

# Experiences of work training for young people in **Latin America**

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## **I) SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.**

In the 1970s the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean fell deeply into debt, and as a consequence they suffered the so-called "foreign debt crisis" at the end of that decade. This conditioned the governments of the region to gradually open up and integrate into international markets, thus abandoning closed economic development.

Globalisation, as a phenomenon which is propelling the social, political and economic structures of the region to join a model of world transformation, started to come into focus during the "lost decade" of the 1980s (Pérez Baltodano, 1997).

The establishment of a new economic model included the liberalisation of the market, with a rise in the flow of international finance, the deregulation of the financial system, strong fiscal adjustment, and reform in the labour market (Filgueira, 1997).

The ultimate objective of these changes was to strengthen the role of markets in the economies, which were faced with increased competitiveness of production in the region, by reorienting them to exports.

These measures were implemented in the belief that, in the long term, they would help national production through a fall in inflation and a rise in private investment.

As a consequence of the measures of adjustment and liberalisation, GDP in Latin America showed an annual growth of 3.6% in the period 1990-94, but in 1995 the increase was only 0.4%. Thus a weakness in the economic structure was revealed, and OIT called attention to it because of the negative repercussions on work which this deceleration could cause (OIT, 1995).

The countries in the region started to experience increasing social inequality which was reflected in the concentration of wealth, the consolidation of poverty, and the maintenance of high rates of unemployment in an increasingly precarious work market. These results are surprising, they do not seem to correspond to the transitory and necessary costs that were foreseen in the early stages of the planning of the adjustment. It had been thought that in the short and medium term there would be a decrease in public employment due to the lowering in public investment, a heavier tax burden and stronger fiscal limits on social protection.

However, the real effects are surprising in that they are more severe and more long-lasting than expected, and they constitute the dark side of structural change. As these negative effects consolidate and cohere, they reveal a high social cost. A study of poverty in the region between 1970 and 1980 shows that it increased in absolute terms but decreased in relative terms, that is in terms of the number of homes below the poverty line. Between 1980 and 1986, both indexes went up in urban areas, and stagnated in rural areas. In this period 43% of the population of 19 Latin American countries were below the poverty line, and by 1990 this had risen to 46% over the whole region, a higher figure than that for the period between 1980 and 1986 (Cepal, 92, 94, 95, 96).

The Latin America and Caribbean countries are very heterogeneous, not only when comparing one to another, but also when studying different segments within each country. New vulnerabilities have appeared which, in the overall panorama, can be identified with the individual weaknesses of the different countries in the region, within

each country, and within each social sector. Along with the structural poor there are now the new poor.

Thus we see that:

1. The GDP per inhabitant in 1996 varies enormously, from \$5401.9 (American dollars) in Argentina to \$ 582.7 (American dollars) in Nicaragua (Cepal, 1997).

2. The index of human development, which averages 0.911 in industrialized countries, varies between 0.891 (in Chile) and 0.530 (in Nicaragua) (Cepal, 1997).

3. According to indicators of inequality (the GINI index, the relation of the richest decile to lower decile bands, the percentage of below average homes) the richest classes have obtained an increasing share of the income, except in the cases of Uruguay and Colombia (Filgueira, 1997). Between 1980 and 1992, the concentration of wealth was consolidated in 12 Latin American countries (Cepal, 1996). Since the implementation of the adjustment, all over Latin America the highest decile saw their wealth increase (Cepal, 1993,1994,1995,1996).

4. When the countries are rated according to the internal redistribution of wealth, it can be seen that at one extreme there is Uruguay (where inequality fell between 1985 and 1996) followed by Costa Rica, and at the other extreme we find Argentina, Mexico and Brazil, who have the worst redistribution.

Therefore a sizeable part of the population of the region has become increasingly vulnerable. This vulnerability is understood as either the increasing probability of losing the level or degree of social insertion attained, or, for those who have never attained any, of never achieving it at all.

The former group is composed of members of the medium low classes who are sliding down towards the poverty line, and the latter is made up of the structural poor who are further and further from any chance of recovery (Jacinto, 1999; Filgueira, 1997)

This society is more complex and more competitive, there is less security or stability, there are large groups of "hard" poverty, and there is marked ecological segregation and isolation from normal city life (Cepal, 1997). Foreign debt has been transformed into social debt (Filgueira, 1997).

## **II) REPERCUSSIONS ON WORK**

The deregulation of the market in general included the deregulation of the labour market in particular. The Taylorist model was superseded, work in successive transformations became more flexible, and the paradigm of full employment disappeared (Tockman, 1997).

