
3. POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN RESPONSE TO IMPEDIMENTS TO ATTAINING DECENT WORK

3.1 THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

In the previous sections of this study we looked at a number of problems that constitute challenges for public policies:

- 1) *To extend educational coverage to contexts of poverty without due regard for quality leads to a lack of labour skills among young people who go through the educational system.*

The situation of young people in Latin America gives cause for serious concern. They make up a high proportion of the population, they are more numerous in poor households than in households that are not poor, they have limited access to the labour market, and their unemployment rates are more than twice the rates for the total active population. It is true that today they tend to stay longer in the educational system than in the past, but for many of them this does not guarantee mastery of the skills needed for employability or ensure a competitive place in the queue of people seeking their first job. This situation is particularly serious among young people from households below the poverty line since these individuals receive poor quality education, have low activity rates, suffer high unemployment and can easily fall into delinquency.

Since the 1990s, the labour market has been demanding skills that can only be acquired through long years of schooling and also social skills that enable a worker to perform in labour contexts that are relatively complex and involve common technologies. Since there are numerous young people seeking jobs, access to formal employment is restricted to those who have been able to complete a sufficient number of years of schooling and obtain at least a secondary education certificate and preferably higher education qualifications. The vast majority of young people are not in this situation, obviously, so their only options are either unemployment or precarious jobs in the informal sector.

In the countries we are considering (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru) most people in the age group in question receive secondary education. As to the educational level of the labour force, we find that in three of the countries the average number of years of study among workers is ten, but in one country, Brazil, it is only about seven. There are also big differences between educational levels in rural areas on the one hand and urban areas on the other. To make matters worse, the actual performance of the educational system is problematic since dropout and repetition rates are high. Another ominous sign is that students from all countries in the region fare poorly on international educational quality tests (PISA). The basic and general training system for the labour force as a whole and for young people entering the labour market in particular, is open to serious criticism as it does not provide the majority of young people with mastery of the basic skills they need to be able to enter the specific training necessary to perform in the labour market in the modern world, or to subsequently change their jobs or be trained on a lifelong basis.

The conclusion we can draw from this scenario is that if educational coverage among populations living in poverty is expanded but the quality of that education is not improved, young people will graduate from the educational system without acquiring labour competencies.

The challenge is to improve the quality of education while at the same time reducing dropout rates and making the educational system more efficient. The educational reforms that were implemented in the past failed to achieve this.

- 2) *There is not enough coordination between formal education and vocational training or between training and enterprises.*

A second problem is that the educational system as a whole is relatively isolated from enterprises in the economy, and to make matters worse there is little coordination between formal education and vocational training or between training and enterprises. This is the case even with regard to technical education, which from the very beginning was conceived of as training for work. The predominant role of ministries of education and the institutional dynamic itself tends to promote the development of bureaucracies in education, and this does not favour linkages between education and enterprises. Vocational training institutions in general, and especially the national vocational training institutions that were set up under tripar-

tite management systems and geared to training workers in specific occupations to meet the needs of emerging industrialization, find it difficult to keep up to date or respond to the demands of technological change and the new dynamic of global markets. However, there have been some positive initiatives that have attempted to respond to the challenge of constructing financing and evaluation policies that would tend to bring the various modes and actors in training together. Another complication is that there is a private training offer from schools and NGOs that reaches a large part of the population. All in all, there are serious doubts about how relevant the content of formal and informal training is when it comes to imparting the skills required in the labour market of today and of the future.

The transformation that took place in the world economy in the 1990s, especially the phenomenon of globalization which means countries now have to compete internationally and technological progress which has fuelled a new dynamic in information and communications, make it essential to change the educational offer. These changes should be geared to training in skills to make people more employable and to respond to the needs of enterprises. To achieve this, traditional secondary education and a brand of vocational training that is focalised on relatively rigid objectives will have to evolve into a more flexible kind of training. A big obstacle here is that, in the region, training has to respond to a productive sector that is segmented into large and small enterprises in the formal economy, and also to an informal sector which employs about half the population.

The challenge is to structure financing and evaluation policies that will tend to coverage between the different modes and actors. This means there will have to continuity on policies and that evaluation should feedback initiatives in training organizations.

