

2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report

Skills development: Expanding opportunities for marginalized groups

The 2012 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* will focus on skills development, emphasizing strategies that increase employment opportunities for marginalized groups. This is an important opportunity to address a neglected issue on the Education for All agenda – and to fill a gap in the Global Monitoring Report's coverage of the goals set at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000.

As governments grapple with the challenges posed by increasingly knowledge-based economic systems, as well as the need to respond to the longer-term consequences of the financial crisis, the 2012 GMR will explore the interaction between skills programmes and employment. The Report will draw lessons from programmes that have succeeded in supporting the development of economically dynamic and socially inclusive societies.

Building on the analytical framework developed over the last two Reports, the 2012 GMR will focus on the role of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and other forms of skills training in creating opportunities for marginalized groups, highlighting linkages with broader problems such as youth unemployment and low pay. The Report will explore the public policy approaches needed to extend employment-relevant training to vulnerable groups such as early school leavers, young adults who never attended school, and those who left school lacking the cognitive and life skills needed to thrive in literate societies. The Report will also identify the ways in which 'second-chance' programmes can provide a route back into education and employment for young people.

Concern over learning and skills deficits is as marked in rich countries as in poor countries. The global recession has generated a renewed impetus for investment in skills training programmes in developed countries, partly in response to rising unemployment. That impetus is also evident in many developing countries. An additional challenge in the poorest countries is to reach highly vulnerable populations working in the informal sector, or in rural areas. High levels of urbanization add to the challenges for these countries.

The Report will assess what national governments are doing to address these challenges, and the ways in which aid donors can support their efforts. It will look at the contributions being made by new donor countries, including those that have experienced significant economic growth themselves in recent years partly thanks to the attention they have paid to skills training.

Many of the questions surrounding skills training are well known, but practical solutions are often elusive. Do initial education and training systems equip students with the skills demanded by labour markets? Are there sufficient provisions for continuing education and training? Who should provide these programmes, and who should pay for them? How can non-formal learning programmes be used to supplement formal ones, and how should the skills that are acquired be assessed and certified? What are the governance arrangements for different types of programmes? What wider policies are necessary to ensure that skills training programmes help to overcome high levels of unemployment? The 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report will address these issues and others.