondary, technical/vocational programmes. Both sexes ³	4,019 (2000/2001)	26,784 (1998/1999)	19,549 (2000/2001)	7,411 (1998/1999)
Percentage of TVE enrolments in secondary education (1998/1999) ³	1.3	12.3	2.3	3.1

Sources:

1. UNESCO, 2003.
2. UNDP, 2002.
3. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) ** UIS estimation.
4. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) for the school year 2000/2001. In: UNESCO, 2003.

Legend:

TVE: Technical and vocational education

Appendix 2

Interregional seminar

on
Assisting the design and implementation of Education for All
skills development plans:
skills development to meet the learning needs of the excluded
(IIEP, Paris, 22-23 January 2004)

Agenda

Thursday 22 January 2004

- 9:00 – 9:30 Registration
- 9:30 – 9:50 Welcome remarks
G. Hernes, Director, IIEP
W. Iwamoto, Director, UNESCO (ED/STV)
- 9:50 – 10:30 Presentation of the project and introduction to the
workshop by IIEP-UNESCO
M. Nozawa, UNESCO (ED/STV/TVE)
D. Atchoarena, IIEP
- 10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:00 – 12:30 Findings of the work in the target countries [30 min
presentation by each country team, followed by
discussion]
Senegal: M. Faye, M. Sène
Lao PDR: P. Inthasone, P. Boupha, S. Didavarong
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 – 15:30 Findings of the work in the target countries
Nepal: H.R. Bajaracharya, T.N. Sharma
Mali: M.D. Traoré, S. Traoré
- 15:30 – 16:00 Comments on the findings
D. Atchoarena, IIEP
*J. Van Ravens, UNESCO (EFA Global Monitoring
Report Team)*
- 16:00 – 16:30 Coffee break

- 16:30 – 17:30 Experiences of other countries: issues and prospects
[10 min presentation by each country]
Bangladesh: N. Islam, S.M.W. Rahman
Cambodia: N. Bunroen, C. Chun
Niger: M. Sanda, C. Maman
Discussion
- 17:30 Cocktail reception

Friday 23 January 2004

- 9:30 – 9:50 Main findings of the discussion of the previous day
M. Nozawa, UNESCO (ED/STV/TVE)
- 9:50 – 11:00 Discussion around key themes
1. Meeting the training needs of disadvantaged groups in the informal sector (*facilitator: André Delluc, IIEP/UNESCO consultant*)
 2. Linking skills development to poverty reduction in rural areas (*facilitator: Lavinia Gaspérini, FAO*)
 3. Reshaping technical and vocational education and training (TVET) within the framework of EFA (*facilitator: Paul Esquieu, consultant IIEP/UNESCO*)
- 11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30 – 12:30 Discussion around key themes (continued)
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 – 16:00 Towards a more comprehensive approach to EFA: strategic dialogue with international development partners (*facilitator: F.Caillods, IIEP Deputy Director*)
Remarks on the EFA process: *H. Mputu Afasuka, UNESCO (ED/EO/DFU)*
- 16:00 – 16:30 Coffee break
- 16:30 – 17:15 Overall conclusions
D. Atchoarena, IIEP
Final remarks by participants
- 17:15 – 17:30 Closing
F. Caillods, IIEP Deputy Director

Appendix 3

Interregional seminar

on

Assisting the design and implementation of Education for All
skills development plans:
skills development to meet the learning needs of the excluded
IIEP, Paris, 22-23 January 2004

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