- 3) *The fact that the economies of the different countries are very heterogeneous and also that there is great heterogeneity within each country, raises serious doubts about how effective training and employment policies designed for formal enterprises and registered employment can be. The fact that informal employment is on such a vast scale constitutes a problem for traditional vocational training and limits the extent to which labour legislation can be applied.*

In the countries we are analysing a sizeable proportion of the population work in unregistered employment. Depending on the country, this amounts to between a third and more than half of the economically active

urban population. Women, youth, the poor and people with lower educational levels are over-represented in this informal sector. However, when we examine the variety and scope of training programmes available we find that training for employment in the formal sector predominates, and that the users of training, as a rule, do not come from this large population working in the informal economy.

The danger here is that the heterogeneous nature of the economy might come to be replicated in the training system and this would accentuate rather than reduce the inequality that is so typical of societies in Latin America. In addition there is the sheer scale of the unregistered economy, and thus there are very serious obstacles to creating quality employment and to allowing training to function effectively as a mechanism to promote integration among the population as a whole.

- 4) *The financing and updating of training policies is hampered by the fact that policies change with each successive government that comes to power, and by difficulties in maintaining consistency in training activity and evaluating outcomes in the middle and long term.*

One problem is that there is tension between the need for long term policies and the need to seek immediate solutions, and this makes for inconsistency in the system and leads to programmes being implemented or abruptly terminated without these decisions being sufficiently grounded in valid evaluation processes. Examples of this are PLANFOR and youth projects that were discontinued. A second problem is to overcome resistance to change and institutional renovation in training organizations that come under ministries of education or labour, and to bring them into a process of self-evaluation and cooperation with public policies.

TABLE B: CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAINING Problems and challenges the four countries share, and programmes and policies implemented

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES	ARGENTINA	BRAZIL	CHILE	PERU	PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES IMPLEMENTED
Coverage and quality of formal education	Wide, consolidated coverage; inequality in outcomes; inequality in dropout and repetition rates depending on strata and regions. Problem of national coherence of the educational system and need to improve quality.	Recent expansion of education coverage; rural – urban dropout differential. Need to gauge and improve quality.	Wide, consolidated coverage but segmentation in outcomes. Need to improve quality and reduce segmentation.	Wide coverage; dropout rate unequal by strata. Poor quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Secondary Education Examination (Brazil). Recovery of drop outs: Chile Califica (Chile). Education for New Industry (Brazil).
Little coordination between formal education, vocational training and the world of enterprises	Little development in VT. Wide but uncoordinated offer of courses. Technical education recovering but still with little coordination with the productive sector.	Good coordination between training and enterprises in S System (SENAI, SENAC, etc.). Weak coordination with rest of the educational system.	Little coordination between formal education and VT. Vocational training (SENCE) sub-contracted and wide participation by enterprises.	Little coordination in formal education. In vocational training, renovation in SENATI; CEOs with little coordination, but reform in CETPROs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAPLAB (Peru). SENATI: Evaluation (Peru). Education for New Industry (Brazil). SENAI: Evaluations (Brazil). Chile Califica (Chile). Primer Paso (Argentina). UOCRA Foundation (Argentina).
Heterogeneity in the economy (informality)	Few programmes specifically for the informal sector: closure of programmes for vulnerable young people aimed at insertion in formal employment (Proyecto Joven).	The SENAI is focalised on the formal sector. Scant training offer for the informal sector.	This is the country with the lowest proportion of urban informality. VT programmes centred on access to employment in the formal sector.	The country with the highest proportion of informal work; little training for this sector; but there are programmes to remedy this (CAPLAB).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAPLAB (Peru).
Few evaluations, and changes in policies and programmes	Changes in programmes (Proyecto Joven and Reforma Educativa) are not based on relevant evaluations.	Important evaluations have been made (PLANFOR) but the policies implemented do not take account of them. The SENAI makes periodic evaluations to modify its plans.	Adequate evaluations of problems, but insufficient accumulation of knowledge about the relation between processes and outcomes.	Global evaluation of education but with no apparent impact on policies. The SENATI has made evaluations and modified its policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAPLAB (Peru). SENATI (Peru). SENAI (Brazil). Labour Competency Certification Programme (Argentina).

3.2 POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO RESPOND TO THESE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Improved quality and quantity in training and coordination with enterprises

There have been a number of innovative initiatives recently to tackle the first two problems outlined in the previous paragraph. In some cases these involved sweeping institutional change, and in others the implementation of programmes that were individual and relatively specific.

