

**Inter-American Tripartite Seminar on Training,
Productivity and Decent Work**

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 15-17 May 2002

FINAL REPORT

InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability



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Background

A dialogue about the various central concerns of the realm of labour has always been a main area of work for the ILO. This event was devoted to dialogue and discussion, on this occasion about occupational training in the region.

There were several reasons that justify an event of this nature.

- The transformations that have occurred in the financing of vocational training, as well as in the roles and responsibilities of various actors in the design, management and application of training programmes.
- The emergence of new alliances and forms of collaboration among institutions and social agents in the region.
- Participation of trade unions in the development of vocational training and in the implementation of employment, income generation and education policies, as well as private initiatives in the design, management and application of vocational training.
- Participation of labour and education ministries and local communities in training.
- Renewed importance of tripartite management in training, and advent of new funding arrangements and mechanisms.
- Recognition of qualifications based on competencies' standards and creation of national certifications systems.

The Seminar offered an opportunity to share ideas and experiences on recent trends in training policies, legislation and practices. These issues will be discussed by the ILO's tripartite constituency at the 2003 and 2004 sessions of the International Labour Conference. The discussions are expected to lead to the adoption, in 2004, of a new Human Resources Development Recommendation.

It was also a good setting for bringing together the experiences of governments and social actors, researchers and professionals, for the exchange of national and international views on promoting the development of knowledge and abilities in order to achieve higher levels of performance and offer men and women better opportunities of decent employment.

Objectives

Exchanging and disseminating national, regional and international experiences about reforms in training policies that may promote greater investment in learning, the recognition of competencies and development of training frameworks in a context of improved productivity and decent work.

A concern with the new forms of institutional organisation of training, the growth of investments in that field and the development of clear-cut mechanisms for recognising competencies led to work on three main subject areas: i) innovation policies and reforms promoting the development of knowledge and skills in the labour force; ii) national and regional systems for the recognition and certification of abilities and qualification frameworks; and iii) policies and mechanisms promoting greater investments in knowledge and skills, training in enterprises and the respective roles of different actors in the process.

Seminar structure

The Seminar included technical sessions on each one of the subject areas. The topics for each session were planned by ILO officials and experts who prepared documents and presentations. The tripartite representatives then gathered in working groups for in-depth discussions of them, and submitted their conclusions to the plenary.

The working groups were organised into three sub-regions. The first one, English-speaking Caribbean, was made up by Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago and was later joined by Canada. The second one, South America, included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia,

Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The third one, Central America, gathered El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras together with Panama and Mexico.

The social actors represented in each group prepared presentations on the basis of a number of questions that had been distributed to them as debate guidelines. A member elected by each group submitted their respective conclusions and recommendations.

This methodology optimised participation by all the social agents attending the event.

Participants

The meeting was attended by high government officials and representatives of employers' and workers' organisations, all of them with responsibilities in the management of training institutes, ministerial departments, and employers' and workers' organisations involved in the development of human resources.

There was a total of 61 representatives from 18 different countries of the region, and more than 20 local and international observers.

Seminar

Opening meeting

The seminar's opening session took place on 15 May. The following speakers took the floor: Alberto Borges de Araujo in representation of the National Industrial Confederation (CNI) and the Industrial Training Service (SENAI), of Brazil; Pedro Daniel Weinberg, Director of CINTERFOR ILO, who spoke on behalf of Agustín Muñoz, ILO Director a.i. for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Nassim Mehedff, National Secretary of Public Employment Policies, of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Brazil.

First day

The first item was the presentation of recent ILO work in connection with training and the preparatory activities for a New Recommendation on the Development of Human Resources. It included presentations by Pekka Aro, Director of IFP/SKILLS and Trevor Riordan, Manager, Training Policies and Programmes of the same InFocus Programme. Moderator of this session was Nassim Mehedff, National Secretary of Public Employment Policies of Brazil.

Mr. Aro presentation focused on the current importance of vocational training in the global employment agenda. He referred to the ILO guidelines in this respect, that concentrate on:

- promoting investment in education and training,
- expanding the coverage of elementary education, literacy and in general of all systems fostering basic qualifications,
- reform of education and vocational training systems,
- recognition of individual competencies (skills, qualifications), and
- favouring social dialogue on vocational training.

He described the preliminary work undertaken by the ILO in preparing a new Human Resources Development Recommendation. The new Recommendation is expected to address the following central themes:

- the importance of achieving greater social equity in the global economy,
- the role of knowledge in the search of decent work for all,
- the challenge of building lifelong education systems, favouring the employability of all workers,
- promoting more and better investments in the development and distribution of knowledge,
- the need to develop efficient and effective mechanisms for recognising individual competencies,
- ensuring equitable access to knowledge
- enhancing the capacity for dialogue both of public and private actors, and
- developing technical assistance a co-operation mechanisms at international level.

Mr. Riordan then introduced the Seminar objectives within a context of raising productivity and promoting decent work. In that connection he pointed out that the Seminar should help to review, exchange and disseminate national, international and regional experiences in:

- reform of public vocational training policies,
- investment in education and vocational training,
- development of networks for the recognition of competencies and training

In summary, he stressed that the Seminar was aimed at collecting inputs for drafting the new Recommendation on the development of human resources, on the basis of progress under way in the different countries.

He then proceeded to explain to participants the dynamics and operation of the Seminar, and what was expected from its implementation. In that respect, a set of the main lines of discussion had to be evolved. The exchange should also contribute to improving the quality and relevance

of vocational training in the region, and reinforcing the capacity of constituents to reform and review national training approaches as a result of their participation in the event.