The rate of employment in the region increased 3% between 1990 and 1994 (OIT, 1995, 1996).

However, this increase was not enough to absorb the rise of 3.2% (1990 -1994) in the number of job seekers. This number is fuelled by the increasing incorporation of women, of young people at increasingly early ages, of the unemployed who are trying to get back to work, and of active workers, either employed or under-employed, who are seeking a second job.

A look at the state of employment itself shows that the labour market is changing to a more segmented profile due to the increase in informal work, in micro-businesses and in the self-employed (Cepal, 1996).

OIT points out that in the non-agricultural sector, small and medium sized companies made up 20.2% of the informal sector in 1990 and 23.1% in 1996, while in the modern sector big companies decreased from 33% in 1990 to 29.6% in 1996.

Informal work, which is understood as “occupations which are outside the modern labour system” (PREALC, 1987) accounted for 55.7% of non-agricultural employment from 1990 to 1994, 57% in 1995, and 58.7% in 1998 (OIT, 1995, 1996, 1998). 85% of the new jobs generated between 1990 and 1994 were unstable, badly remunerated, with little or no security, and highly precarious and flexible.

According to Cepal and OIT, these results show that the growth in employment does not mean the incorporation of new people or the absorption of young people. It was thought that the reactivation of the economy would generate a dynamism in the sectors that benefited from the reforms, and they would absorb the unemployed and thus avoid any high social cost, but this dynamism has not come about at the levels expected (Cepal, 1998).

The unstable labour model that is emerging demands a new level of training to maintain employability.

### III) YOUTH EMPLOYMENT: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION.

The youth sector of the labour pool is up against all the complexities and obstacles mentioned above, but to a greater extent than the rest of the population: the rate of youth unemployment is double or triple the general unemployment rate. This vulnerability is made even worse if, along with condition of being young, there are also poverty, race, rural location and low levels of schooling, phenomena which also occur in the developed countries (Ramírez, 1998).

When we look at the relation between the youth unemployment rate and the total unemployment rate for the economically active population, the figures reveal discrimination, even when we consider the heterogeneous nature of the various countries: Let us look at some examples (1997):

	1997		
	General unemployment %	Youth unemployment 15-24	%
Argentina	15.7	15-28	20.7
Greater Buenos Aires			
Brazil	5.7	18-24	11.4
6 metropolitan areas			
Chile	5.3	20-24	13.6
national			
Colombia	13.3	20-29	18.1
7 metropolitan areas			
Costa Rica	5.9	12-24	11.4
national urban			
Mexico	3.7	20-24	6.5
41 urban areas			
Peru	8.4	14-24	14.6
national urban			
Uruguay	11.6	14-24	27.2
Montevideo			

Source: OIT, 1998

Unemployment rates for young women are from 10% to 60% higher than for men of the same age (Cepal, 97 b and c).

Heavy pressure to maintain labour competitiveness modifies the demand at the individual level.

Those in charge of education and work understand that young people must have certain basic competences which will allow them to be integrated (Gallart, Jacinto, 1997).

These would include attitudinal characteristics, self-esteem, creativity, the capacity to identify and solve problems, responsibility, an interest in permanent learning, good communication, efficiency, long term projects, active participation, disposition to change, high responsibility, and creative and interactive thought with new communication codes based on technology and teamwork.

The acquisition of such competences would be helped by a general understanding of reading and writing, a high level of abstraction and anticipation with the formulation of logical-analytic models, and the application of mathematics to concrete problems. (UNESCO, 1997; Cepal, 1997; Torres, 1996; Ramírez, 1997; Novick, 1997; Gallart and Jacinto, 1997)

Traditional education in the region is segmented, there is different access to quality in education which depends on social strata (Tedesco, 1998; Rama, 1998; Cepal, 1997; Jacinto, 1999)

There is universal access to education but there is a deterioration in quality, with late entry into primary education (20%), high rates of repetition (40% in the first year), high rates of backwardness in schooling (50% at one point in the cycle), and only 50% of those with the age and capacity to go into secondary education do so (UNESCO, 1998).

The effective results of education and training in Latin America and the Caribbean are markedly below those of the developed countries, especially when it comes to disadvantaged sectors of the population.

This whole problem area is also immersed in the phenomenon of "the devaluation of educational qualifications": more years of preparation are needed for the same tasks. According to Cepal, formal education starts to be discriminative for work after the 12th year of study.

#### **IV) EXCLUSION**

The segmentation of the labour market becomes more marked and more discriminatory in youth work, given that the qualifications, skills, aptitudes, attitudinal and behavioural profiles, and social networks necessary for entry into modernized work sectors are almost monopolized by young people from the well-off classes (Tockman, 1997).<sup>7</sup>

The high income strata of society benefit from the expansion of employment because they secure the best jobs. They enjoy a delay, in the sense that it is possible for them to postpone the assumption of full maturity.