In almost all the countries analysed, programmes are under way to attempt to remedy the shortcomings in the basic and general training of people who dropout early from formal education, and to train the new generations on solid foundations in general education and suitable specific training that responds to the needs of the productive apparatus, and may also enable workers who have been made redundant to reinsert into the labour market.

In general, these programmes are aimed at implementing a flexible education offer organized into modules. That have content and skills from ordinary education but are offered in an updated way, in a flexible-attendance format, and organized in time periods that are shorter than in traditional primary and secondary teaching. They provide kinds of support that do not feature in ordinary education, like tutors and scholarships. The institutions offering these services are mostly schools that come under the Ministry of Education, but in some cases, like in Chile, other educational agencies are sub-contracted. An important aspect of these programmes in the sphere of secondary education is evaluation and accreditation. There are ad hoc tests, but there is a negative aspect: these assessments do not provide any guarantee that the certificates obtained are backed by the necessary skills or even that they can be collated with similar levels in formal education. The programmes vary: some are more centred on completion and seek to help young people remain in the educational system and finish their studies, while others focus more on levelling, and are geared to producing as many workers as possible who have the skills and qualifications necessary to work in the formal sector (see Box 2: Chile Califica, Chile).

There is another kind of programme geared to assisting young people who are seeking work, connecting them with enterprises (usually of small

and medium size), and providing counselling about labour market entry. In the countries we are analysing, these programmes are currently in operation in Argentina, Brazil and Chile (see Box 3: Primer Paso, Argentina).

One further initiative to mention is the “Education for New Industry” programme in Brazil, which was outlined in the previous chapter. The aim of this programme is to raise the educational and skills levels of the labour force with a holistic, integrated training system geared to widening the offer of good quality basic education, improving coordination with technical secondary education and extending vocational training to new production poles (see Box 5: Education for New Industry, Brazil).

In both these initiatives, the Chilean and the Brazilian, the aim is to position these programmes in national vocational training organizations like the SENCE and the SENAI to take advantage of their experience and the institutional human resources and physical infrastructure available in these organizations. To a certain extent this limits the impact the new programmes can have in the educational system as a whole as this reaches the bulk of young people, but there is the advantage that the participation of entrepreneurs is institutionalised in these national organizations, so there is better coordination with the demands of enterprises. In addition, coordination between secondary technical education and vocational training will be facilitated by their both belonging to the same organization. What is not clear is whether the users will be the same. The population groups trained in general education will very probably be different from those that training services cater to, so specific worker training is not taken into account in institutional coordination. However, the proposal includes ways to impart skills not acquired previously, so it would be very important to have follow-up studies on trainees so as to evaluate the coherence of training through outcomes in terms of the labour market entry of the users. Two national VTIs, the SENAI and the SENATI, have carried out evaluations based on the follow-up of trainees, in the latter case as part of its dual learning programme, and the SENCE in Chile has also carried out evaluations of the impact of the Chile Joven programme (see Box 6: SENAI External Evaluation Programme, Brazil; and Box 7: Evaluation of Ex-trainees of the SENATI Dual Programme, Peru).

Reforms to curricula and the organization of cycles have been implemented in educational systems. These changes meant prolonging basic education, delaying specialisation, and decentralising the financial and peda-

gogic management of schools to the local level. As yet there have not been any comprehensive evaluations that capture the successes and failures of these initiatives, but there seems to be agreement that the Chilean experience was more successful, and in fact in Argentina not only was the programme impossible to implement in the whole country but it has since been reversed. Moreover, the outcomes of the PISA evaluations mentioned above ought to be borne in mind so as not to jump to over-optimistic conclusions. The other change aimed at narrowing the gap between training and the demand from enterprises has been to update technical education in the formal system. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this initiative but at least technical education is being restored to a significant role in education for work.

The national VTIs have been criticized for failing to adequately adapt to the new demands and for being bureaucratically top-heavy, and policies that involve financing the demand for courses instead of the offer by vocational training institutions have been introduced. In most of the countries this got no further than good intentions, but in Chile it was actually implemented and the SENCE was set up and the INACAP privatised. The SENCE administers the FONCAP and sub-contracts public and private training institutions to execute the course components of the various programmes. The largest programme, with 850,000 workers trained in 2002, is the in plant training enterprise training programme. In the other national VTIs in the region, reforms were only partial because although some reform programmes were implemented, the previous management tended to remain in control of these activities and of the budgets.