Mr. Mehedff described the current situation in Brazil regarding reform processes in the management of public policies and systems of vocational training. He made special mention of the importance of tripartite social dialogue –at national and local level- in the field of training and pointed to the challenges that had to be overcome. Among others, the need to achieve wider coverage and better quality for basic schooling and literacy, enlarging the scope of vocational training systems to reach a significant proportion of the population. Brazil had made a strategic option for social dialogue in vocational training.

The plenary started discussion of innovative policies and management reforms to promote the development of workers' knowledge and abilities. Torkel Alfthan, of IFP/Skills and Pedro Daniel Weinberg, of CINTERFOR/ILO contributed to this technical session.. A panel was set up with Alejandro Salinas, representative of the National Training and Employment Service (SENCE) of Chile, Carlos Aquino, National Director of the National Technical Training Institute (INFOTEP) of the Dominican Republic and Guillermo Peña Assistant Director for Planning of the same Institute, and Ricardo Castillo, employers' representative on the Board of Directors of the Technical Institute for Training and Productivity (INTECAP), of Guatemala. Moderator of the session was Oliver Flax, Chairman of the National Training Agency of Trinidad & Tobago.

In his presentation, entitled "Educating and Training for Work: New Policies and Practices", **Mr. Alfthan** approached the subject of current global trends in the reform of the management of vocational training systems, and innovative traits in policies to conduct them.

Among other aspects, he referred to the reasons why a new Recommendation on the development of human resources was being drafted. He underlined that the Recommendation now in force (nº 150, year 1975) was to a great extent a reflection of industrial, economic and social planning policies of the 'seventies. They hardly took into account the demands and needs of labour markets, were not sufficient to orient reform processes in vocational training systems, ascribed an excessively broad and monolithic role to the State. Besides, there was the fact that they preceded the development of new information and communications technologies.

Quoting the conclusions of the International Labour Conference of the year 2000, he said that globalisation had a social dimension to it that called for social solutions. Education and training were essential in such solutions. There were three crucial aspects in all new strategies for the development of human resources: basic competencies to promote employability and lessen vulnerability; knowledge and qualifications for competitiveness; retraining to fend off the negative effects of globalisation.

He added that education and training policies involved five fundamental principles: a favourable environment; an inter-institutional network; equal access for all; the forging of alliances; strategies focusing on learning and the use of information and communication technologies.

Regarding new tendencies in institutional arrangements for education and training, he mentioned decentralisation processes and the expansion of non-formal learning. He emphasised the role of social dialogue and collective negotiation for structuring lifelong education and training systems.

He finally suggested a number of issues or questions to the plenary, as guidelines for the subsequent discussion:

- Investment in training. What policies, instruments or incentives can governments use to increase investment in education and vocational training, by all actors involved?
- Literacy, elementary education and training for all. What education and training policies can governments implement to promote employability and impart basic competencies?
- Training policies and reform of systems. How can education and training be more efficient in responding to rapid economic changes and social needs?

- Social dialogue in vocational training. How can social dialogue boost participation by the various actors and promote the priority assigned by society to the development of competencies?

Likewise, **Mr. Weinberg** spoke on the historical evolution of vocational training institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean. In his speech he described how vocational training was born and had developed in the region on the basis of the national vocational training institutions model, which was in full effect until the end of the seventies. Since then, he noted, another training organization model began to be developed, applied more specifically to the actions of the Ministries of Labour, that promoted a new focus for the role of the State rather more centred on systems regulation and on development of mechanisms to stimulate both the demand and the supply of training. Although he spoke of the existence both of achievements and problems in both approaches, he asserted that the region was moving towards a third instance in which the strategic importance of vocational training institutions was still evident, while the latter were undergoing a process of transformation in order to increase their coverage (basically through shared training execution schemes) and to improve their levels of up-datedness and adaptation to the new realities in labour markets and the innovations regarding technology and organization of production and labour.

Mr. Salinas addressed the topic of the training system in Chile, providing details of its main lines of action, starting with the *Servicio Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo*, *SENCE* (National Training and Employment Service). He specifically highlighted the success obtained by the use of the tax franchise mechanism for training purposes.

Messrs. Aquino and Peña, from INFOTEP in the Dominican Republic, explained the principal changes in the management of this institution during the last few years. In this sense, they mentioned three lines of action: the aim to increase the coverage of the national training system through shared management and the “collaborator centres” scheme; the strong development of training supply on the basis of a dual modality; and the adoption of a training focus by competencies aimed at entrepreneurial productivity development.

Mr. Castillo held forth on how the INTECAP in Guatemala had been adapting its structure and management mechanisms to present challenges arising in vocational training in his country. That institution had reached a climax in an important modernisation process, and was at present on the way to obtain its certification according to ISO standards.

During the afternoon, the regional groups held their working sessions. The conclusions and recommendations arising from that work appear in the annex to this report.

Second day

The second day of the meeting began with the presentation of the results of the work performed in the sub-regional groups the day before.

Subsequently, the plenary dealt with the subject of the financing of training and the role of the social players. It started with presentations by Regina Galhardi, from IFP/Skills, and Jaime Ramirez, CINTERFOR/ILO consultant. Those presentations were commented on and supplemented by a panel made up of Jorge Licetti, Vice President of the *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje en Trabajo Industrial (SENATI)* (National Industrial Labour Learning Service) of Peru; Alejandro Waisglas, Executive Director of the *Fundación de Educación y Capacitación para los Trabajadores de la Construcción* (National Construction Workers Education and Training Foundation); Gay Stinson, of the Canadian Ministry of Labour; and Juan Alejandro Angel, Manager of the *Asociación Nacional de Industriales de Colombia (ANDI)* (National Industrialists Association of Colombia). The moderator of the session was José Ramírez Gamero, of the *Confederación de Trabajadores de México (CTM)* (Workers Confederation of Mexico)..

