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The importance of being earnest about skills

The winds of change are beginning to affect both international and parental attitudes towards technical and vocational education. What were once regarded as out-dated branches, and safety nets for failing adolescent or educational drop-outs, are now becoming important alternatives to growing economies, which need skilled manpower to sustain their development.

DURING the 1990s the international policy debate on education was predominantly focused on basic competencies and literacy. Little attention was paid to vocational skills. Technical and vocational education institutions were more often than not considered as obsolete, inefficient instruments.

This was also the opinion of many donor agencies which failed to support programmes aimed at developing vocational skills. This position is being questioned in many countries where there is a strong social demand for more training opportunities for youth. It is often linked to a critique of a school system considered unable to equip students with the skills they need to make a living. But this is the same old story. In the *“Wealth of nations”* published in 1776, Adam Smith complained that the “greater part of what is taught in schools and universities ... does not seem to be the most proper preparation” for “the business which is to employ [the students] for the remainder of their days.”

As Claudia Jacinto points out in her book on vocational training programmes in Latin America (cf. *article by C. Jacinto p. 9 and book list p. 4*), many youngsters leave school with few or no qualifications. In the context of an overall increase of educational levels, the costs of dropping out are higher than ever before because – as in other parts of the world – employment opportunities for the unskilled have diminished. While increasing participation in vocational courses cannot be an end in itself, in some of the wealthier countries the virtue of strategies which help to keep



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Woodwork at the Portmore Academy, Jamaica

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editorial

Vocational or 'voc-educational'?

EDUCATION has a dual role: to develop the talents and character of individuals and to prepare them for active participation in adult life. The latter function, to a large extent, used to be carried out by taking part in the world of work, learning increasingly complex tasks on the job from adults or elders. The focus of training was generally local and the skills acquired remained useful a lifetime since social change was slow. A carpenter or farmer could go on using the tools and methods they had mastered when young.

Our modern world is everything but stable. Many occupations have disappeared or are disappearing – taxis are no longer horse-driven in industrialized countries. Mechanics use increasingly complex tools. Sanitation workers are slowly being replaced by large machines that sweep and flush.

The rate of change varies with occupations. Some have been transformed by information technologies, such as car mechanics or navigating. Others keep a larger fraction of the old techniques and tools, such as carpentry. And some stay fairly stable, e.g. crafts like carpet-making or cooperage.

When the labour market and occupations change, training must be adapted so as not to become outdated. Therefore designing vocational training is a complex task. Not only do occupations change at different rates: labour markets vary with the level of development, type of economy and differ greatly across countries. Labour markets depend both on a specific economic geography and particular economic history. Hence some of the demands directed towards vocational training are conflicting.

On the one hand, vocational training must prepare for the jobs that are available: too little or the wrong kind and the trainee may not be able to find work. Too much, or too advanced, and the trainee may find available jobs unattractive. So vocational training has to be relevant, functional and timely for specific jobs at hand. Otherwise, trained incapacity will develop, together with misfits.

On the other hand, since labour markets change, occupational content is altered and jobs

disappear. Therefore, the young have to be trained not just for the existing labour market, but also for those to come. A 16-year-old of today will remain active until about 2050 – and will have to be prepared to face and adapt to the different changes that will emerge during that period. So vocational training has to be general, durable and adaptable to different, possible, worlds. Vocational training cannot just provide today's youth and tomorrow's labour force with skills with 'sell-by' dates – it has to produce individuals who are able to control their own future.

The young need to be trained not only to *take on* jobs but also to *create* their own jobs as well. They will not always be in a position to wait for someone else to provide opportunities for employment.

Despite these conflicting demands, rational solutions do exist. The youngsters trained have to be equipped with a mixed bag of skills – some of which are immediately useful and can be translated into employment, and others that are more general, robust enough to last a lifetime, and which can provide the basis for new and updated competencies.

This means that the boundary between traditional practical capacities, tacit know-how and dexterity, on the one hand, and general, more theoretical academic knowledge, on the other, will become increasingly vague and irrelevant.

Furthermore, this means that the division between education and work will also become increasingly hazy. The degree of convergence between the two spheres will become greater: jobs will become more educational and education more vocational as part of life-long learning. Perhaps it is time to fuse the two terms and talk of 'voc-educational' training.

Gudmund Hernes
Director of IIEP

children and youth off the streets cannot be ignored. The large numbers of youngsters who are out of school, out of work, and not undergoing any training, are increasingly seen as contributing to the high incidence of juvenile crime, teenage pregnancies and drug abuse. Although this is a view mainly held in post-industrialized countries, the fear of governments in developing countries, of uncontrolled youth in cities, often leads to a wave of new training policies.

Today, the reform process in technical and vocational education and training is on the move in many parts of the world, regardless of development and income levels. Beyond short-term policies, which often mistake training for jobs, this movement reflects an effort to cope with the effects of globalization and take advantage of the opportunities it provides.

One of the main driving forces, behind the will to strengthen skill provision, is the rapid and in-depth transformation of the labour market. As information is disseminated on a large scale through new technologies in production processes, economies tend to require more qualified labour. Typically, most of the jobs lost as a result of labour market restructuring are low-skilled, whereas many of the new jobs require a good education and skills. The current rhetoric on economic development proclaims that modern societies are moving towards a knowledge economy, where success depends increasingly on brains rather than brawn. It is then argued that sustaining growth will require unprecedented numbers of graduates, although little is actually known about the knowledge economy, and its definition is still rather vague.

In reality, in many countries the skill gap primarily concerns 'intermediate skills.' If one accepts that better qualified workers tend to be more flexible, technological change is likely to increase the relative demand for skills during a transitional period. It is those sorts of qualifications that are produced by technical and vocational education, including company-based training.

While this vision may well capture



Learning physics in a training centre in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

the reality of highly developed and competitive economies, it does not reflect the complexity of labour market structures in developing countries, where various levels of technological development coexist. In such a context, more persuasive analyses about technology and work argue that each level of technological development favours different skills. In many low-income countries, where most of the jobs are located in the informal economy, training policies need to recognize this reality and come up with innovative responses, often outside the formal technical education system. Recent evidence on programmes aimed at supporting apprenticeship in the informal economy in West Africa illustrates this approach and reveals its merit (cf. *article by A. Delluc, p 6*).