There is an interesting initiative currently under way in several countries to make training more relevant to employment: the labour competency certification programme. This involves defining the most important skills in various employment profiles in each sector and branch; a process that is carried out by a tripartite team made up of entrepreneurs and union and state representatives. Workers are then trained in these skills and their competency is certified. To supplement this, new curricula are produced and the trainers are trained. These programmes only appeared recently and they only reach a small proportion of workers, but they are still in operation and it will be interesting to see evaluations of the outcomes they produce (see Box 8: Labour Competency Certification Programme, Argentina).

Heterogeneity in the economy and training for all

Training for work is clearly more oriented to the formal sector of the economy in terms of funding and also in terms of numbers of vocational training courses and users. People with higher educational levels are more likely to receive further training, but some programmes for micro-enterprises and for young people at risk of exclusion have been implemented. In programmes to assist micro-enterprises, training is seen as just one out of a range of inputs and not the most important, as priority is given to providing credit and assistance in the area of management. This complicates the implementation of wide-ranging coherent training policies in the different countries (Gallart, 2003b). In programmes for young people that follow the Chile Joven model the beneficiaries are from disadvantaged groups, but in spite of this the aim of the programme is to make them employable in low-skilled jobs in the formal sector. The work experience they are given is in formal enterprises, but it is not known how long they will retain this employment.

Some years ago, a review of training programmes for the informal sector in Latin America³⁰ showed there were various kinds of interventions in progress that had been initiated by governments and were supported by international credit organizations, national VTIs and civil society organizations, but it emerged that training as such was a minor component in these programmes and sometimes it was almost forgotten because the urgent and most important needs were for credit, consultancy service in how to manage undertakings, marketing, etc. It also emerged that the main focus was to help the micro-enterprise to survive rather than to foster the well-being or social integration of its workers.

There are a number of dilemmas in this scenario:

- *Should initiatives be geared to the micro-enterprise itself and its capacity to grow and accumulate, or should the main focus be the worker and his or her right to decent work?* There is a tension that is seldom acknowledged between benefiting the micro-enterprise and fostering good working conditions for its employees.

30 Gallart, María Antonia. *Habilidades y competencias para el sector informal en América Latina: una revisión de la literatura sobre programas y metodologías de formación*. Montevideo: Inter-American Technical Bulletin on Vocational Training, ILO/Cinterfor, No. 155, 2003. pp. 33-75.

- *On the one hand there is the goal of increased productivity, as judged by the market, and consequently there is an emphasis on reducing costs and selling products and services at a good price, and this often means evading taxes or exploiting staff. On the other hand there are state social assistance policies for the most unprotected sectors of society, which can involve subsidising activities that are non-profit making. The danger in the latter case is that the activity will only last as long as there is funding, and when this comes to an end, as has happened with many programmes, the workers are made redundant.*
- *One option is to train people to work in the informal sector, and the other is to provide instruments that will enable them to leave that sector and obtain a job in the formal economy. Programmes of the Chile Joven type are for young people who are unemployed or in precarious employment, and the aim is to train them so they can insert into semi-skilled occupations in enterprises in the formal sector. There are difficulties with this approach stemming from the trainees' educational deficiencies and lack of social capital, which make prolonged insertion in registered employment problematic, and the situation is further complicated because vacancies in registered employment become saturated and there is competition for jobs from people with better qualifications.*
- *One alternative is to give priority to young people completing their secondary studies in formal education, which would improve their possibilities of insertion in registered employment, and the other alternative is to train these people directly for the work that is available in the informal sector. Evaluations of young people's programmes for the levelling of studies have detected this problem: if an individual obtains employment he or she stops studying and falls into the vicious circle of precarious employment in any case.*

In various countries a distinction is made between programmes to improve young people's labour market entry and programmes geared to levelling in education, which focus on obtaining qualifications and educational skills and subsequently supplementing these with vocational training to open the door to employment in the informal economy and eventually evolve to greater integration into the productive process.

There are two typical problems with this approach. One is that the training organizations in existence at the moment, VTIs, technical schools,

training centres, etc., find it difficult to handle these kinds of users (young people who are deficient in skills like discipline or punctuality, etc.) and are not geared to providing the kinds of skills needed for the self-employed mode of labour market entry. The second obstacle is that curricula in VTIs are quite structured and are based on codified knowledge derived from an analysis of occupations in the formal economy. This means that the tacit knowledge that people with experience in the informal sector have, that is to say being able to manage in a competitive and unstable world with restricted access to tools, inputs and markets, is not taken into account. To improve labour market entry and open the way for upward mobility and a better connection with the integrated economy, it is essential to take this learning from experience as a starting point and build on it, and this demands not only changes to curricula but changes in the training style of instructors.

