LINKING SKILLS TRAINING AND THE WORLD OF WORK: A VERITABLE APPROACH FOR ASSISTING THE MARGINALIZED

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Abstract

This paper explores in which enterprise - led approach to skills training can help marginalized people enter the world of work and why education and training systems should, and how they can, adopt enterprise approaches to skills training for self - employment and enterprise. Emphasis was on enterprise approaches to skills training, and this is based on the relative success of such approaches in facilitation the socio-economic inclusion of the marginalized people. Recommendation were made that training needs should be relevant cost effective and these needs must be structured to the needs and aspirations of the marginalized learner.

Introduction

Education, training, employment, enterprise and work are wide-ranging, multifaceted concepts. This paper uses a number of terms to subsume their diversity and complexity; the term livelihood is to cover most aspects of the world of work, including employment, self-employment and enterprise. It is a useful conceptualization for two reasons; first, it recognizes and reflects the importance of the economic, social and cultural aspects of the world of work, and second it is an inherently positive and people-centered concept, taking its starting point, people's strengths (assets) rather than their needs. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required to earn one's living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, without undermining the natural resource base (http./www/livelihood .org/info/guidance-sheets.html).

The term skills training is used as a generic term subsuming formal and informal forms of vocational and technical education. Skills are understood to comprise the capabilities needed to successfully enter the world of work; which means to secure a livelihood. The focus of this paper is on the marginalized. The definition of the marginalized varies according to place, culture and circumstance but, they are general understood to include women, youths (particularly out - of - school youths) those with special needs, indigenous peoples, rural and remote population and the homeless (Grierson, 1997).

Context Challenge and Opportunity

Governments and development practitioners are becoming more aware that standard approaches to skills training require fundamental rethinking. This is especially true for programmes serving marginalized people, who seek their livelihood in the internal sector. Increasing access to skills training alone is not sufficient overcome the barriers confronting marginalized people.

At times, well-intentioned efforts at guidance and counseling are constrained by the back of marketability skills among those being counseled, itself a reflection of the dearth of appropriate training opportunities guidance and counseling work best and are most efficient when they can focus on two things, first matching learners with training opportunities that reflect current local market demand and second, facilitating the final steps in the transition from learning to work. At present the low priority given to skills training for the marginalized means that there is often both a shortage of appropriate learning opportunities and a high level of demand for skills that cannot be met. Guidance and counseling can do much to make the process more equitable and more efficient when adequate training opportunities exist that correspond to current market needs.

Systematic change is needed to enable the marginalized to access, absorb and apply livelihood skills (Grierson, 2000). These systematic changes need to address what United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1996) has identified as a training crisis. Grierson describes this as a crisis in three areas: a crisis of cost, a crisis of relevance, and crisis of equity.

Broadly speaking, most conventional forms of skills training cost too much, fail to impact the skills in demand in local markets, and do little to serve those most in needs of skills, the socially and economically marginalized (Grievson, 2000:26). Addressing these crisis is a daunting and growing challenge, according to Grievson, Schnurr and Young (2002) it is generally accepted that a further on billion children and adults will require education and training in the years to come. In their words, this one billion will need to be prepared for a world or work that is becoming increasingly complex and differentiated, yet more integrated and inter - linked. The opportunities emerging are both inequitably distributed and complication by the challenges of keeping pace with frequent, externally driven and often radical change. The technologies of work and communication, the work environment, learning methodologies and work itself are all in a state of semi - permanent flux. These changes influence all aspects of learning, the world of knowledge and skills transfer is struggling to keep pace with the need to customize skills training to respond to the needs of communities and individuals, and to do so while keeping cost at in acceptable level.

The Forces of Change are Forging a New Culture of Open Learning
Demand - driven learning requires more openness and flexibility in training and education. In essence, this creates a new and more challenging learning environment. A fluid combination of economic, technological and social forces is driving this paradigm shift in the culture of education. This new educational culture must respond to demands for increased accessibility from no - traditional clients, many of whom will have had little or no exposure to formal education and training systems. The outcomes they are seeking will not be achieved effectively by continued use of the traditional supply - driven approaches to skills training that are still adopted in most places. Skills training policy must adopt the new opfen learning practices in order to offer a flexible array of livelihood pathways that will enable marginalized people to learn as they work and work as they learn. The condition in which marginalized learners pursue their livelihood with their fixed and inflexible time frames and schedules, often compel them to forego learning opportunities. Independent, self - driven learning takes the marginalized person's motivating and constraints into account, and abandons traditional fixed time frames in difference to the learner's needs.