Should governments put more effort into increasing the supply of well-educated workers? The answer to this question is probably 'yes', but there is no explanation as to how to go about it, and in particular, what the precise role of governments should be. In many developing countries, the record of public sector skills provision has been pretty bad. To some extent, this poor performance, together with the low capacity of public training institutions, have led the public to turn towards private providers. Thus, although the information base is still sufficient, there is enough converging evidence to consider that private

provision is growing fast, and often represents the major source of vocational skill formation. This is true in many middle-income countries but also in low-income countries, such as Mali and Senegal (cf. *article by P. Esquieu, p. 5*). It is now clear that national vocational development policies and donor support need to recognize this fact and adjust their strategies accordingly. Here lies the core of the debate. Should private training be liberalized, regulated or both? For free market supporters, applying the free market recipe to technical and vocational education and training would be both an effective and efficient solution. However, others point out that there is no guarantee or empirical evidence that market mechanisms will, by themselves, fuel the economy with the adequate volume and types of skills. They also point out the social dimension of training policies. Is regulation, in essence, anti-market? Probably not. The art lies in combining regulatory zeal with a respect for the dynamics of private sector initiatives.

In technical and vocational education, as in other fields, governments need to become pro-active and this implies close links with social partners in order to define qualifications and methods used to run the system. It also calls for cultivating flexibility whilst opening up new learning pathways. Recent vocational education strategies in OECD countries illustrate these trends

(cf. *article by O. Briseid, p. 11*). Bridging the gap between vocational and academic streams is probably a logical trend. However, going too far in that direction may be counterproductive. In some sectors, employers care about the practical nature of vocational education, and too much theory may end up diluting the skills they look for. The current debate on competency-based training and on national qualification frameworks illustrates this issue (e.g. Australia).

But efforts to encourage skills development are sometimes destroyed by parents and young people who do not have very high regard for vocational education. In such a context, governments should take up the challenge to make vocational qualifications more appealing to students and their families, as well as employers. The establishment of revamped apprenticeship schemes in several European countries (e.g. the United Kingdom), but also in other parts of the world such as sub-Saharan Africa (Botswana and South Africa), reflects an attempt at both maintaining the attention of potential drop-outs and ensuring that the skills being inculcated are actually those valued by local businesses.

However, increasing investment in vocational education still leaves the question of the growing divide between the skill 'haves' and 'have-nots.' Will labour market transformation in the future continue to favour the better-educated, both in terms of job and income prospects? There is much evidence to suggest that the answer is probably 'yes'. Therefore, government policy should target programmes that focus on getting disadvantaged people into jobs. But broadly targeted training programmes tend to be ineffective. Successful pro-poor interventions need to be specific. One reason for this is that the poor are a heterogeneous category with very diverse labour market handicaps. Considering that most of the poor live in rural areas, an interesting perspective relates to the role of higher agricultural education in poverty alleviation and rural development (cf. *article by Charles Maguire, p. 8*).

Training cannot do everything. In particular, it cannot fill gaps in basic education in a cost-effective manner. In some countries employers argue that the most important problem is not vocational skills but poor numeracy and

literacy levels. Technical and vocational education and training, as such, does not generally address the problem of basic competencies.

Therefore, addressing the challenge of skill formation must be put into a broader perspective of education reform processes (cf. *article by P. Runner, p. 7*). Increasingly, the emphasis is very much on a 'lifelong learning society' to enable everyone to acquire new skills, even after they have left school. But lifelong learning starts in the school, and probably even before, and the new school of thought is to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to develop flexible learning skills. In Asia, many countries are aiming to get away from their old system of learning, in which pupils are studying for very competitive exams. Specific measures are being taken to build lifelong learning pathways (cf. *article by D. Atchoarena and Y. Sawano, p. 10*). This emerging focus of lifelong learning may offer an opportunity to rediscover that education is about more than just economics.

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TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The articles on technical and vocational education in this issue of the IIEP Newsletter all relate to recent or ongoing IIEP research projects and operational activities, including:

- a review of technical and vocational education in sub-Saharan Africa and a study on private provision in the same region, both conducted in 2001 on behalf of the World Bank;
- a study on support programmes for apprenticeship training in four countries in Western Africa conducted for the *Agence Internationale de la Francophonie*, with a financial contribution from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- a study on secondary education in OECD member countries conducted in 2002 on behalf of the World Bank;
- ongoing comparative research on lifelong learning policies in selected

countries in Asia and Europe, jointly conducted with the Korean Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Korea) the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (Australia), the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (Japan);

- a monitoring programme of the reform of education in Tunisia, conducted on behalf of the European Commission.

Further reading:

ATCHOARENA, David; DELLUC, André. 2002. *Changes in French-speaking Africa: review of four country experiences*. Paris: UNESCO/IIEP.

ATCHOARENA, David; ESQUIEU, Paul. 2002. *Private technical and vocational education in sub-Saharan Africa – Provision patterns and policy issues*. Paris: UNESCO/IIEP.

JACINTO, Claudia *et al.* 2002. *Nuevas alianzas y estrategias en la formación para el trabajo de jóvenes desfavorecidos. Estudios de caso en América Latina*. Paris: UNESCO/IIEP.

Education for rural development – Towards new policy responses. 2002.

A joint study conducted by FAO and UNESCO. Paris: FAO/UNESCO/IIEP.

DELLUC, André; MURTIN, B.; ATCHOARENA, David. *Stratégies d'appui à l'apprentissage dans le secteur artisanal, leçons et expériences en Afrique de l'Ouest*. Paris: UNESCO/IIEP, forthcoming.



In an attempt to meet the increasing needs of their developing economies, private technical and vocational education has taken over where governments failed to invest. The time has come to take stock of the situation and seriously rethink state policy in this domain.

SUB-SAHARAN African countries, which have been hit hard by budget constraints, rarely have the resources needed for the development of *Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (TVET). The structure and content of TVET programmes are, in many cases, patterned on the educational model inherited from former colonial powers, and, generally speaking, the sector is suffering from inadequate government action, not only through reduced funding and marginalized or even debased status, but also through inappropriate and often obsolete training programmes.