Something along these lines has been tried in the region: the 1997-2006 Labour Training Programme of the Centre for Labour Training and Development Services (CAPLAB) in Peru³¹ (see Box 1: CAPLAB, Peru).

The changing policies of successive governments and the difficulty of linking up interventions and evaluating outcomes in the middle and long term

There have been two important attempts to establish continuity in the policies implemented. The first was to set up national funds to finance training, which replaced the previous system of specific purpose taxes or closed budgets by institution (e.g. FONCAP and FAT). This change was expected to enable programmes to have continuity and to be relevant beyond sectoral interests. The second mechanism was allocating funds by programmes, and systematically analysing these programmes to give them continuity if necessary so as to be able to terminate activities that were no longer of benefit to their target populations. Both these mechanisms have been tried, but our survey of experiences shows they were not very effective tools to ensure the continuity of programmes or to make it possible to distinguish those that

31 Centre for Labour Training and Development Services – CAPLAB. Report on Outcomes and Effects of the 1997-2006 Labour Training Programme.

were worth continuing from those that were not. From reading these evaluation reports and checking them against measures that were actually taken to extend or to terminate certain programmes one gets the impression that these decisions have more to do with political changes in state administration and/or the availability to secure finance within the programmes themselves or from international organizations than with any in-depth evaluation of the possibilities and shortcomings of the programmes.

3.3 PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE POLICIES IMPLEMENTED AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

Reforms in training systems and programmes for specific populations

From our analysis of the four countries we can conclude that radical reforms in education tend to be carried through when the different levels of the state all pull together in the same direction and when the sectors of civil society that support the reforms have sufficient power. If these conditions do not prevail, decentralisation leads to the fragmentation of educational systems or to a reaction that neutralises the effort to change. This is what happened when education reform was attempted in Argentina. In democratic processes in heterogeneous and compartmentalised societies the different levels of application must be taken account of when change is implemented, and in the sphere of education these are the national and provincial levels and schools, both private and public. Without a basic consensus in favour and the necessary finance, the reforms can have no future. On the other hand, expanding enrolments and implementing reforms without evaluating the learning outcomes they produce runs the risk of over-emphasising educational credentials and thus devaluing these credentials without improving real educational results. Therefore it is necessary to implement evaluation mechanisms that can feed back into the educational system and be used to improve its quality (see Box 9, National Secondary Education Examination, Brazil). The large national vocational training institutions (VTIs) can benefit from comprehensive, systematic evaluations based on outcomes in terms of the labour market entry of their trainees (see Box 6: SENAI External Evaluation Programme, Brazil).

We have outlined various programmes as examples of responses to some of the problems that have emerged. Some of these programmes are geared to the informal sector of the economy (CAPLAB) and others are aimed at young people or are more comprehensive and approach the problem on many levels (Chile Califica, Education for New Industry, Brazil). These are all in their early stages and are relatively limited in scope, but if they adhere to certain basic principles they may contain the seeds of valid and effective responses.

Some **characteristics that enable programmes to function well** and eventually produce positive outcomes are as follows:

- That ministries of education should play an active role in promoting continuity in formal education and making these structures flexible enough to accept change.
- That training should be tailored to the real requirements of the enterprises involved.
- That the Ministry of Labour should encourage and help guide the projects.
- That programmes should not be isolated but should provide mutual support for each other and be based in some organization that has continuity.
- That implementation should be gradual so that the programme can take advantage of the experience acquired to make changes to orientations.

As to content and activities, the wide range of subjects tackled and the varied kinds of intervention seem to be responses to a variety of different challenges, but in quantitative terms these initiatives are on a small scale considering that the target population is so vast. In addition, the evaluations are rather specific and short term and do not provide a basis for making comparisons with other programmes so as to be able to choose the most suitable. Like with many initiatives, lack of continuity in policies, and limitations on the evaluations that decisions about changing or closing programmes are based on, constitute serious obstacles to success.