Policies to Create Opportunity
There is a need to strengthen institutional capacity for delivering training to the poor and marginalized and to encourage institutions to deliver these services. In general, training system have not developed the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to help marginalized people take advantage of useful training. This is in part due to the absence of polices to stimulate and guide the integration of enterprise education and livelihood skills development into formal education and training curriculum, establish linkages among non - formal and formal training programmes, and build links between training systems and the private sector. According to Bennell, (2000:3) despite the generally accepted view that " in the context of mass poverty in most developing countries, the critical role of training in furnishing badly needed skills seems particularly obvious and straight forward. The United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (UNDP,2001) reflects the broad reality that training for the marginalized is neither a common policy objective nor generally on offer as a basic social service. Training for the poor and marginalized as a means of poverty reduction is not generally seen as a priority.

Multiple Pathways To nd Within The World Of Work
Over a lifetime, it is typical for the work of the marginalized to proceed in cycles. Often the cycles are overlapping, self - employment or enterprise activity can follow employment or the reverse, each often interspersed with periods of unemployment. Frequently there are combinations of several forms of work. Sometimes the process involves the formal sector. More often, in the case of marginalized people, the process unfolds in the informal sector where an increasing portion of the economic activity of marginalized peoples takes place overtime, charging livelihood demands often compel cyclical changes in work station and encourage opportunistic combination of employment, self-employment and enterprise. Many individuals alternate regularly between employment and self- employment as their working life progresses.

In looking at education and training for the informal sector, McGrath, King, Leach and Carr - Hill (1995) identified six pathways to work, which can be broadly summarized into two as from school to employment to self-employment or enterprise, and (b) from school to self-employment or enterprise to employment. Each of these broad avenues assumes a number of alternative pathways reflecting various training and other factors (McGrath et al 1995). The fluid complex, multidimensional reality of people's quest for livelihood is such that livelihood support programmes must include both employment strategies for self-employment and enterprise.

The Respective Roles of Education and Training

Education and training systems are now coming to terms with the reality that can no longer live within the comfortable confines of homogenous clientele hierarchical structures and narrowly - defined objectives. Education and training systems must help people develop the capacities needed to cope with stresses such as loss of work, as well as recognize and create opportunities, such as self - employment, as viable employment alternatives. Education and training each respond to these challenges in quite different ways. While each offers considerable transformation potential, the fundamental difference between them as that Education makes a broad general contribution to people's development, while training usually makes a specific and more immediately applicable contribution. Education is in a very real sense the base on which most human capital is built. In the words of Lauglo (2000 :17) he state that:

> Education result in the acquiring of general capacities that can be widely applied over time. A solid foundation of education enhances virtually all other efforts to build human capital. This is the rationale behind the many calls for education for all. Education works best when delivered early usually at a time when most other options for young people are either impracticable (e.g. workspace - based training or training requiring literacy and numeracy or undesirable (e.g. child labour). Education leads itself to the large scale systematic delivery of standardized products. Even if only the basics (reading, writing and arithmetic) are addressed education results in a sustained and synergistic array of civic, social, health and economic benefits.

In terms of human capital enhancement, the ability to access, absorb and apply virtually all employment related skill is a function of training. However, due to the very different nature of training, there are unlikely to be calls for training for all with few exceptions, training needs to be both specialized and situation - specific. Training is specialized in the sense that it seek to impart a precise set of skills for a narrow range of tasks. According to Middleton Ziderman, and van Adams (1993:26) training is :

> Situation specific in the sense that it is most effective when it responds to both the aspirations and ideas of those seeking training and the opportunities currency available in highly differentiated fast - changing local markets. In marketed contrast with education, the high levels of specialization and specificity called for in training mean that the large - scale delivery, of standardized training programmes is seldom viable.

A Way Forward for Skills Training for Marginalized People

This paper has considered aspects of the widely - recognized crisis of training and emerging evidence that enterprise approaches to skills training can deliver effective skills training for livelihoods to the marginalized. Figure 1, below draws together and summaries these elements.

The four factors noted in figure 1 are interrelated. In virtually all cases, modifying any single factor will affect one or more of the other factors either positively or negatively. For example addressing equity and asset enhancement concerns (such as reducing marginalization) will increase costs and complexity aspects that is, if they can be provided for, can be more than compensated for in

terms of relevance. The art of designing useful employment support measures is that of finding an appropriate balance of factors in relation to local resources and circumstances.