Mrs. Galhardi began her speech by talking in general terms on the subject of financing of and investment in vocational training. On that basis she underscored the fact that, as the ILO World Employment Programme states, there is a critical need for greater global investment in education and training, for all people. For this reason the main objective, she said, of the ILO InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability (IFP/Skills) is to promote greater investment in qualifications and training so that men and women may have greater and equal access to productive and decent work.

In response to the challenge to generate more and better investments in training, she stated that it was necessary to recognise that investment in training must be a shared responsibility among the public and private sectors, the social participants, and workers and individuals in general. Also, she stated, a measurable and comparative basis was needed to evaluate vocational training expenditures as well as a series of models on investments that could work as a reference point for countries, sectors, and companies.

Investment in training was a responsibility of the State, she noted, but also of the private sector and the individuals themselves. Finally, she stressed the need to improve the evidence there is regarding financing, basically by identifying best practices in that respect and the use of available sources of information.

Mr. Ramírez, in his speech, drew a broad and updated panoramic view of vocational training financing schemes in Latin America and the Caribbean. Throughout his discourse he dealt with the problems, achievements and prospects for types of financing such as parafiscal contributions, budgetary allocations from the educational system, budgetary allocations from the Labour Ministries, tax incentives to firms, special social investment programmes, the convergence of multi-institutional public financing, and private financing beginning with the investment in ongoing training of firms and workers. He ended his speech by providing a series of recommendations on this subject.

Mr. Licetti, in turn, told the participants about the strategies developed by the *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje en Trabajo Industrial (SENATI)* of Peru, aimed at adapting its operation and structure to the progressive decline in rates of contribution coming from firms, demonstrating how good management can make efficacy and efficiency objectives possible even in contexts of financial constraint.

Alejandro Waisglas explained to the plenary the forms of financing tested by the *Fundación de Educación y Capacitación para los Trabajadores de la Construcción* (Construction Workers Education and Training Foundation) of Argentina, on the basis, mainly, of contributions from both workers and firms and of participation in public training and employment programmes. The Foundation is within the orbit of the *Unión de Obreros de la Construcción de la República Argentina (UOCRA)* (Construction Workers Union of Argentina).

Gay Stinson presented an overall view of the importance assigned in Canada to human resources development and to investment in education.

Juan Alejandro Angel stressed the importance of the participation of the social players in financing schemes and of the fact that institutional support must be available for the execution of vocational training programmes.

Third day

This session was devoted to the subject of recognition and certification of occupational competencies and the role of training systems in that respect.

The initial presentations, designed to establish a framework for later discussion, were by Trevor Riordan, of IFP/Skills; George Gamerdinger, Senior HRD and training specialist, MDT Port of Spain; and Fernando Vargas, CINTERFOR/ILO Consultant. As in the two previous sessions, a panel was established, with the purpose of both presenting national experiences and providing commentary on the principal speeches. The members of the panel were: Robert Gregory,

Executive Director of HEART/NTA Trust/National Training Agency of Jamaica; José Pedro Cabarrús, Manager of the *Instituto Técnico de Capacitación y Productividad (INTECAP)* (Training and Productivity Technical Institute) of Guatemala; Doreen Deane, representative of the Barbados Worker's Union; and Elizabeth Cornejo, Director of Vocational Training of the Ministry of Labour and Social Outreach of Peru. Carlos Urenda, General Manager of the *Confederación de la Producción y el Comercio de Chile* (Production and Trade Confederation of Chile) was the moderator of the session.

Mr. Riordan began his speech by addressing the main themes and problems involved in recognising the knowledge and skills of individuals, as well as the negative effects occurring when that recognition is lacking. In order to illustrate possible ways of dealing with the subject, he mentioned the experiences of various countries and their respective approaches. Within the context of the conclusions of the General Discussion on National Qualifications Frameworks (ILC-2000), he asserted that those frameworks were important both for the companies and for the workers, since they aid lifelong learning, help firms to combine demand and supply of skills, and guide individuals in the choice of training and careers. He also noted that they contribute to skills recognition and certification, to the development of training products and services, and to providing guidance to training service providers.

He continued his presentation by analysing other aspects that the National Certification Frameworks should include, such as:

- Competency standards based on industries (established on a tripartite basis)
- Skills recognition regardless of where they were obtained – recognition of earlier learning
- Methodology for fair, transparent and non-discriminatory verification
- Qualification frameworks developed on a tripartite basis.

He then explained what demands had been brought to the attention of the ILO by constituents, among which to be stressed are the implementation of a data bank on best practices to develop a National Qualifications Framework, a study to be undertaken regarding the possibility of comparing different national frameworks on the basis of the data bank, and an investigation to be carried out on recognition of earlier learning. He also gave examples of how other international agencies such as the OECD, EU, World Bank and UNESCO could contribute to such a task. He ended his speech by presenting some issues that should be debated in the seminar, such as:

- What are the main difficulties facing the developing countries in terms of the improvement of skill and qualification recognition systems?
- How can recognition of informally obtained skills be improved?
- What role do the constituents play in the improvement of skills recognition and National Qualifications Frameworks?
- How can international agencies best assist countries to improve skills recognition?

Mr. Gamerdinger, likewise, sketched in a panoramic view the certification systems that are being developed in the English-speaking Caribbean countries. They had made a long and in-depth study of the main international models, especially the British and Australian models, adapting them to the specific reality of the countries of the sub-region. He particularly stressed how beneficial tripartite National Training and Skills Development Councils have been for that process.