It is therefore very tempting to leave TVET up to private initiative, but this idea deserves preliminary examination. For this reason, the World Bank requested the IIEP to do a more detailed analysis of the situation in two countries: Mali and Senegal.

Despite the inaccuracy of the data available, the predominant image in these two countries is one of a somewhat destitute and disorganized vocational training sector that is still waiting for a real development policy. Although TVET does appear in the ten-year programmes for education, the sector meets neither the countries' economic needs nor the potential demand for this type of education, notably from numerous youngsters who do not wish to continue a general secondary education.

These shortcomings are compounded by stringent and weird selection proce-

dures, both for entry into public institutions and at the exam stage, where the low pass rates are enough to discourage even the most enthusiastic of candidates!

Confronted with this situation of scarcity or paralysis, Mali and Senegal in the 1990s, opened the door to private initiative and investment by liberalizing the procedures required for opening a new training institution. This led to the emergence of many privately-owned courses, centres, schools and other institutions, relieving the state of part of its educational and financial responsibilities, bringing more flexibility to the somewhat rigid structure of the public sector, and responding more effectively to the needs of students and the market. At the same time, the expansion of private TVET offers the spectacle of a sprawling, disparate system, where networks of denominational schools stand alongside purely individual undertakings, some of which are guided by a strong educational almost social purpose, while others are motivated simply by profit. A somewhat anarchic expansion, in which the state grants official recognition to a mere handful of institutions, while others open and operate clandestinely, with no state control whatsoever.

In a sector that primarily relies on its own resources – mainly school fees paid by families – such diversity in the range of TVET institutions implies considerable disparity, or outright inequality, in their material and financial situations.

In order to break even and make a profit, private providers quite naturally tend to prefer the least expensive or the most profitable types of training, in the most promising geographical areas. Hence, the proliferation of schools offering advanced training for service industries are mainly concentrated around the capital cities, Dakar and to a lesser extent Bamako.

In both Mali and Senegal, the question is not whether the private sector should enter the TVET field, but how to create the conditions and take the steps to allow it to develop in a smooth, economically efficient and equitable manner. If the state cannot do it all in this field, neither can the private sector. Government action and regulation are still needed, but their usual methods, whether bureaucratic or interventionist, need to be rethought. First, it will be necessary to exert greater control over the development of the private sector and the range of training courses it offers, avoiding the irregularities and imbalances seen today, and in particular closing those establishments which cannot provide minimum guarantees as to the quality of instruction. Second, some institutions, namely those offering a genuine 'public service', could be given enough resources to ensure their financial survival. The current subsidy system, much larger in Mali than in Senegal, is not always rational or efficient and needs to be overhauled. To this effect, governments should consider ways of marshalling and distributing available resources more effectively, whether they stem from training taxes, paid by business, or from donor support.

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Apprenticeship: at the heart of the training/employment connection



Senegalese craftsman

THE education policies of most French-speaking African countries have, for a long time, confined technical education and vocational training to classroom-based, and generally compartmentalized branches, of the education system. This positioning ignored the real needs of the labour market, and a great many apprentices working in craft sector micro-enterprises were excluded from the education system, and deprived of a general education.

This cleavage between the education system and the working world reflects a severe underestimation of the importance of the craft sector, which offers more apprenticeship and job opportunities than any other sector in Africa.

Substantial programmes, often on a national scale, have been deployed to improve traditional apprenticeship through a 'sandwich' approach to *on-the-job training* that combines reinforcing general knowledge (often basic literacy skills) with a more scientific and technological approach to vocational skills. The frequency of the alternating classroom/workplace periods varies (weekly or monthly), and the training of apprentices is either preceded or supplemented by that of their employers.

At the request of the *Agence de la francophonie*, the IIEP conducted a study about to be published (cf. *List of recommended reading p. 4*) in four countries: Benin, Mali, Senegal and Togo. The study examines bilateral (Swiss, German and French) and multilateral (World Bank) co-operation programmes run in partnership

By recognizing the importance of apprenticeship programmes, some West African countries not only meet their labour market needs but have also created valuable partners that the state cannot afford to ignore.

with governments and with the trade organizations (associations and consular bodies) that represent craft workers. Without claiming to propose standard formulae for programmes which are sharply differentiated by their social, economic or historical contexts, the study attempts to identify some practical and methodological features that allowed them to obtain convincing results and prevent any loss of state control.

The two main lines of inquiry related to the effectiveness of teaching and to what is required for sustainability, through analysis of the *interplay of the stakeholders* (craft workers, aid organizations, training officers, government). These stakeholders are involved in all the cases studied, but the scenarios in which they act are often very different.

Below we will discuss the cases of Mali and Togo which appear to have the most coherent national strategies.

In *Mali*, the lead organization for the programme is the *Fédération nationale des artisans maliens* (the apex trade organization for craft workers), seconded more recently by the Trades Chamber, and in partnership with Swisscontact, an NGO financed through the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation. The content of training courses is defined by craft workers, and the courses are taught by training officers from public or private training centres on a term-employee basis. The state began to take an active role only after the programme was launched, through the *Fonds d'appui à la formation professionnelle et à l'apprentissage*

(FAFPA), a semi-public funding agency under equal public/private management, whose financial resources initially stemmed from a World Bank loan.

In *Togo*, it was the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training that took responsibility for this type of training: the country's technical schools at the junior secondary level opened their doors to apprentices in certain vocational branches. Here we can see the influence of the German dual system advocated in Togo by the Hanns Seidel Foundation – similar to that of the Swiss system via Swisscontact in Mali. French co-operation actions support 'sandwich' training, now widely used in France too. For other branches, training courses are provided by Togo's well-established trade associations.

Togo's experience is unique in French-speaking Africa. The programmes examined in Benin and Senegal followed the same strategy as in Mali, although on a smaller scale and with less success.

French-speaking African countries are beginning to reform their vocational training systems, and recognition of apprenticeship in the craft sector marks a significant step in their genuine efforts to serve the labour market and the business community. The significance of the programmes studied resides in their having given an enhanced role to trade organizations, which are now recognized as partners that governments cannot afford to ignore.