Figure 1. Factors Influencing Training For Livelihood	
Factor	**Problem statement and proposed remedies in (italics)**
Relevance	There is a mismatch between training opportunities offer and the skills and capacities in 1 demand in local labour markets. * Training should respond to local labour market demand and lead to some form of 1 remunerative work (employment, self- employment or enterprise).
Cost	Training is expensive, due to specialization and the need to customize training to [1 respond to current learners and current local needs and due inherently high unit costs. *Training can be made more efficient by involving local business in all aspects of ! training enterprise involvement can make training more efficient (through greater cost -1 sharing) and more effective (though constant orientation to local needs). *Training programmes should make use of indigenous skills transfer system (e.g. 1 traditional apprenticeships) and avail able facilitates (particularly local enterprises).
Equity	Training is often difficult to access and difficult to use, especially for those who, due to 1 social or economic disadvantage, are in greatest need of work - related skills. *Make provision to overcome economic and social barriers to access and participation by, inter alia, adequate funding for basic provision, scholarship or vouchers for those in greatest need, and restructuring schooling in terms of local, schedules and vernacular languages. *Training programmes should reflect and accommodate the circumstances and customs of those they serve. Training curricula, schedules and structures should address the needs and accommodate the social realities and multiple obligations of those they are intended to serve.
Asset enhancement	Training initiative are seldom designed and administered specially to enhance livelihood assets *Training should provide the skills needed to grasp existing work opportunities and identify future opportunities; * Asset enhancement should be assessed in terms of increased income, greater flexibility, reduce vulnerability to crisis and enhanced access to economic support networks.

(Adapted from Grierson and Schnurr, 2000)

The report of the cario workshop on girls' livelihood of the population council and the international council for research on women (PC/ICRW/2000) summaries the principle of good training for livelihood skills for one particularly marginalized group, young women. The PC/ICRW workshop found that good training:

> Recognized the wide economic environment;
> Offer training in new, demand - led growth areas and is wary of training in already crowded sectors;
>Ensures that skills offered are matched to the needs of communities;
>Encourages women and girls to train in new and growing sectors that are yet "engendered";
> Keeps programmes simple and consistent;
> Exploits traditional knowledge while being wary of traditional barriers; and
>Recognizes that a business - life approach is more realistic and holds far grater potential for

long-term success (PC/ICRW,.2000: 41).

Bennell (2000:48) proposes incorporating market - driven strategies unto the design of pro - poor training strategies and finds that skills training for the marginalized " should be driven by a people centered pedagogy which maximizes locally available skills and empowers people to learn for themselves;.

Education and Training are Moving Closer Together and Closer to the Marginalized

While the respective contributions of education and training remain sharply differentiated, the roles and responsibilities of education and training systems are becoming less and less so. There is a growing array of experiments which involved "vocationalizing primary and secondary education curricula. Many education programmes now include entrepreneurship as a component of study. It is increasingly common to find re - orientation towards self - employment as a major component of training programmes in some cases in the interest of the learners and in some cases as a means of institutional rescue (Hoppers, 1994). Vocational training has become much about the enterprise and self - employment as about its traditional role of preparation for specific employment option (Grierson, 2000). In general this is resulting a new and positive recognition of the needs of marginalized people.

Training Works Best in an Expanding Economy

Large scale unemployment and underemployment is a function of three interrelated problems; the death of employable skills, the lack of equitable access to either decent work or useful skills training opportunities, and the several overall shortage of jobs (Crump, Grierson & Wahbah, 2000) Education and training can do little to increase the number of jobs. Appropriately structured economic growth is the key to solving the job shortage problem. Human capital development initiatives can, however, do much to expand the diversity and quality of relevant training and to make access to training alternatives more equitable economic growth can and should generate livelihood opportunities for the marginalized. Initiative to enhance welfare and employability work best when overall labour absorption is growing (international labour organization (ILO), 1999).

Pro - poor growth is based on the idea that poverty alleviation and economic growth objectives can be addressed simultaneously, provided that economic polices and support programmes are carefully structured to pursue both this objectives skills training for the marginalized works best when it complements and supports pro - poor economic growth.

Recommendations

- ❖ In all circumstances the fundamental of enterprise - led skills training for the marginalized should apply.
- ❖ Training needs should be relevant to the needs of the local market, these needs must be structured, and to the needs and aspiration of the marginalized learners. ,
- ❖ Training must be cost conscious and in search of the efficient and cost effective ways of operating.
- ♦> Training must be equitable, it must ensure that the marginalized can access, acquire and apply useful skills
- ❖ Training must help to enhance the assets needed to secure a livelihood and face the downturns and crisis that life inevidentably may present.

Conclusion

This paper has presented the case for enterprises - led approaches to skills training for marginalized people. The emphasize has been on responding to the aspiration of marginalized learners, interacting with the markets in which they will seek their livelihoods and understanding the communities they represent.

It is useful to be reminded that while training can do little to generate either economic growth or to opportunities, it can do much to help cease opportunities that emerge in local markets. Training is more effective in an expanding economy, particularly if it is designed to interact with the economy. Training for the marginalized works best in a context of pro - poor growth which is not limited to expanding, dynamic economies.

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