This delay makes it possible for them to accumulate years of learning, of vocational searching, of trial and error, and of wide socializing experience, without having to hurry into precarious and low-level employment at an early age. Poor young people, by contrast, leave formal education and training because they have to maintain themselves.

This delay which young people from the well-to-do classes can enjoy "is a new historical use of economic surplus" (Gerth and Mills, quoted by Lasida, 1992)

Exclusion is understood as the impossibility of sharing communal time and space in the social network (Arocena, 1996). It is traditional in Latin American society, which is considered to be the most iniquitous in the world (Iglesias, 1997).

To be excluded means economic poverty, low educational qualifications, to be "out" of the social scene, to be unable to take part in the different social ambits, and not to have the option of being a full member of a strongly democratic society (Ramírez, 1998).

The critical sector of excluded youth is made up of unemployed young people with low levels of schooling, young people who are inactive (who do not work or study), poor women (mainly adolescents), the rural poor, and members of ethnic minority groups.

50% of the recruitment of young people for work comes about through family or group networks, but such people do not have social networks. Besides this, there is discrimination in access to good quality education and training, which is reinforced by ecological discrimination since they live in peripheral areas with bad communications and with scarce and expensive services, which also reinforces isolation.

If they do get work it is less secure, less highly-skilled and less well paid than an adult's work. It is difficult to get a good job, and the barriers against inclusion are even higher when we take into account the weight of socialization which a good quality job bestows (Jacinto, 1999). Given that finding work is so difficult, and the work that is found is so bad "a culture of unstable or non-existent work" is created (Jacinto, Lasida, Ruetalo, Berrutti; 1998), and young people became inactive. The bewildering sensation that post-modern society is changeable and uncertain also contributes to this paralysis.

To sum up, young people belonging to the poor sectors of society go through a number of critical points which condition the perpetuation of poverty. It is a process of identification and socialization, they are denied any breathing space so they undergo an accelerated and premature entry into the unstable informal work market (Lasida, 1992).

In this symbolic process of identification there is interaction and reciprocity within the habits of daily life. This relationship depends on an exchange that is progressive and constant.

The physical aspect of a person is highly individualized, but at the same time it is highly social. Parallel to the withdrawal of the individual is the world of culture and ideology, which institutionalises thought and communication through a system of signs and symbols. In this system the place occupied by the body is especially important for the individual and for the social group (Turner, 1984). Young people who are poor exhibit behaviour, attitudes and gestures which also exclude them from the job market because they make them appear to companies to be untrustworthy. Stigmatisation

works on the level of the degradation of the body, given that the surface of the body interprets the physical problem of modern social prestige (Cooley, 1964). To be stigmatised is to be profoundly discredited, and it supposes the situation of an individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance (Goffman, 1968). One reaction to this situation is that the person who is stigmatised elects to remain amongst his peers so as not to have to confront the problem. Among the social categories, Goffman concerns himself with those members of the lower class who " ... quite noticeably carry the mark of their status in their language, their appearance and their manners, and are second class citizens with respect to the public institutions of our society ..."

Through the mass media, globalisation shows and legitimises cultural models and consumerism, and the young people who are structurally excluded recognize these as something set apart and inaccessible.

These inequalities hurt everyone in the end because society is impoverished. The segmentation and the consequent isolation of different social sectors prevents any enriching cultural interaction, and limits the quality of life of the citizens taken as a whole. This greater social disintegration consolidates pockets of structural poverty, with ethnic, gender and ecological discrimination, leading to an increase in urban violence (Cepal, 1997).

The negative consequences of this distortion can also be seen in the industrialized world, " ... it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which the persistent unemployment of young people could bring positive benefits to society" (Thurow, 1996).

## **V) A RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION**

With the disappearance of the State as benefactor, there are in the heart of society two schools of thought which explain the need for social policies: those which try to attenuate the negative effects of the market without interfering with it, and those of the developmentalist type which favour the inclusion of excluded people as a basic necessity for modernization.

New paradigms in social policy have been proposed: the "universalization of rights" through universal education, and "equality of opportunity" with specific action aimed at promoting access to jobs for vulnerable groups (Corvalán, 1996; Jacinto, 1999; Querubín, 1998). In the new paradigm of social policy, young people have a transcendent value and a preponderant role because they constitute the strategic resource for the integral development of society (Gallart and Jacinto, 1997), and education, training and instruction are the keys to individual and social development. (Arocena, 1996)

There is a conviction, which is gradually gaining acceptance in society as a whole, that it is necessary to seek solutions to exclusion through the creation of a new social contract (Jacinto, 1999), which would lay the foundations of productive transformation, full democratisation and social modernization.