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Tunisia: meeting the EU challenge



Education centre for women at Bizerte, Tunisia

ACCORDING to the latest available statistics, collected in 2001, Tunisia's population stood at approximately 9.6 million and was growing by 1.14 per cent a year, one of the lowest rates of population growth in Africa.

Tunisia currently devotes over 6 per cent of its GDP and 30 per cent of the Government's operating budget (excluding debt) to the national school system and to higher education. From the early years after Independence, this country has regarded education as a fundamental factor in its economic and social development and has made 'Education for All' a national priority.

Schooling has been free and compulsory since the reform of the education system in 1991. As a result, net enrolment rates for six-year-olds reached 99 per cent in 2001/2002 – with nearly one-to-one gender parity – whereas the average enrolment rate for the Arab Region as a whole is estimated at 86 per cent. In the same year, 91.3 per cent of children in the 6-12 age bracket were in school, and the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for 13-19 year olds was 71.0 per cent (as against 57.9 per cent in 1996/1997).

With the opening of the Tunisian economy to world trade, enhanced by the prospect of association with the European Union in 2008, the Government decided to implement new development strategies – for human resource development in particular – in order to boost its growth and competitiveness.

Boosted by its desire to become an associate of the European Union in 2008, Tunisia has undertaken sweeping reforms of its education system. Closely monitored by the EU, these reforms are now beginning to bear fruit and have put Tunisia at the forefront of developing countries.

Against this background, a sweeping reform of the education system has been underway since 1989. Implementation of the reform began under the VIIIth (1992-96) and IXth Plans (1997-2001). It will continue and is expected to be completed during the Xth Plan (2002-2006).

Together with other donors, particularly the World Bank and UNICEF, the European Commission (EC) decided to provide financial support to the reform at the levels of basic education (including pre-school education), literacy training for young people and adults with little or no schooling, and the co-ordination of different ministries' policies in favour of the excluded.

The overall objective of the programme is to improve the skills of the country's human resources in order to be better prepared for the profound social, political and economic changes in progress, and to come.

The EC is providing a total of €40 million in financial support, to be paid in two €20 million instalments. Each instalment is conditional to a positive assessment by EC personnel of the progress achieved in implementing the reform. The progress will be evaluated on the basis of seven specific components, each of which corresponds to one of the basic thrusts of the reform:

- widespread use of the 'basic skills' approach;
- professionalizing the further training of education personnel;
- making the 'priority to education' policy an operational reality;

- intensifying decentralization;
- reorganizing the strategy concerning educational studies and research;
- improving school conditions with a view to ensuring equity; and,
- broadening educational coverage as a step towards 'education for all'.

A Luxembourg research consultancy was selected to monitor implementation of these components, together with the IIEP. This will involve sending four annual missions over the entire duration of the programme (2002-2007) to evaluate the progress made.

Observations made during the first monitoring mission, which took place last spring, showed that the reform process is indeed well underway and that the seven priorities designated above are indeed essential to its success, notably in terms of effectiveness and equity.

The progress made is, of course, not the same for all the components. While the first three are being achieved, decentralization is just starting and the reorganization of research is in full swing, with the creation of a new body to co-ordinate and promote education-related research. As regards the last two components, namely equal access to schooling and education for all, Tunisia is well ahead of other developing countries with enrolment rates close to 100 per cent.

The next stage is to raise the quality of all levels of schooling and to bring this quality abreast of the requirements of a rapidly changing labour market.

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Changing expectations for higher agricultural education

Providing a qualified and competent labour force for today's globalized agricultural market is paramount for ensuring rural development and alleviating rural poverty. Meeting this challenge is essentially the role of higher agricultural education in developing nations.

TRADITIONAL agricultural education that has served production agriculture for the past century faces a challenge that will test its relevance to present-day agriculture and rural development. While production agriculture remains important, and in many countries is the main contributor to national wealth and food security, concerns about sustainable management of natural resources, the environment, the impact of climate change, and the globalization of markets for agricultural and natural resource products have become prominent. To these concerns can be added the alleviation of poverty and rural development.

Higher Agricultural Education (HAE) in developing countries is feeling pressure for change, but progress is slow. While each education entity is unique the problems associated with HAE in developing contexts are well known. They include: low levels of funding; declining quality of research and teaching; inappropriate curricula for labour market needs; isolation from mainstream academia and external partnerships; weak incentives for quality staff performance or retention; political interference with management and administration; and an absence of guiding policies. HAE in more developed nations is attempting to deal with the problems of declining farming populations, decreasing funding levels, changes in stakeholder expectations, food quality and food safety, and a continually changing agricultural sector. However,

universities and colleges in these nations appear to have had more success in getting the process of reform and reinvention underway.

New challenges

Rural development is concerned with the well-being of all those who inhabit the rural space, not only farmers and the farming community but also a large proportion (up to 70 per cent) of the poor in some developing countries. Solving the problems of rural development will mean educating, and training, those who intend to make a career managing the process of rural development, and those who implement the detail. In providing an effective education for these people, traditional HAE will have to work in co-operation with other sectors and stakeholders that have an interest in things rural. These include health, education, infrastructure, the private sector, NGOs, and community groups. A refocused HAE will have to offer a multidisciplinary programme to its students enabling them not only to understand the dynamics of rural development but also to analyze complex technical, social and economic situations and provide solutions. A core of agricultural knowledge and skills will continue to be offered that reflects new and improving technology, economic reality, and sustainable concerns. Fears concerning the disappearance of HAE are unfounded but its curriculum and content will differ greatly from those of

the traditional past. In the future, HAE may be less isolated from mainstream higher education and, instead, become a vital part of co-operative approaches to solving the problems of rural development and poverty reduction. A second, and largely undeveloped role of HAE, will be to expand its presence in the broader education for rural development scene. If critical sustainable agriculture and natural resources messages are to be widely disseminated in society the content of these must be researched and packaged for primary, secondary, vocational and adult education. Teacher training and materials preparation, for agriculture and natural resources subject matter, are tasks that fall naturally to HAE, as well as the responsibility to inform policy-makers of the needs of rural development and of the education required to make that process work.

