

Training for the Workplace: System changes in developing countries

Abstract

Anne Richmond,
Skills Development Specialist,
International Labour Organization,
Sub-Regional Office, Bangkok

This presentation is from a practical rather than academic point of view. It begins by exploring the question of ‘what is education for?’ as a way of suggesting a new paradigm of education. The paper explores a number of issues linked to education, including youth unemployment, and proposes that one of the purposes of education is to ensure that individuals are able to find and keep decent employment, throughout their lives. Taking this as the basis for one ‘new paradigm’ for education, the paper then explores the general role of the UN for education and training, and how national and international progress in education is measured in the Millennium Development Goals. The roles of two UN specialized agencies, UNESCO and the ILO, are described, along with some of their recommendations and action on the subject.

Building on the suggestion of a new paradigm for education being based in its effectiveness at equipping individuals for productive and decent work, the paper then explores how this perspective influences the view from the global, country and training system levels. It explores the case of technical and vocational education and training as a form of education which, in a new paradigm of education, might be seen as more significant and valuable than in a different paradigm. The paper then presents two short country examples, and Mongolia and Lao PDR, as the basis for discussing the UN’s role.

Finally, the paper considers how countries might proceed to define needs and develop solutions to different parts of their overall education and training system, based on a ‘new paradigm’ for education. It looks at five different issues: labour market information, quality, recognition, funding and governance, to explore how a new paradigm can lead to different policy and programme responses. The paper concludes by suggesting that new paradigms are helpful for looking at problems in new ways, and for finding different solutions.

Recommended reading materials accessible from Internet:

- A short paper on ‘the purpose of education’ at <http://www.teachersmind.com/education.htm>
- The UN MDG website and monitor page at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
- The UNESCO UNEVOC site at <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/snippet.php>
- The ILO Human Resources Development recommendation database at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/hrdr/index.htm>