At a time when democracy is gaining strength all over the world, social intervention, in most countries in the region, is seen as organized action to deal with unresolved problems through the functioning of economic and political institutions constituted by a market economy and a democratic political system (Corvalán, 1996). In the revaluation of social policies, one equitable solution that has been proposed is "positive discrimination" in education, training and instruction. This would mean changes in pedagogic strategies to help coordination with the local situation respecting all its ecological, inter-cultural and racial heterogeneity.

It is generally agreed that as the State is responsible for all its citizens, it should carry the main burden in the implementation of compensatory discrimination and in the necessary coordination of the public and the private elements. It would be in charge of overall design, financing, monitoring and evaluation at a distance, the coordination of teacher training and pedagogic materials, and also help in the local situation, decentralizing the implementation and improving access for vulnerable sectors of the population.

Ordinary society also participates, there is a wide range of instances of cooperation between the public and private spheres, in an increasingly close nexus of collaboration and mutual understanding.

This proposed design demands substantial changes from all the actors involved, with an updating of methods on the part of the government organisms which design employment policies through the Ministries of Labour (Weinberg, 1998).

The integration of this complex educational network demands coordination with the world of work, so as to promote full access and not just employability.

## **VI) REGIONAL EFFORTS AGAINST SEGMENTATION: EQUITY**

The various proposals for social intervention involve ethical principles concerning the unacceptability of certain solutions and modernizing strategies in society. Following this line of seeking equality through social policies, there have been proposals in the educational field for “positive discrimination” or “compensatory education”, through differentiated action in the system of formal educational ( Document of Jomtien).

What happens at this level is the coordination of education with work, to foster full social insertion and not just employability, since what is in play here is the strategic resource for the development and modernization of society (Gallart, Jacinto, 1997).

### **VI a) WORK TRAINING AS A POLICY OF COMPENSATION**

Since the 1940s vocational training institutions (VTIs) have been developed in the region. These have tripartite representation in the sphere of non-formal education, and are oriented to the retraining of workers. There are also the institutions of Formal Technical Education in the formal education system, which handle the training of intermediate level technicians. Due to the fact that competitiveness and productivity are being given priority in the new paradigm of work, and also because the expansion in employment has turned out to be less than what was expected, the VTIs and the institutions of formal technical education are changing and modernizing their administrations and training strategies, and basing them on work competences.

Since the end of the 1980s, work training programmes for young people who were structurally unemployed or at high social risk have been promoted, with considerable help from the Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID – Inter-American Development bank). The pioneer project was developed with a wide institutional framework in Chile (the Chile Joven (Young Chile) Programme), from which it spread to other countries, with adaptations depending on individual characteristics of each nation: Argentina (Proyecto Joven - Youth Project), Colombia (Programa de Capacitación Laboral para Jóvenes – Programme of Youth Work Training), Uruguay (Opción Joven – Youth Option, then Projoven), among others.<sup>10</sup>

## **VI b) THE CONTRIBUTION TO TRAINING POLICIES FRAMED IN THE ACTIVITIES OF CINTERFOR/OIT**

To contribute to the implementation of a training policy which, while keeping this scenario in mind, also promotes social equity and equality of opportunity, the **Centro Interamericano de Investigación y Documentación sobre Formación Profesional (CINTERFOR/OIT) (Inter-American Centre for Research and Documentation on Vocational Training)** has, along with the Ministries of Work, and public, private and social bodies, cooperated in the design and the structuring of programmes geared to specific sectors of the population. This was done with a view to overcoming the work, economic and social disadvantages which exist. A good part of the agenda of the Centre is closely connected to the subject of the training and employment of young people, always when both problems are closely connected to questions of equality and the fight against poverty.