Donor role

HAE in the developing world is swiftly reaching a point where its relevance and, indeed, its future is suspect. The change process that must be initiated to move HAE in the direction of education for rural development is often stymied for lack of leadership, of a model for adaptation and implementation, and of policy-level support. The donor community has a critical role to play in bringing the issues of education for rural development to the attention of those who have the decision-making power in the public sector. It has a further role in providing the material support for design and implementation of the change process.

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Vocational training for young people in Latin America

A recent IIEP study on *New vocational training partnerships and strategies for disadvantaged youth* examines a range of experiences illustrating a renewal of traditional approaches to vocational training.

More than half of young Latin Americans do not finish secondary education. They leave without the skills they need for adult life and the workplace. They face long-term exclusion from work, as well as serious difficulties with social integration. To address this situation, a number of programmes aimed at providing them with skills they need for the workplace have been created.

Traditionally, most vocational training programmes for youth who have not completed lower secondary are provided by training centres under the tripartite institutions or the ministries of education. The social groups, which generally have access to these centres, are those with the potential to enter the formal sectors. However, there are some exceptions, such as the National Learning Institute (INA) workshops in Costa Rica, or training for micro-enterprise by the National Learning Service (SENA) in Colombia.

During the 1990s, many social programmes aimed at reducing poverty began to provide vocational training for underprivileged youth. One of the models adopted offers flexible courses geared towards the mainstream economy through on-the-job training with companies. The courses are sub-contracted mainly to private companies, both profit- and non profit-making, through bids for tender. Many are government-designed programmes which are financed by multilateral donors.

Another type of programme, sometimes linked to ministries of social development

and financed by bilateral or multilateral donors, was developed and implemented by NGOs, foundations, churches (particularly Catholic), national training centres, and local governments. These programmes were designed for the informal sector of the economy, and for self-employed people in particular. Some of them do more than just train: they can provide personal and career guidance, civic education, links with the formal sector of the economy, and more. Many have focused on setting up micro-enterprises.

Despite the differences among countries, and even within the countries themselves, the study noted serious difficulties in developing courses tailored to meet labour market needs. There is little investment in teacher training and regarding course curricula, the predominant approach favours short one-off courses providing basic skills, but virtually no modular curricula. Intersectorial co-ordination is also minimal.

One particularly problematic aspect is the establishment of appropriate links with the workplace. Many courses continue to be designed from a supply angle, without updating content or offering opportunities to complement theory with on-the-job training. No career guidance services are supplied.

The strategy of one-off subsidies or bids has made it difficult for institutions to ensure continuity, progressively improve their training programmes or even to ensure their very survival. A balance

between flexible institutionalization of experience and providing the resources needed to strengthen the better institutions has to be found.

More recent initiatives only target a small part of the potential population, namely youth who drop out of school, whereas the private sector tends to demand young people with more years of formal education. However, those who do attend appear satisfied with their training. The courses generally focus on subjects relevant to their lives and their social inclusion, provide them with certain skills and boost their self-esteem. Follow-up on graduates has shown that many re-enter the formal education system soon after completing their training.

Some more innovative programmes create local partnerships using a more holistic approach combining resources and services, promoting links between general education and training, and targeting real local labour needs. Many have already recognized the importance of including on-the-job training and adopted a skills-based design.

Perhaps one of the main challenges remaining is to create systems which link formal education with vocational training, and vocational training with job programmes, moving towards the concept of lifelong learning. The need to achieve better co-ordination is not just a matter of effectiveness and efficiency. By shifting from a plethora of programmes to formulating policies which integrate general education and vocational training with labour market needs will help create more equitable employment opportunities in the very difficult social, and economic context, currently prevailing in the region.

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Lifelong learning in Asia

Reconciling work, community and school for the knowledge society



For Asian countries, lifelong learning has become an important part of the education reform process, a strategy to recover from the setbacks of the 1997 crisis and a means to integrate the global economy.

MANY Asian governments are taking up lifelong learning as a key strategy for meeting the challenges of globalization. Countries like *China*, *Malaysia* and *Thailand* are currently putting the emphasis on fostering a knowledge economy. *Korea* uses lifelong education to reduce an over-emphasis on academic pathways and credentials, and in *Japan* the aim is to continue building a lifelong learning society. Beyond these variations, lifelong learning is also seen as a strategy to restore robust and sustainable growth after the 1997 crisis.

The ensuing rapid review by country of trends and policies reflects the diversity of both solutions and types of innovations being implemented.

In *China* and *Thailand*, making lifelong learning a reality was one of the goals of educational reform throughout the 1990s. With the acceleration of globalization this century, both countries are introducing strategies adapted from experiences in neighbouring countries.

China is developing various support strategies to accelerate modernization and build a market-oriented economy. Its efforts to transform rural areas, restructure the labour market and foster a knowledge-based economy are shaping the objectives and strategies for lifelong learning. The challenge is complex and institutional frameworks need to be restructured to ensure access, provision and recognition.

Thailand was one of the first countries in Asia to pass a National Law on Education which clearly delimits

lifelong learning as one of the major goals for education. Current educational reform, aimed at providing every citizen with equal access to lifelong education and training, should accelerate the post-crisis recovery and consolidate human capital. Much emphasis is placed on partnerships between ministries, central, regional and local governments, the business sector and other social partners in an effort to make public providers more autonomous and responsive.

In *Malaysia*, the concept of lifelong learning in education and training policies is new. As part of a broader strategy for building a knowledge-based economy, the focus is placed on employability, skills and productivity with emphasis on formal provision and post-secondary vocational and technical education, in which various ministries are involved. This vision takes place within a broader planning framework where the central government plays a key role in a top-down implementation process. Particular attention is paid to the articulation between sub-systems and qualifications in order to increase private provision.

In *Korea*, lifelong learning takes on a new approach to qualifications introduced by the credit bank system – an open system that recognizes the diversity of learning experiences gained both within school and on the job. In a country where admission to university is highly competitive and excludes adult learners, the credit bank system has opened up new learning pathways to obtain high-level qualifi-

cations. This reform has helped to rehabilitate non-formal education and adult learners can now access learning and accreditation. The implementation of the scheme remains modest and its expansion would require the official recognition and accreditation of work experience, as well as revising the funding system which currently relies on government support.