In his presentation on certification systems, **Mr. Vargas** referred to the progress that was taking place in the region regarding training and certification experiences based on a competency focus. Both entrepreneurs and unions, training institutions and ministries of labour and education have developed experiences that apply that approach.

The speaker pointed out that in the analysis and study of international experiences as well as in the implementation of national models, there was discussion surrounding various issues. His presentation referred to four of them, all of which were statements regarding certification that he called false.

Such statements refer to the idea of a certificate as recognition issued at the end of a course of study; the debate between certification and social exclusion; the role of certification systems to overcome traditional problems of training institutions and the differentiation of the functions of training, evaluation and certification.

Robert Gregory described the origins and entrenchment of vocational training in Jamaica and its strong relationship with the historical and cultural identity of the country, demonstrating how good training was indispensable for economic development and increases in productivity. He also stressed the advantages of the occupational competency focus to achieve better performance on the job.

José Pedro Cabarrús described the institutional modernisation process carried out by INTECAP during the last two years. He also presented a model called "Norte" (North) on standardisation and certification of occupational competencies that that institute had designed and was beginning to implement.

Doreen Deane referred to the importance for the workers of recognition of competencies acquired by means of experience. She also stressed the importance of worker participation in National Training Councils, and ended her speech by reading a text on an actual case of application of certification with worker participation.

Elizabeth Cornejo spoke of the present debate in Peru on the design of a national training and certification system, stressing the importance assigned to tripartite social dialogue, as well as the effort that is being made to increase and improve the articulation of the education world and the job world.

Closing session

The following group was responsible for closing the seminar: Alberto Borges de Araújo, *Confederación Nacional de la Industria (CNI)/Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Industrial (SENAI)* of Brazil; Pekka Aro, Director of IFP/Skills; Pedro Daniel Weinberg, Director of CINTERFOR/ILO; Nassim Mehedff, National Secretary of Public Employment Policies of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of Brazil; Ricardo Castillo, Employer Representative on the Board of Directors of the *Instituto Técnico de Capacitación y Productividad (INTECAP)* of Guatemala; and Sebastião Lopes Neto, of the *Central Unica de Trabajadores (CUT)* of Brazil, on behalf of the workers.

REVIEW OF THE MAIN IDEAS UNDER DISCUSSION

The purpose of this document is to review the main aspects discussed in the plenary sessions and in the work of the subregional groups during the Seminar. The first part discusses those more general ideas under discussion which emerge from the work throughout the event. In the second section, however, the contributions directly from the subregional working groups are discussed by the representatives of each topic addressed.

**Inter-American Tripartite Seminar on Training,
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MAIN IDEAS UNDER DISCUSSION

Session 1: Innovative policies and reforms in the management of vocational training for the development of the competences of workers

Several experiences by the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were presented as examples of adapting the policies, forms of organisation and management of vocational training to the rapidly changing economic and social situation in the region.

Based on such experiences it was found that, unlike previous years, there is no single model of vocational training organisation and management in the region. While national or sector institutions are still fundamental agents in several countries, new management schemes have emerged basically as a result of a more active and direct action by the Labour Ministries.

In some countries the national institution model, tripartite or managed by employer organisations, funded with specific taxes on company payrolls, continues to be the prevailing institutional arrangement. In other countries, the management of policies in this field is basically the responsibility of the Labour Ministry which, in some cases, relies on participation of social partners in management. Lastly, there are also countries where both organisation models coexist, albeit with different rationales.

Nevertheless, the transformation of training does not end there. In general, the region is found to have at least two more trends: the increase in supply of private training; and greater participation of employer and employee organisations in this field.

Beyond the diversity of organisational arrangements and management schemes for vocational training, the actors involved in every country are dealing with a series of common challenges:

- To overcome the historic constraint of a significant proportion of the population not having achieved an acceptable minimum level of basic learning which hinders the development of general and specific competences.
- To achieve further and better coordination between vocational training, and all other forms of learning, in order to provide people with lifelong learning/training opportunities.
- To update and adapt vocational training systems and policies to the changes in the labour market, society and new technologies.
- To enhance the contribution of vocational training to productive and labour market policies, as well as to all policies that promote social integration and cohesion.

With respect to the first objective, it was noted that it is necessary to increase public investment in basic learning, and to adjust methodologies and intervention strategies.

Coordination between the systems of vocational training and general education is increasingly viewed as an urgent need. There are several examples of mechanisms which improve coordination and facilitate linkages between different systems of learning and training.

Different alternatives are being tested to reform and update vocational training systems. One alternative is to focus on productive sectors, supply chains and social groups requiring special qualifications. Another is the diversification of institutional actions towards developing several technological services. The participation of the social partners in management and social dialogue on training is increasingly instrumental in policies and institutions which reflect the requirements of a changing social and economic order.

Moreover, the contribution of vocational training to active labour market and income generation policies can be strengthened by having social dialogue at national, local and sector levels.

Session 2: Investment in vocational training: the role of the social players

The national experiences and cases throughout the seminar reveal diversification in the forms of funding vocational training compared to past practices.

Although the traditional forms such as quasi-fiscal taxation and budgetary allocations continue, new alternatives have emerged. These include tax exemption systems, public funds collected from contributions by companies and employees and managed by tripartite entities. Other combinations include strategic alliances between various actors and agencies, which not only provide economic resources but also infrastructure and teaching materials. International cooperation also plays a leading role in several cases.

It was agreed that it is necessary to increase both public and private investments in vocational training. However, it was also mentioned that this effort should be accompanied by efficient, effective and transparent management of existing resources and funds.