The Centre regularly took part in the coordinating activity of the Liaison Committee that grew out of the International Meeting on Youth, Education and Employment in Latin America (Rio de Janeiro, 1997). This was set up by the Organización Iberoamericana de la Juventud (OIJ – Latin American Youth Organization), and is made up of Ministries of Work and of Education, the MUDES foundation of Brazil, the OIJ, the Andrés Bello agreement, and CINTERFOR/OIT. Along the same lines, and also thanks to financial help from the Instituto de Juventud de España (INJUVE – Spanish Youth Institute), the Centre compiled and published a paper on the subject on *Youth, Education and Employment*, assembling the documents, reports and results of the meeting in Rio. Besides this, CINTERFOR/OIT recently published their Bulletin numbers 139-140: *Young people, Training and Employability; Access to work for Young people in the European Union*, by Lorenzo Cachón; *Young People and Work Training. The challenge of access, quality and institutional suitability*. Contributions from various researchers in the region were compiled and coordinated through the Latin-American Network of Education and Work, and based on these the publication *For a Second Chance: work training for vulnerable young people* was prepared. The “*Training and employment course for young people: a comparative analysis of European and Latin American experience*” was organized in Malaga, in conjunction with the Turin Centre of the OIT, the members of the Liaison Committee and the Youth Institute of the Spanish Ministry of Work and Social Affairs. Since 1998 the Centre has maintained the internet **Web Site “Young People, Training and Employment”**, which has 3,300 subscribers, receives an average of 200 visits per day, and is brought up to date every three days.

## **VI b) MODELS OF TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION**

Latin America has a long tradition of vocational training with a wide variety of experience in which the roles of the public and the private sectors, with their different connections and administrative systems, were and are changing with the times and with the circumstances of each country in the region (Gallart, 1998).

The vocational training institutions have targeted and targets a wide range of different sectors of the population, sometimes the have-nots, and sometimes groups that are already integrated into the formal or the informal work market, micro-businesses, etc. (Cinterfor, 1990).

The meaning of the concepts of “public” and “private” are still in entrenched positions, although there is general acceptance of the idea of “public” as “including all”, that is, embracing all members of society, based on the idea of “fairness” and the possibility of integrated social participation as an indispensable step on the road to full democracy.

It is increasingly clear that the institutions in charge of vocational training in the public or the private sphere need to be coordinated among themselves so as to achieve greater efficiency, more agile administration, to avoid duplicating work, and to improve the cost-benefit ratio.<sup>11</sup>

A new challenge has appeared - What should the preparation of an individual be for this work model? And also - How can those who are excluded be re-inserted?

The idea of fairness, stemming from a strong feeling of solidarity and protection, must be applied to those who are vulnerable. This is not a question of reconstituting a paternalistic State for everyone, rather it is to be fair and to give more to those who have the greater need. It is a redistributive criterion, that the State should act in such a way as to foster the inclusion of all citizens as a better way of sharing democratic power. The ultimate beneficiary of this equality is society as a whole, because the whole social fabric is made more dynamic. This is the thinking behind educational compensation (Rama, CEPAL, UNESCO 92) in Latin America. This compensation is based on changes to the curriculum; less schooling, the modernization of the teaching-learning programmes, and giving more weight to technical and vocational elements in formal education. Besides this, there are proposals for temporary employment in small technological companies, with beneficial and educational ends for all young people (including those from the upper class), centred on the company itself, with probationary periods as their first work experience.

In Latin America the target population for educational compensation was focalised in three groups:

- 1) Unemployed young people with low schooling.
- 2) Young people who do not work or study.
- 3) Young women from poor sectors.

In Latin America, the activities carried out within this framework cover a wide range of different institutions, places, times and systems etc.

In general it can be said that there is a lack of systematisation and of solid and sustained evaluation of the implementation, administration and effects of these efforts.

#### **VI d) PROGRAMMES OF THE "CHILE JOVEN" (YOUNG CHILE) TYPE.**

This programme has a clearly defined focalisation, it is directed at young people who are unemployed and at high social risk.

This model is relatively new for some countries, and it has raised great expectations given the perception of the societies in the region, and the transcendental nature of the problem of young people.

The design of the project has not been the same in all countries, and its specific adaptations are in the process of revision.

We present the various components schematically, although their necessary interconnection is what gives the final result:

- 1 - Institutions – the strengthening of institutions - interconnections
- 2 – Focalization
- 3 - Design, implementation and training
- 4 – Providers
- 5 – Financing

- 1-) Institutions – the strengthening of institutions – interconnections

The strengthening of all the institutions connected to this idea revolve around the concept of full insertion, social modernization, and active participation in productive change. The institutional set-up is based on normative centralization and executive decentralization.

The State is the predominant institutional body. As it includes all citizens it has overall responsibility for the programme, for design, for monitoring and evaluation, and for supervision and funding. Already at the conference on Employment and Training Policies for Young People in Latin America (Belo Horizonte, 1989) it was considered highly advisable to create "...ambits for the regular participation of the different government bodies, workers' and employers' representatives, non-governmental organizations which are active in this area, and representatives of the young people themselves...".

The State plays a preponderant role in education, in training, in citizenship and in social inclusion, and as the promoter of upward social mobility. In short it is the entity which channels popular demand (Rama 1983).