Two recent programmes outlined here are explicitly geared to the coordination between education that makes it possible to acquire basic skills and qualifications on the one hand, and labour training that includes state of the art technologies and is coordinated with the demand from enterprises on

the other. These are Chile Califica and Education for New Industry (Brazil). These are both worthy initiatives, but they still have two weaknesses that ought to be remedied. The first is the question of access: both of these programmes cater to only a minority in the population, although at least they are making a start and that is very important in itself. The other weakness is the question of coherence and continuity in policies. Unless the interested ministries (labour and education) are actively involved, and unless the programmes and evaluations can continue to operate in spite of changes of government, it is difficult to make any significant impact on the population's levels of labour skills. In Brazil the PLANFOR scheme was virtually abandoned when a new government came to power and, quite apart from the actual limitations of the programme itself, this made it difficult to correct or improve a policy in which a lot of money had been invested and which had nation-wide scope. The Education for New Industry programme, on the other hand, is basically focalised on workers in industry and their environment, so it does not reach the great mass of workers in the informal economy. These observations are not intended to belittle these programmes, merely to highlight the problems that still have to be tackled by educational organizations, by enterprises and by governments.

Coordination between enterprises and training

In this area we can draw some general conclusions about which there is relative consensus in the sphere of research. Apart from these, there are also areas in which we should act on the basis of some instructive antecedents.

These conclusions are as follows:

- That non-specific vocational training has to be subsidised by the state.
- There are some formal education and vocational training institutions that provide reasonable coverage of training needs from the perspective of the labour market but not from the point of view of critical target populations.
- Training institutions cater mainly to the formal sector of the economy and their services are mainly used by medium and large enterprises in that sector.

- The institutional network that provides training is not clearly defined, and there is little control of the quality or relevance of the training beyond the prestige of some well-regarded VTIs.

The broad areas in which action has to be taken are as follows:

- To evaluate the quality of the general skills imparted in secondary education and vocational skills in vocational training so as to avoid the harmful effect of qualifications in the labour market becoming devalued, and to promote the employability of the bulk of the population.
- To bring in entrepreneurs' organizations to play a key role in evaluating and selecting the courses to be implemented but to make sure that large enterprises are not over-represented, or else vocational training would be turned into an option just for the elite.

Interesting precedents in this area are as follows:

- External examinations that are voluntary and free of charge to establish the quality of educational credentials, such as the National Secondary Education Examination (ENEM) in Brazil.
- Follow-up on trainees who complete vocational training courses, to evaluate their performance in the labour market, such as the SENAI External Evaluation Programme or the SENATI Dual Learning Programme evaluations.
- The labour competency certification programmes that are supported by employers' associations, unions and education authorities, which are responsible for monitoring validity and current relevance in the labour market.

Training for vulnerable sectors and micro-enterprises

An analysis of the data on unregistered employment in the region clearly shows that workers in the informal economy have lower levels of education and are in badly paid, precarious employment. The programmes that cater to this population on the Chile Joven model and the PLANFOR consist of short training courses for semi-skilled occupations, and have very few inputs for remedial work on the basic skills of reading, writing and applied arithmetic. Evaluations of the PLANFOR show that it brought about

only a slight improvement in labour market entry (Leite, 2007, p. 97), although people recognised that self-esteem, family and social relations and work performance did improve. It was not possible to make wider or more long-term comparative analyses because the funds from the FAT were cut back and projects for young people in various other countries were discontinued. If continuity had been maintained on this programme, it would probably have been possible, as time went by, to correct its flaws in the areas of training content and approach to the two dimensions of the target population: the users themselves and the enterprises providing employment.

There have been few public policies to tackle the informal sector as a whole, taking account of its sheer vastness. What there have been are individual programmes of greater or lesser scope and in which training has not had great weight. If we focus on the integrated training of people currently in the informal economy it is hard to distinguish between the most favoured sectors, people with high levels of education who do unregistered profit-making work and who can obtain training without any problem, and groups that are more numerous of people whose main or only labour option is to work in precarious employment in the informal sector. Within this sector we should also make a distinction between entrepreneurs who may be able to evolve and formalise their undertakings, and individuals, mainly young people and women with low levels of education and almost no access whatsoever to working capital, who drift from one precarious job to another. Programmes designed to raise the educational levels and social capital of people in the latter group are welcome, and so are initiatives that focalise on viable micro-enterprises that provide stable labour market entry. It should also be noted that initiatives like the CAPLAB are worth bearing in mind and evaluating with a view to applying them in other contexts as they have a holistic approach to the problem, their target populations are young people at risk of unemployment or of slipping into informal work, and they take advantage of institutional resources that are already available in the community (the CEOs).