Social dialogue was considered to be a useful tool for developing new schemes of funding and promoting investment in vocational training. Its role was also considered important in making training fund management transparent.

It was concluded that a combination of schemes and devices is necessary for addressing the needs of both the modern and traditional sectors, and the needs of employees in the formal and informal sectors, the unemployed and those in vulnerable conditions.

The concentration of public funding in vocational training programmes on initial training or re-training, and promotion of private investment in continuous and in-house training was demonstrated as a possible strategy.

Similarly, the incentive to set up effective and transparent mechanisms for regulating quality and effectiveness of training policies, as well as undertaking impact and cost-benefit analyses of the various alternatives, was considered an important recommendation.

Session 3: Trends in recognition and certification of labour competences: the role of training systems

It was noted both in the plenary sessions and working groups that competence certification was an important policy mechanism for addressing the skill recognition needs of both employers and employees.

Nevertheless, it is found that there are several approaches to the design of certification systems. They have in common the concern for better quality and achieving an effective involvement of employers and employees as guaranties of such quality.

The members of the plenary stressed the importance of certification as an element affecting the quality of the training process, in both training institutions and the workplace.

There was major interest expressed in developing pilot approaches in specific critical sectors, important for generating employment and where certification contributed to improved performance and more relevant training.

The countries have endeavoured to identify successful experiences at an international level. Detailed study of such experiences permits them to progress in defining and structuring their own certification models.

The participants emphasized the need for such models to respect principles such as equity, access, reliability and legitimacy, in order to develop transparent certification and quality control systems. Emphasis was given to the important role of the government in regulating certification systems rather than intervening in their execution.

Discussions also addressed the widespread possibilities for certification systems to include the informal economy and groups more prone to unemployment and social exclusion, and facilitating their integration in the framework of decent jobs.

It is of the utmost importance for certification systems to have funding mechanisms, if they are to eliminate many barriers to access and to enable the inclusion of large groups of workers in such processes.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SUB-REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS

TECHNICAL SESSION 1: Innovative policies and management reforms which promote the development of workforce knowledge and skills
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Sub-topic 1: Literacy, basic learning and training for everyone: Which education and training policies should governments and partners pursue to develop individuals' employability and core work skills?

BARBADOS, CANADA, JAMAICA, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO GROUP

The group found that the three questions were multifaceted. Before addressing the questions, the group confirmed that

“every citizen should be ensured equal access to, and completion of, a secondary education that will provide the literacy, numeracy, computer, core work, and other skills that individuals need for living and working in the knowledge society”

On the particular questions, the following answers were suggested:

- Education and training policies should be developed in equal partnership between government, employers, trade unions, training providers and other stakeholders.
- The social partners and the government should develop and maintain industry-led competency standards that are benchmarked nationally and internationally. Sector councils can facilitate this process.
- Government should lead policy reforms of post-secondary education and training in order to make lifelong learning and training effective and all-inclusive.

SOUTH AMERICAN GROUP

- Lifelong or occupational learning does not exist. What does exist is learning as a lifelong process
- It is necessary to eradicate illiteracy and ensure a basic education for everyone at the proper age. Therefore, it is not to be regarded as passive free learning but rather that it is necessary to have strategies for active free learning. All countries should strive for quality and pertinence in the eleven years of basic learning for everyone.
- Theoretically, basic and cross skills should be assured from basic learning, while specific skills are the responsibility of vocational training. Nevertheless, reality shows that vocational training has many people in its population – young and old alike - who do not dominate such basic and general competences. Currently, then, the vocational training systems and institutions must contribute to achieve such learning goals.

CENTRAL AMERICA, PANAMA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND MEXICO GROUP

- All learning must be directed towards the labour world.
- People do not have the basic competences for vocational training. Every worker must know how to read and write, communicate, dominate basic mathematics and handle new technologies.
- Integration of learning subsystems

- Vocational training institutions should be those which orient learning programmes for work
- Basic learning should be adapted towards a technical career
- Vocational training students must have basic fourth grade education
- Basic learning based on skills with a regional model for horizontal country-to-country mobilisation
- Learning re-engineering
- Lifelong learning to achieve individual and collective well-being
- Learning at the different levels must have alternative options in vocational training according to the potential of each region
- Learning must be lifelong and developed through labour competences
- Why learning? on what basis? what does the country need? to solve what? to determine the requirements.
- We must train non-mechanical individuals in order to reduce illiteracy, globalise culture-based learning, for lifelong learning and practice, to have full learning using as few technical tools as possible.
- Lifelong and vocational learning to combat occupational illiteracy
- To have minimum standards
- Each graduate must teach one citizen how to read and write
- Public and private institutions must contribute towards literacy
- Mechanisms for the government to concentrate its resources in basic learning
- Academic education must have technical options
- Youth guidance programme
- To promote technical learning stressing its vocational importance
- To consider the rural zones and provide minimum labour guidance
- To formulate regional learning policies
- In order to integrate learning systems for horizontal and regional mobility, this integration must be based on competences in written, oral and corporal communication; basic mathematical knowledge and which offers opportunity for technical side options

Sub-topic 2: How can learning and training programmes be made more responsive to rapidly changing economic and social needs?

BARBADOS, CANADA, JAMAICA, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO GROUP

- **Social partnership in education and training will ensure that policies and programmes are flexible and coherent, and that they are relevant to market and social needs.**
- There should be a formalized process, whereby training stakeholders review, monitor, and ensure the relevance and effectiveness of, the output of public and private training providers.