Except in the case of organizations connected to religions (especially the Catholic church) or to the State, there are almost no positive results for society once the projects have finished. This is due to the institutional weaknesses which they suffer from. Once the financing stage is complete, the providers and the people responsible for the projects step back, and, since there is no institutional framework, the projects remain without measurable social impact. What is more, even when the project is running, the lack of an institutional framework (or the lack of connections with formal education) means that the young people who have completed their training do not get access to jobs or cannot re-enter formal schooling.

The following alternative has been proposed

- 1) The creation of a period of accompaniment to help with this second insertion.
- 2) The recruitment of young people to tasks within the project itself

The connection between the normative, operational and administrative aspects, and the coordination of the activities of the State, businessmen and society should be strengthened.

Observation of the progress of projects in the 1990s (a very few years) shows that there is very little connection between institutions or between activities, that supply is superimposed or duplicated, which is extremely expensive, and that there are no clear links to the productive sector.

## 2) Focalisation

Focalisation is established through a census or through surveys of homes, which identifies the areas at the greatest social risk. This is an aspect which has been resolved best, possibly because the target population sector (age, sex, economic level, place of residence, schooling and employment) is clearly identified very early on.

The extent to which the programmes can be efficiently promoted and publicized among the people depends on the prior history of the institution, or on similar projects in the same place. The better known it is, the less formidable the barriers between those inside and those outside the community become. This is particularly noticeable in the case of religious orders.

For children who live or who spend most of their time on the street, as well as for poor and inactive unemployed young people, the family can play the fundamental role in

focalisation, serving as a point of reference. It is necessary to prevent resources being diverted to other groups, and in this the incentives and the design of the courses, their duration and their location, are of fundamental importance.

### 3) Design, implementation

Young people should actively participate at this stage, something which has not often been the case. Of all the actors in the process of education for work, these are the ones who habitually go absent. They are the object of the process. They should be brought into the programme early on, so that through adapting and actively participating they can become catalysts. This role for young people goes hand in hand with the general participation of the rest of the community. If this is done effectively, (in the preparation of the projects, in participating in tripartite commissions or social pacts) social actors would increase their involvement in the transformation of society.

It has been said that "along with the conceptual dimensions currently associated with quality, like efficacy and efficiency, the requirements for skills and competences should also be pertinent to the world of work, and relevant to the expectations and the needs of the young people themselves" (Jacinto, Lasida, Ruetalo, Berruti).

Because the target population is heterogeneous, training proposals have to be imaginative and diversified.

Marginalisation can be categorized according to cause: 1) structural, 2) socio-cultural, socio-demographic or ethno-cultural 3) due to prevailing conditions (Weinberg, 1994), and these all require different treatment when it comes to training for re-insertion and escape from exclusion.

Along with the training of poor and marginalized young people, there is a social re-ordering, with the reorganization of daily life due to the revolutions in technology and communications (Paiva, 1997).

This implies that training must be integral (technical training accompanied by social insertion, work network, connections with formal education). There has to be an attempt to train not only for work but also for social insertion.

Here we return to themes mentioned before (institutionalisation, institutional reinforcement, coordination, participation, etc.)

### 4) Providers - decentralization of implementation

Grouped according to origin, they are recognized as:

- Institutions of formal education:

Of work training (VTIs)

Of formal technical education.<sup>14</sup>

Technological or techno-vocational.

- Private Enterprises of non-formal education

Non-government organizations and other local entities which train the disadvantaged for micro-businesses.

- Informal learning practices inside companies

- Religious institutions

They are grouped as public, private or mixed, according to how they are financed.

### 5) Financing

The programme is financed through specific taxes, the general income of the nation, or loans from international organizations (e.g. BID - The Inter-American Development Bank).

The State is responsible for financing: it contracts the agents (almost always by a public call for tenders) and it pays them according to the cost of the course. The people who actually benefit are subsidized with suitable scholarships which are designed to be attractive only for the young people that the programme is aimed at.

According to Rodríguez (1995), investment in the Chilean programme (Chile Joven) amounted to 80 million dollars for 100,000 young people over 4 years. The programme of productive retraining in Argentina is estimated at 350 million dollars for 200,000 young people over 5 years. Thus it is estimated that between 50 and 300 million dollars per country over five years is needed to meet the problem of the exclusion of young people and their access to jobs.

It has been calculated that in the year 2,000 unemployed young people in Latin America will amount to around 6,500,000, with as many again under-employed. Big investment is needed, with political decision on the part of the governments in the region, and with a contribution from the international community. "CEPAL and UNESCO" estimate that making the education plan the key element for productive and equitable transformation would mean an additional investment of 3.9% of the regional GDP" (Rodríguez, 1995).