In *Japan*, the approach is very different. To a large extent, lifelong learning is seen as a means of addressing growing problems within schools characterized by a certain resistance of children to learning, and to authority, and by the emergence of new patterns of transition from school to work. Strategies focus on community building as a means to achieve a 'fusion' of schools and society. While the overall leadership is provided by the ministries of education, implementation mainly takes place at the regional (prefecture) and local (municipal) levels. Based on civil society initiatives, the measures taken help to promote interaction between the pupils and their community in order to give them a 'zest for living' and empower parents and communities.

Throughout Asia, the combination of globalization and domestic changes such as ageing, have radically transformed employment, the family and school. The tensions associated with such trends often cause deep social disruption. Lifelong learning in Asia reflects a general concern to restore the ties between the school, the labour market and the community.

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Diversity and convergence

Vocational education and training in some OECD countries

As the demand for skilled workers increases in developed countries, the variations of solutions provide some interesting examples.



Vocational training in Switzerland

In many OECD countries, and particularly in Europe, the present political emphasis on vocational education and training is strong. The increasing demand for skilled workers, and a decreasing need for unskilled manpower has created new challenges for vocational education and training. A number of countries are worried about what seems to be a decreasing status of vocational education and training among parents and young people. This hampers recruitment and will cause serious labour market problems in the future. Social partners, in close co-operation with public authorities, are attempting to counteract this trend through various measures. For example, the European Union (EU) puts considerable emphasis on vocational education and training in order to develop the necessary skills and enhance workforce mobility within the European labour market.

A recent study of secondary education undertaken by IIEP, for the World Bank, in 12 OECD countries reviews the different types of vocational education and training these countries offer in upper secondary education. From the analysis, three dominant models show up.

ä Some countries, such as Germany, have an *enterprise-based model* with contractual apprenticeships. In Germany, more than 60 per cent of the age cohorts follow this model in upper secondary education. Apprenticeship-contracts are

normally signed on completion of lower secondary. The training consists of an alternance between theoretical education in a school context and practical training in an enterprise. Around 50-70 per cent of the time is spent in the enterprise for work and practical training. The rest of the time is spent on theoretical education in 'basics' (mother tongue, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, foreign languages) and theory related to the specific vocational field in question.

ä Other countries, such as Finland, have chosen a *primarily school-based model, often combined with placements in enterprises* (but not apprenticeships in the classical sense). This education may be provided in *separate schools or colleges* with workshops for the practical training. In order to get more 'real-life' experience, placements for shorter or longer periods in enterprises are often arranged. In other countries (Ireland, Scotland and some states in Australia, Canada and the USA), vocational courses are given full-time or part-time in *comprehensive schools* attended both by students aiming for university entrance and those wanting a skilled worker's certificate for the world of work.

ä A third model, used in Norway, is a *combination of school-based vocational education and ordinary apprenticeship-contracts*. In this model the first years of upper secondary vocational education is full-time school-based. Emphasis is put

on broad-based practical and theoretical education within wide vocational fields (for example mechanics, technology, social/health/nursing, trade and commerce) and the 'basics' (English, mother tongue, mathematics, etc.). After one or two years in school, the students sign apprenticeship contracts for another two years of practical and highly specialized training in an enterprise. This model is an attempt to combine advantages of a 'school-based' model providing the broad-based knowledge and skills, and with an 'enterprise-based' model providing the specialized skills which schools are unable to offer due to costs involved in keeping instructors and equipment regularly updated.

Although the models above give a broad picture of how vocational education and training is organized, it must be added that there may be different variations of the three dominant models and that one country may have two or all three models represented. In short, the landscape is quite complex.

In spite of organizational differences and priorities among countries, there are certain trends that can be highlighted within most of the countries studied:

ä Increased emphasis is being put on developing policies where vocational education and training is seen in a life-long learning perspective. The relationship between content and delivery in

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UNEVOC – The UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Bonn, Germany

When the winds of change blow, some build walls while others build windmills (Ancient Chinese saying).

THE UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre was established as a result of an agreement signed on 12 July 2000 between UNESCO and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for the hosting of a UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Bonn. The Bonn Centre was inaugurated in May 2002.

The Bonn International Centre concentrates on providing technical backstopping to strengthen and upgrade TVET at a time of rapid change and globalization. Its primary focus is on least-developed and developing countries, those in a post-conflict situation and countries going through a period of rapid transition. Special attention is given to meeting the specific needs of women and girls, and disadvantaged groups such as those in remote areas, the poor, minority groups and demobilized soldiers in a post-conflict situation such as currently in Afghanistan.

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre is also part of a worldwide effort to achieve Education for All, which includes the promotion of functional literacy for the world of work and skills development for youth: to bring, for example, effective education for gainful employment to the 100 million out-of-school youth throughout the world.

During the current period of rapid change and globalization, the Bonn International Centre seeks to achieve its aims through erecting

'four windmills for action', these being:

• **UNEVOC International Network:** The Centre is the hub of a worldwide network of over 200 UNEVOC Centres in 136 countries.

• **Human Resource Development and Training:** The Centre is concerned with providing mainly in-country training for key personnel in technical and vocational educational and training in least developed and developing countries, through such means as mobile training teams, workshops and fellowships.

• **Clearinghouse Services and Knowledge Management:** The Centre facilitates the exchange of experience, innovations and best practice among policy-makers and practitioners in TVET, and also generates its own publications.

• **Inter-agency Collaboration:** The Centre aims to become a platform for inter-agency co-operation and exchange in TVET.

The Bonn Centre is active in many regions of the world, including Southern and West Africa, the Arab Region, Central Asia, East and South Asia, and the Pacific. Moves are currently afoot to commence activities in Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Rupert Maclean, Director

More details about the UNEVOC Centre in Bonn and its wide range of programme activities are available from the UNESCO-UNEVOC Web site at www.unevoc.de

Diversity and convergence – Vocational education and training in some OECD countries

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basic vocational education and training and continuous in-service training, in the world of work after basic education and training, identification of core competencies in a lifelong learning context, validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are important issues on this agenda.