SOUTH AMERICAN GROUP

- The fundamental pillars of vocational training are quality, pertinence, flexibility and integrality. Moreover, it must be directed by the concepts of social integration and attention to diversity.
- In striving for further pertinence of training actions, a number of institutions represented have made great progress based on focusing attention on productive sectors and chains.
- Socio-productive realities are extremely heterogeneous, including within the same country. Vocational training, in addition to attending the more dynamic and modern sectors of the economy, must bear in mind the unstructured traditional sectors and the more vulnerable social groups. It is necessary to understand each reality and make the necessary methodological and curricular reformulations.
- In contexts of slow economic growth, vocational training policies should be integrated with policies to ensure minimum subsistence income. Without it, it may be hard for vocational training to contribute against social exclusion.
- It is necessary to address public vocational training policies to the people. Further coordination is therefore necessary from the different State organizations and institutions to

achieve a single integrated vocational training policy. On this matter, endeavours are being made in Argentina by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security to sign an agreement to set up an inter-ministerial area, which would become the “sole lookout” for training topics. The purpose of learning and training for everyone is to develop training institutional networks that match their experiences, knowledge and resources.

- The matching of training policies with economic and social change also requires, two complementary strategies: first, the development of vocational and qualification observatories; second, preparing flexible and modularised training routes based on identifying vocational profiles.

CENTRAL AMERICA, PANAMA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND MEXICO GROUP

- Further involvement in the productive system in the vocational training policies
- To integrate within the productive sector through twofold training
- Concerning the technological and economic changes the institutions must dictate policies towards organisational and technological upgrades and to include quality assurance systems to efficiently meet customer requirements: employers, employees and EAP.
- Human resources training must be based on labour competences
- To develop a national dialogue to set up different policies on various topics
- The boards of directors of vocational training institutions must be tripartite and that the ideas of the productive players prevail (employees and employers)

Sub-topic 3: Social dialogue on training: How can social dialogue strengthen the “education and training constituency” and the priority that society gives to skills development?

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- Social dialogue provides an opportunity to develop an integrated national development and training plan that addresses the needs and concerns all stakeholders.
- Social dialogue facilitates the establishment and use of a National Training Agency as a vehicle to promote skills development.

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- Participation of social players in training management reports major benefits to the relevant institutions and policies. Employers shall foresee and ensure that the requirements in the productive sector are met. Participation of employees shall ensure that the requirements of individuals are met. Experiences in this context are to be found in Argentina (Management Councils of tripartite management centres), in Brazil (Deliberative Council of Employee Support Fund, state and local employment committees), in Uruguay in the sphere of the Labour Ministry (National Employment Board) and in the Vocational Technical Training Council (School Advisory Councils), and in all training institutions in South America that consider the participation of these players.

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- Pleasant working environment to achieve a keener competitive edge.
- To integrate vocational training actions with other sectors to achieve student productivity
- Social dialogue tools with private companies for change in vocational training
- Regional agendas shall be drawn up on vocational training to upgrade institutions and obtain new technologies
- Various examples on participation:

–In El Salvador the largest car sales company has developed training by opening up apprenticeships for young people using the dual system, and has recently increased its participation such a programme.

–In Guatemala INTECAP was upgraded in its organisational, technical and quality assurance aspects. This permitted it to quickly improve the quality and pertinence of its supply. With the participation of the productive sector competence standards were defined and participated in preparing competence programmes and certification, as well as beginning the ISO 9000 certification process.

- In Honduras, INFOP is working jointly with other institutions to set up a process ranging from capacity building to product marketing (UDECO). Each institution together with the community contributes and plays a role in the process.

- In the Dominican Republic all sectors involved participate in a national Advisory Committee, the purpose of which is to achieve a national vocational training policy. Sector technical committees exist to detect requirements and supervise the quality of the graduates. Dual training is very successful and has graduated 4000 apprentices in the past five years.

- A negative factor is the change in senior executives in vocational training institutions – lack of continuity in training policies and the institutions must be outside party politics.

TECHNICAL SESSION 2: *Investment in training: the role of the social partners*

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Question 1. What are the most effective strategies to promote more investment in training by government and the social partners, based on successful experiences?

1.1. Successful experiences include: Jamaica's levy (3%) on employers wage bill. The employer shares 20-25% of the training costs with the employee for training provided above the entry-level standard of the worker. In Canada's Quebec province – i.e. not elsewhere in Canada - employers must spend 1% of their payroll on training their workers. If they do not spend 1%, they contribute the amount to a central fund. In Canada, trust funds have proven effective in raising resources for apprenticeship and trades training, especially when workers have no permanent relationship with the employer, e.g. in the construction industry. Other sources of investment in Canada include: regular unemployment insurance which provides apprentices wage replacement funds while they undergo training away from the work place; some Canadian employers also provide training to meet business requirements. In Barbados, a levy of 1% (½% employer, ½% employee) is imposed up to a maximum of B\$3100 per month. All education up to and including tertiary level is free. Government provides a training subsidy to trade unions and employers organizations. In Trinidad and Tobago, foreign investors contribute to specific training funds in the energy sector; the government provides matching funds (Dollar for Dollar Programme)

1.2 General strategies to promote and encourage investment in training include: development of national competency standards; apprenticeship programmes; dedicated training funds; tax rebates; grants; and revolving loan schemes.

Question 2. What should be the role of government, workers' and employers' organizations in investing in training? What policies or practices promote a greater involvement of all social partners?

2.1. Government assumes responsibility for legislation, and for creating an "enabling" environment that encourages investment by all parties in training. Government should also provide financial contributions for training. Employers' organizations should contribute financially and provide employees paid training leave to participate in training activities. Workers' organizations should negotiate collective agreements that provide for training.