## **VII) LESSONS LEARNED**

Some efforts have been made to attack the problem of youth employment in the region, and to improve access to jobs. These have come mainly from States and a variety of organizations, and the programmes of youth employment undertaken have met with varying success. However, there has been little scientific evaluation of their impact, and in many cases their future existence is in doubt because of institutional weaknesses or the lack of financial resources to sustain them.

Interactive knowledge of the various models of training and instruction would help to clarify these doubts (Castro Verdisco, 1999).

The development of the programme presupposes a strong institutional presence in a favourable socio-economic context, working along consistent lines oriented to the development of human resources, and with clear social policies against poverty and exclusion. This makes it necessary to clarify the objective of the intervention. If the aim is an increase in economic efficiency, all activity geared to training raises employability and development. But there are two disturbing questions: What happens in the long term? And how are the programmes focalised?

Action aimed at disadvantaged adolescents includes "Programmes of the Chile Joven type", which are strongly promoted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and there are also activities, which by now are traditional, led by the unions, non-governmental organizations, local groups, churches and educational institutions. This long and varied experience has made it possible to accumulate a lot of theoretical and practical knowledge about education, training and instruction.

What is certain is that today the world has changed, as have the quantity and quality of the competences, abilities and basic educational, attitudinal and behavioural skills which it demands. These things are not provided by the mechanisms of socialization which poor adolescents and young people have, and such people also lack social networks to give help and the chance of insertion. Just identifying this situation gives greater urgency to the lucid and objective evaluation of what has been done up to now to help needy adolescents (especially women) who are stigmatised.

Not only the people involved in conducting the programmes but also external evaluators repeatedly point out faults at the implementation stage, which stand out even more in those organizations which have a fluid, legitimate and recognized link to the local situation because of their prolonged activity in zones of extreme poverty.

The years of implementation of the programmes bring to light a series of questions which revolve around the degree of vulnerability of the population that they are aimed at.

The discussion centres on how far the improvement in employability is parallel to social insertion. Moreover, when the external and internal evaluators insist on the necessity of identifying the competences needed to promote employability, we can ask, Is training enough? Or should basic psycho-social, attitudinal and behavioural skills also be reinforced? How can the role of citizenship or social participation be reinforced?

All these points have to do with the design, the focalisation, the degree of integration, and the relevance of the courses.

There is growing interest, on the part of those responsible for the programmes and external technicians, in the new protagonists who are widening the offer and varying the kinds of training given. These institutions may be public or private, formal or informal, unions, non-government organizations, local associations, religious institutions, or the novel private entities which are seeking to make a profit. These are all in a dynamic process of technical and administrative change and improvement, trying to identify weaknesses and suggest solutions which would make for institutional strength.

It has been repeatedly pointed out that there is a proven "crisis of the providers", probably connected to the lack of instructors trained on the institutional level, in sufficient quantity and of sufficient quality to take charge of implementation. Behind this crisis, a number of weaknesses among the trainers themselves have been identified (Castro, 1997; Jacinto, 1997 y 1999; Ramírez, 1998B; Gallart, 1998B; Novick, 1998; Millos, 1998; Jacinto, Lasida, Ruetalo, Berruti, 1998):

- 1) Lack of professionalism in management, with confused administration and management, with duplication, without indicators, and without generating experience or becoming stronger.
- 2) Concrete difficulties in the handling of formal bureaucratic procedures, including putting out to tender and the drawing up of contracts between providers and companies, which deal with implementation.
- 3) The demand that secondary training is a prerequisite, as a limit to the management of funding or of State help.
- 4) The weakness of links between institutions, and specifically between trainers, which would permit them to share the use of material and human resources.<sup>16</sup>
- 5) The obsolescence of the technical teaching programmes, and the lack of technical assessors for training, leading to the instability of courses which are "made to measure".
- 6) Insufficient technical and pedagogic training, without suitable pedagogic materials.
- 7) The absence of monitoring, follow up and evaluation which would allow for feedback and prevent the project becoming routine.
- 8) Obstacles to identifying occupational niches, and the consequent lack of relevance of the courses to real demand.
- 9) The complexity of the concept of "educational compensation", and its adaptation to the content of the courses.
- 10) The scarcity of proposals for managing and administering alternatives to the system of temporary traineeships. In times of economic recession the companies do

not give priority to temporary trainees because they are worried about survival and about pressure from their workers.