• More priority is given to providing students in basic vocational education and training with competencies and skills in the 'basics' such as the mother tongue, foreign languages, mathematics, natural and social sciences. Also social skills, entrepreneurial skills, computer literacy and media skills are included in most curricula. The argument is that such

skills are increasingly demanded for work.

• The content of vocational education is more broad-based and less specialized – the world of work changes so rapidly that too specialized a content would very quickly be outdated. Basic vocational education must also prepare for professions and vocations not yet invented.

• Access to higher education, both to colleges and universities, is gradually being opened to students from vocational education and training. This will, presumably, also give vocational education a higher status, not only among the young



Apprenticeship programmes in Sweden

age cohorts and their parents, but also in academic circles.

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NEPAL faces severe educational challenges. While primary school enrolment rates have increased, the poor quality of education remains a matter of concern. Whilst the country receives significant foreign assistance, criticism has been expressed over its application.

Against this background, the Government is undertaking a comprehensive education reform, with particular emphasis on basic education. An important objective is to improve system management through decentralization. For this policy to succeed, two key elements need to be in place:

• Management and planning capacities at the district level need to be strengthened. District offices are responsible for attaining universal basic education of high quality. However, most need to reorganize their system, e.g. by restructuring the school network, redeploying teachers, identifying areas with a

Strengthening decentralized planning for EFA in Nepal

need for non-formal education and Early Childhood Development (ECD). The IIEP is assisting a group of pilot districts to undertake systematic planning, by preparing a diagnosis of the district situation, identifying priority actions, making projections, and then drawing up proposals for improvement. A first workshop took place this October in the district of Jhapa.


• The central planning and statistics departments continue to play a core role, by monitoring implementation, by addressing disparities and by providing information on district performance. The IIEP works with ministry staff to strengthen the EMIS. This includes several steps: streamlining data collection, improving data entry and analysis, giving special attention to the communication of information, and ensuring that information is used by decision-makers, at all levels, from headteachers to ministry personnel.

Using indicators to plan and monitor education

Organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Commonwealth of Dominica, this training course held in Roseau, Dominica, from 15 to 24 July 2002, was the sixth of its type in a series of regional and distance courses which started in 1995.

The overall objective of this course was to strengthen national capacities in the use of information for decision-making purposes and, in particular, to provide planners and managers with the skills necessary to develop a system of key indicators on the functioning of their education system in the framework of the Dakar objectives. As a result, at the end of the course, the participants compiled a brief indicators report containing succinct information on the state of their education system.

Emphasis was placed on the analysis of key indicators and on communication. Besides the development of indicators to




monitor the functioning of the education system, the course dealt with indicators on school functioning. This was felt to be relevant because most, if not all, participating countries are developing a school 'performance management tool'. The small size of Caribbean countries made this school-based perspective especially important.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems was also discussed, the Caribbean Region being second only to sub-Saharan Africa in the level of prevalence of the epidemic, and this trend is set to rise.

The course was financed by the UNESCO Participation programme and by the IIEP. The twenty-five participants came from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent.

Strengthening NGO interventions for EFA



INTERNATIONAL Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are increasingly assisting countries to achieve EFA. They have the advantage of working closely with schools and can establish good relationships with local communities, whose voices are not always heard at higher levels. However, they realize that their actions will only have a limited impact if they fail to transform national education policies. To remedy this, they have attempted, in recent years, to influence decision making at the national level. Among other things, this requires that their staff have stronger skills in planning and management.

With this optic in mind, one of the major international NGOs, Plan International, contacted the IIEP to develop a training programme for its regional and national learning advisors. Some 25 people from Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, as well as their UK headquarters took part in a work-

shop from 15 to 19 April 2002, in Paris. The course dealt with challenges and strategies at three levels:

- *international*, by examining globalization, HIV/AIDS and the implications of the Jomtien and Dakar commitments;
- *national*, by looking at compensatory programmes and non-formal interventions to address inequities;
- *local*, by working in detail on how to support schools in the development of improvement plans.

Plan International's interventions are based on the conviction that it can work closely with communities and help them improve their schools. This is possible if the management and teachers of individual schools are held more accountable to the parents and children. Jointly developing School Improvement Plans is one strategy to link schools with their communities and to promote school accountability.

When ministries meet the media or the logic of conflict

IIEP's annual Policy Forum dealt this year with the often complex relations between ministries of education and the media. It was a time for both sides to air their views, and to try to understand each other in order to create a more effective working relationship.

MINISTRIES of education and the media live in a symbiotic relationship while pursuing different goals and activities. This results in a rather complex relationship, bringing into play multiple strategies and tactics. It was the basic assumption that both actors can gain from a better understanding of the other's particular modes of operation and internal functioning, which in turn would lead to better communication and information about educational developments.

The Policy Forum took place in Paris, at the Institute's Headquarters on 20 and 21 June 2002. It brought together some 30 decision-makers and officials from ministries of education, as well as editors and journalists specialized in educational issues, to discuss current concerns and recent experience regarding the ***Relations between ministries of education and the media*** in both developing and industrialized countries.

The Policy Forum started off with a description of the 'battlefield' and the 'logic of conflict' when ministries meet the media. They both have different roles to play and are subjected to opposing imperatives which tend to intensify their contentions. As an example: the time ministries request for deliberations vs. the deadlines media have to meet, official views that ministries wish to

communicate and dissenting views media wish to air, etc. The contestants are engaged in what is called a 'mixed motive game', with partly conflicting but also partly coinciding interests which may create strategic alliances at times, but conflicts at others.

A session was organized on how to implement reforms, something which often entails challenging vested interests. Here, a fruitful interaction with the media was felt to be crucial to the success of any reform initiative of a ministry – and sometimes even an issue of survival for the minister. The media create images which can make or break public personae.

A third topic addressed the more general issue of the formation of public opinion which is in no way determined by media alone, particularly not in the field of education. Most people have attended schools that shaped their notions of the way they function, and they know of the experiences of children, friends and neighbours. Hence public opinion and its malleability depend on many factors, through complex interactions as well as actual events such as political conflicts, reactions of teachers' unions etc.