2.2. Policies and practices that promote social partners' participation include: advocating the national socio-economic benefits of more investment in training; providing individuals incentives to invest in their own and their children's future; and establishing dedicated trust funds that are managed by a tripartite board. All stakeholders should be involved in developing a national training policy. The system should be managed on a tripartite basis.

Question 3. What policies and measures can be developed to ensure that investments in training address concerns relating to equity, quality and cost-effectiveness?

3.1. Equity: Special programmes and initiatives should be targeted at disadvantaged and marginalized groups of people in order to ensure them equal access to training. Quality of training should be promoted by developing industry-led standards and certification. Cost-effectiveness can be promoted by developing job-based training; co-operative training programmes; apprenticeship programmes; and by aligning training to labour market needs.

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- In contrast to past years when there were basically only two funding schemes: quasi-fiscal contributions for training institutions and budget allocations; today there are, in addition to the earlier schemes, multiple forms of funding. For example: tax exemption, strategic alliances between players, international cooperation agreements.
- The purpose of these different schemes is to meet training requirements of different groups and sectors. Some more effectively point to employees in the formal sector, others to informal workers or unemployed, others to vulnerable groups, etc.
- Although the increase in training investment is a goal in itself, resources should be managed from a systemic focus and through the participation of social players.
- Systematic training helps improve courses and thereby guarantees equally valid certifications on a national scale.
- The topic of funding is not only based on the increase in economic resources but also basically on the enhancement of the existing knowledge, infrastructure and economic resources.
- Management must be competent, efficient and transparent, so that the social dialogue becomes a fundamental resource.
- Social dialogue is also a strategic tool both to define new methods of funding and to encourage a training culture.
- Training should be understood as the whole process relating to identifying needs, defining supply, curricular design, development of teaching resources and impact assessments after the actual training.
- Training is the employee's right, for which reason different ways are being considered for them to maintain this right and not solely for a more competitive economy.

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- Collection mechanisms must be as effective as possible and give top quality and cover the beneficiaries
- Payroll contributions should bring benefits for the country
- The tripartite organisation should benefit training

To support national and regional cooperation projects

- To achieve further involvement of companies, as in the case of Dominican Republic and El Salvador which invested in on-site training (Dual System)
- To adopt selling strategies of specialised services
- To encourage beneficiaries of training to participate in the costs
- The institutions should be run and managed on a tripartite basis
- The funds raised are handled in specialised institutions on a tripartite basis
- To implement and/or reinforce social impact/cost-benefit assessment programmes, in which participation is tripartite
- To guarantee that the Executive Boards of the vocational training institutions set up a strategic plan in which mechanisms are ensured for resources to be used with social justice and administrative efficiency

- To urge governments to invest resources in vocational training
Independent and systematic assessments

<p>TECHNICAL SESSION 3: <i>Trends in skill recognition and certification the role of competency-based training frameworks</i></p>
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- What are the major difficulties faced by developing countries in improving skills recognition and qualifications systems?
 - Culture of acceptance of traditional academic qualifications
 - Lack of system to identify non-certified skills (prior learning)
 - Lack of resources (technical and financial)
 - National and Regional coordination and promulgation of qualification systems
 - Lack of proper nexus between academic education and vocational training systems
 - Inability of some of the social partners to fully participate in the process (particularly in reference to small and medium sized enterprises)
- How can recognition of skills gained informally be improved?
 - Public awareness and acceptance of the need for recognition of skills gained informally
 - Benchmarking against national and international standards
 - Evaluation and documentation of skills gained informally (by accreditation bodies)
 - Link to additional compensation
 - Articulation and equivalency with formal system
- What is the role of the social partners in improving skills recognition and NQFs?
 - Cooperation in identifying issues and in developing and implementing systems
 - Active participation and resource allocation (including financial)
 - Take responsibility for dissemination of information to stakeholders
 - Expand to include all communities of interest (NGOs etc.)
- How can the international agencies best assist countries to improve skills recognition?
 - By responding to requests from individual countries
 - By identifying benchmarks and best practices
 - By identifying funding
 - By sharing training and knowledge
 - By conducting research and surveys
 - By creating framework for international portability and recognition

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- Certification is inevitable. Sooner or later, the workers and employers themselves will ask for certification.
- There are two meanings to 'competencies'. On the one hand, qualifications to proceed with further studies, and on the other, skills for the performance of an occupation or a given job.
- Difficulties in establishing which abilities are to be certified.
- Conflicts that the issue arouses among teachers and trainers as a group.
- Resistance of trade unions to the issue of competencies, for fear of loss of power or occupational identity.
- Difficulty of the social actors to decide their level of participation in the subject. Need for the State to act as facilitator of agreements among private agents, without monopolising the issue or shedding its responsibility for guaranteeing equity to the system.

- Costs of certification processes. It is out of the question that workers should bear them in Latin American economic realities. If employers assume the responsibility, they will no doubt do so in proportion to the impact certification may have on their productivity.
- Potentially double exclusion arises from the above: workers cannot afford certification costs, and employers will only pay for them selectively.
- The setting of standards poses another difficulty. Standards should be established according to realistic criteria and not by norms of excellence.
- Certification systems should be flexible, with a safety net for workers unable to reach the standards required.
- There is not much social dialogue on the issue.
- It has low social visibility.
- As training requirements rise, the certifications issue may serve to legitimise that excessive demand for qualifications.
- Regarding international organisations, their collaboration with Latin American countries in building systems for the certification of competencies or accreditation of abilities, is basically a matter of financing and transfer of knowledge. Supporting the actors that have to take part in this issue and promoting their bargaining ability.
- It will also be very useful to us if, apart from letting us know about their successes, our friends should tell us about their difficulties and bad experiences. Our impoverished countries cannot afford to finance any more failures.