There are serious weaknesses in the processes of monitoring, follow up and evaluation. There is a lack of systematisation, which leads to proliferation and repetition, and there is no feedback or in-depth analysis of the real impact. There is a lack of methodological rigour in the objectives and in the definition of each stage, with a lack of evaluative research, difficulties in registering information, vague and unreliable statistics which hinder the measurement of the movement or the substitution of people, among other variables. The design is complex because of the multiplicity of indicators and dimensions to evaluate.

However, the conviction that an expansion in training favours productivity and competitiveness, with a consequent growth in the economy and in employment, forces us to follow this path (Castro, 1997), seeking new arrangements among all the possible alternatives and bringing into focus the kind of profile that would be most suitable for institutions to plan and to carry out the work.

It is a great challenge, because it has to do with a sector of the population that is highly vulnerable, hard to retain on the programme, and that has marked deficiencies in their educational and psycho-social credentials.

The person in charge of carrying out such programmes must have technical-pedagogical, management and administrative skills, as well as a firm link to the local situation and the target population.

In the wide and heterogeneous sector of providers one group stands out, basic organizations, unions, non-government organizations that have strong connections with disadvantaged young people. These groups have vast experience in the fight for training and against poverty, but they show a certain fragility when it comes to evaluative and management competences. It is necessary to provide them with access to knowledge and skills in the running of a process that is organized in clear and systematic stages which are amenable to evaluation. Thus a new figure appears on the scene, the trainer of the trainers.

The policy for dealing with this subject tends to demand the optimum use of human and material resources, according to the evaluation of results, and with emphasis on the real costs and benefits for society as a whole.

In 1995, Grubs (OIT, Geneva) presented the results of evaluations on the efficiency of labour training programmes in the United States, with particular emphasis on the most sophisticated evaluations using randomised assignation methods, which have their strong points and weaknesses. A large part of his report turns on one single question - Did the programmes succeed or did they fail? A conventional reading of the evaluations showed that a lot of the programmes resulted in a slight but statistically significant rise in employment, although an analysis of the cost-benefit equation showed that the social benefits did not always outweigh the costs. Grubs, along with other assessors, says that one has to conclude that these programmes have been successful and ought to continue. However, he also remarks that from a practical point of view, if the programme is seen as a way out of unemployment, the successes are inadequate because the effects rapidly decay with time, and the benefits are short term.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, it was recognized from the beginning that it was especially important to carry out assessments so as to be able to understand why

some programmes are successful and others not, and to have the material to make recommendations which would allow them to be remodelled and made more effective. To abandon them would not be a suitable response, it seems. They have to carry on since they are attempts to alleviate problems like poverty and unemployment that are impossible to ignore. In the region, evaluations and external or internal audits were carried out by the central administration of the project, by external assessors and/or by representatives of the financial institutions. The evaluational methodologies which were used themselves constitute a big part of the difficulty, and this is a problem which the assessors in the different countries in the region have pointed out again and again (Castro, Gallart, Jacinto, Ramírez).

The focalisation and the coverage of the programme were measured with a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, in an attempt to detect any diversion of the benefits to young people of other social strata. Both methodologies measure and compare the number of young people who meet the requirements to be potential beneficiaries, those who enrol, and those who finish the courses. In a number of countries there were drop outs due to bad focalisation, largely because of the weak integration of those running the programmes into the local community where the young people lived, inadequate use of channels in the social fabric and the means of communication. Great difficulty was noted in the recruitment (not to mention the retention) of the young people in greatest need, of those who manifested high risk conduct (alcohol, drug addiction, violence, criminality), of those living in the country, of adolescent women, and of those belonging to ethnic or religious minorities. In all these cases, the assessors attribute the failure to the bad orientation of the programme: its impact (access to jobs) is inversely connected to the degree of vulnerability of the young people (Ramírez, 1999).

Lastly, given the complexity of the social programmes and the variety of the training programmes, it is no surprise that we come away with the impression that there are still other aspects of the situation which have not been evaluated

It would be advisable to carry out internal and external evaluations, in which all the actors involved in this complex problem would participate.

A systematic, ordered and pre-planned evaluation of the implementation of each stage forms a feedback mechanism that allows successes and mistakes to be identified, so as to reinforce the former and correct the latter. If there is no evaluation then the fate of the young people who have been trained cannot be known, the quality of the training as a mechanism for social insertion cannot be known, the costs and the benefits of the project cannot be known, and its impact as a force for change in society cannot be measured. Likewise, the results could give solid support to the reinforcement of institutions, the definition of State policies on work and education, systematized and profitable management, the suitability of content depending on degree of integration, relevance and appropriateness, and the road to equality, given that “ the basic idea of democracy is the recognition of other people” (Touraine, 1995)