A fourth topic dealt with proactive versus reactive strategies. Ministries are often in the situation where they cannot develop a plan for advancing a particular policy initiative, but must immediately

respond to an emergency that may stir up the public – urgent action is needed on the part of ministers who have to face a critical press. In other words, both reactive and proactive strategies are required for dealing with specific constituencies and the public in general.

Over the last decades, ministries have increasingly tried to 'professionalize' their communication function, in terms of hiring press spokesmen, establishing information units, organizing training for journalists etc. The Policy Forum allowed participants to exchange their experiences and feelings on whether relations had improved and mutual trust had been reinforced.

What now?

It was decided to publish the proceedings of the Policy Forum which will shortly be put on the IIEP Web site. It was also decided to organize a one-day session on the same topic for policy-makers at a convenient date close to the forthcoming UNESCO General Conference in October 2003.

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The Virtual Institute

Looking ahead to 2003

COURSES AND DISCUSSION FORUMS

Planning has begun for our activities of 2003 and it is expected that four distance education courses and two Internet discussion forums will be offered.

Courses include:

- n **Using indicators to plan basic education**
- n **Education sector diagnosis**
- n **Education projects**

n **Management of university-industry relations**

The **forums** will focus on policy issues related to virtual universities and transnational education, and a topic in educational planning which is yet to be determined.

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THE IIEP ALUMNI NETWORK

The Network, which now has over 200 members, is continuing the discussion on indicators for the six goals of Education For All.

Do contact us at the address below if you are a graduate of the IIEP annual *Advanced Training Programme* and we will add your name to the Network. Please note your country and year of participation.

The 2002/2003 Annual Training Programme begins

THE Institute welcomed the new group of participants for its 2002/2003 Advanced Training Programme (ATP), which commenced in Paris on Monday 30 September 2002. This year's group is made up of 31 participants from 29 countries (16 from Africa, 7 from Asia and the Pacific, 2 from Arab States and 6 from Latin America and the Caribbean).

After one month of self-study and preparatory work carried out in their respective home countries, and a few days of 'initiation' on their arrival in Paris, the participants were invited to an Orientation Seminar outside Paris, at the Château d'Esclimont, St. Symphorien.

Organized in co-operation with the French National Commission for UNESCO, the Orientation Seminar provided an overview of the ATP and its contents. The discussions at this seminar were of particular importance this year since the Institute has thoroughly revised the contents of the training programme and introduced an option for the Master's degree. It was also a moment for the

participants to express their expectations as regards their training at IIEP.

The Orientation Seminar also provided an excellent opportunity for participants to get to know each other and to discuss both among themselves and with IIEP staff, on the practice of educational planning and management in their own countries. The deliberations demonstrated that practices varied from one country to another. In some, the planning committees/commissions play an important role in preparing educational plans; in others, the ministries of education play this role. The discussions indicated that plans are often prepared for shorter durations and that, at times, budget and financial allocations are given priority in plan preparation.

Some of these changes are due to the project mode of designing and implementing educational programmes. Sector-wide approaches, rolling plans and implementation schedules are becoming common features in many countries. Generally speaking, planning has become more participatory and there is an overall shift



ATP group at the Orientation Seminar

towards decentralization.

Another trend common to many countries is that of external funding. Participants remarked that, in many countries, funding agencies influence – positively or negatively – decisions on educational programmes designed for implementation.

This impressive richness and diversity of countries and their experiences, from Pakistan to Belize, from Lesotho to Bahrain, from Papua New Guinea to Mali, will constitute a challenge but also a tremendous asset for comparative learning all round throughout the 2002/2003 session of the Advanced Training Programme.

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IIEP Activities

Intensive training workshop on "The management of higher education"

Kabul, Afghanistan
19-23 October 2002

Contact: k.mahshi@iiep.unesco.org

Seminar on "Lower secondary education and equity in Latin America: Strategies for improving opportunities for the young"

Montevideo, Uruguay
4-5 November 2002

Contact: f.caillods@iiep.unesco.org

Seminar on "Institutional restructuring of higher education"

Bangkok, Thailand
14-15 November 2002

Contact: nv.varghese@iiep.unesco.org

Seminar on "Recent issues in educational planning"

IIEP, Paris, France
4-6 December 2002

Contact: f.caillods@iiep.unesco.org

Working meeting of SACMEQ National Research Co-ordinators on "Computer-based analysis of pupil achievement levels for the SACMEQ II Project"

Grand Bay, Mauritius
15-20 December 2002

Contact: k.ross@iiep.unesco.org

Intensive training workshop on "Monitoring basic education and the objectives of Dakar: development of an indicators system"

Dakar, Senegal
9-19 December 2002

Contact: p.dias-da-graca@iiep.unesco.org

IIEP-BUENOS AIRES

Fifth regional course on 'Educational policy planning'

IIEP-BA's fifth regional course on *Educational policy planning* started on 2 September and ran on to 29 November 2002 at the Institute's regional headquarters in Buenos Aires. The 25 participants came from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

Based on an evaluation of the four previous sessions of the course, a series of changes were made this year to its structure and content. The module on *Current challenges to education* has been changed into an intensive course and included a workshop-seminar entitled *From educational planning to strategic management* which slotted in before the module on *Education-sector diagnosis*. At the end of the course, a complete review of educational reform

in Latin America was undertaken with the participants.

This year, the module on diagnosis included a workshop on the analysis of compensatory programmes. With an eye to strengthening the links between research and training, the relationship between education and equity in Latin America was examined on the basis of the results of research carried out by IIEP-BA. For the first time, a workshop-seminar based on research on 'training in educational management' was included in order to examine new types of professional situations at various levels of decision making. The workshop focused on communication in education management, stressing oral presentations as an essential tool for professionals. The ability to communicate in work situations was

addressed throughout the various modules.

Foreign speakers participated throughout the course, including ministers at the national and provincial levels, as well as representatives of multilateral lending institutions. Study visits were organized from 3 to 8 November to two education administrations in Argentina: the City of Buenos Aires, and the province of La Pampa, both of which are effecting major changes to increase enrolments and to improve staff training. To conclude work on the core modules, a workshop was organized, specifically focused on the problems of resource allocation during periods of budgetary restriction.