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Which are the greatest difficulties faced by countries?

- An empirical approach to vocational training.
- Lack of national regulations in vocational training.
- Negligence of human capital in recognising qualifications acquired through practical work experience.
- Prevalence of the academic approach in formal systems (diplomas).
- Proliferation of isolated training programmes.
- Lack of information about the advantages of vocational training.
- Low educational level of societies of the region, which fail to recognise the importance of vocational training.
- Resistance of the population to accept training.
- Lack of a positive mental attitude concerning new forms of training.
- Education for practical work tends to be seen as second rate, despite the fact that it often leads to higher incomes.
- Difficulties in labour relations. This affects motivation to get training (construction industry). No social security is provided in this sector or others.
- Shortcomings of formal education. Lack of integration and coordination in educational system.

Greater recognition of informally acquired skills and competencies.

- Development of systems that include standardisation and certification.
- Devising information programmes about the advantages of certification.
- Informal education systems are not contributing to vocational training.
- Employers should rely on certification systems, which promote the mobility of workers.

What is the role of the social partners in improving certification?

- Getting participants involved along the whole training process, up to and including certification.
- Disseminating the advantages of certification.

In which way may international organisations help?

- Supporting the process of adopting certification, in line with the individuality of each country.
- Supporting the dissemination of experiences in the recognition of occupational competencies.
- Promoting the advantages of achieving occupational standards of regional application.
- Providing resources for training of the social actors involved.

**Inter-American Tripartite Seminar on Training, Productivity and
Decent Work**

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 15 – 17 May 2002

AGENDA

Wednesday, 15 May

- 0800 - 0900** Registration
- 0900 - 0930** ***Inaugural session***
 Alberto Borges de Araujo, Representative of the Industrial National Confederation/SENAI
 Pedro Daniel Weinberg, Director Cinterfor/OIT on behalf of the ILO Regional Director a.i. for the Americas, Agustín Muñoz.
 Nassim Mehedff, National Secretary of Public Policies of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Brazil.
- 0930 - 1000** Break
- 1000 – 1030** ***Introductory session: ILO's recent activities on skill development and the preparation for the new Human Resources Development Recommendation***
 Chairperson: Nassim Mehedff, National Secretary of Public Policies of Employment, Brazil
 Introduced by: Pekka Aro, Director IFP/Skills, ILO/Geneva
 Trevor Riordan, IFP/Skills
- 1030 - 1230** ***Technical session 1: Innovative policies and management reforms which promote the development of workforce knowledge and skills***
 Panel Chairperson: Oliver Flax, National Training Agency, Trinidad & Tobago.
 Introduced by: Torkel Alfthan, IFP/Skills
 P. D. Weinberg, CINTERFOR/ILO
 Panel members: Alejandro Salinas, SENCE, Chile
 Carlos Aquino, INFOTEP, Dominican Republic
 Sebastián Lopes Neto, CUT, Brazil
 Ricardo Castillo, INTECAP, Guatemala
 Questions and comments
- 1230 – 1400** Lunch
- 1400 - 1530** ***Working groups -Technical Session 1***
 (3 sub-regional working groups)
- 1530 - 1600** Break
- 1600 – 1700** ***Working groups - Technical session 1***
 (Continued)

Thursday, 16 May

- 0900 - 1000** Presentations of working groups and discussion
- 1000 - 1015** Break

1015 - 1230 **Technical session 2: Investment in training: the role of social partners**
Chairperson: José Ramírez Gamero, CTM, México
Introduced by: Regina Galhardi IFP/Skills
Jaime Ramírez, ILO/Cinterfor Consultant
Panel Members: Jorge Licetti, SENATI, Peru
Alejandro Waisglas, UOCRA, Argentina
Gay Stinson, Ministry of Labour, Canada
Juan Alejandro Angel, ANDI, Colombia

Questions and comments.

1230 - 1400 Lunch

1400 - 1530 **Working groups - technical session 2:**
(3 sub-regional working groups)

1530 – 1600 Break

1600 – 1630 **Working groups Technical session 2**
(Continued)

1630 - 1700 Presentations of the working groups and discussion

Friday, 17 May

0900 - 1030 **Technical Session 3: Trends in skill recognition and certification: the role of competency-based training frameworks**

Panel Chairperson: Carlos Urenda, Confederación de la Producción y del Comercio, Chile

Introduced by: Trevor Riordan, IFP/Skills
George Gamerding, ILO/CAMAT VT Specialist.
Fernando Vargas, ILO/Cinterfor Consultant

Panel members: Robert Gregory, HEART/NTA, Jamaica
José Pedro Cabarrus, INTECAP, Guatemala
Doreen Deane, Barbados Workers' Union, Barbados
Elizabeth Cornejo, Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción Social, Perú

1030 - 1100 Break

1100 - 1230 **Working groups Technical session 3**
(3 sub-regional working groups)

1230 - 1300 Presentations of the working groups and discussion

1300 - 1400 Lunch

1400 - 1530 Discussion of main findings (sub-regional group meetings)

1530 - 1600 Break

1600 - 1630 **Synthesis and presentation of main findings from the Technical Sessions**

Panel Chairperson: Pekka Aro, Director, IFP/Skills

Panel Members: Chairpersons of the three technical sessions

1630 - 1700 **Closing session**

Inter-American Tripartite Seminar on Training, Productivity and Decent Work

Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, 15 – 17 Mayo, 2002

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