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Technical Intervention Area Summary Notes: TIA-2

RURAL SKILLS TRAINING INTERVENTIONS TO COMBAT WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR INCLUDING TRAFFICKING

Precursor

Many agencies that address trafficking do so by offering vocational training to target groups, as part of a broader package of services. However, the effectiveness of such services varies, and vocational training offered by both public sector and NGO-based vocational training centres no longer forms a guarantee or even a likelihood for a job, and often has little impact on the economic situation of the trainees. The constraints to prospective trainees accessing vocational training are as follows: (i) general lack of training providers; (ii) inappropriate skills training programmes; (iii) the organization of the training.

Generally, the lack of wage jobs in rural areas would make skills training for self-employment (rather than vocational training for wage-employment) the best option for income-generation. Given that trafficking in children and women mainly occurs from rural and relatively underdeveloped areas, this paper focuses on 'rural' skills training, and should be read in conjunction with other TIA-papers, in particular the one on micro-finance services (TIA-3).

Rural skills training services may be targeted at children older than 14 years of age, and parents whose children are at risk of being trafficked. The suggestions below should not be seen as 'blue-prints' but should be interpreted in specific local contexts as there is no 'one-best' solution.

1 TYPES OF SKILLS TRAINING

Skills training can be categorized in: (1.0) vocational training for wage-employment – often centre-based; (1.1) skills training for self-employment (livelihood activities and micro-enterprises) – often in rural areas; (1.2) traditional apprenticeship programmes; and, (1.3) product based skills development interventions. Given the above-mentioned constraints of vocational training for wage-employment, the paper focuses mainly on the other three categories.

1.1 Skills training for self-employment (in livelihood activities and micro-enterprises)

In the rural areas, and especially those that are resource-poor and have little potential for farming, the scope for skills training to create local employment is inherently limited. In fact, the most common way for government organizations and especially NGOs interested to improve the living and working situation of the rural poor is to promote livelihood activities, and/or micro-enterprises.

- Rural skills training needs to have a clearly defined objective and strategy, should be directly related to the target group to be served and should state the conditions for the use of the skills to be transferred.

- Few organizations involved in the promotion of livelihood activities have integrated skills training into their interventions. However, even if the level of skills would be low, there is great need to take the technical side of livelihood activities into consideration. The beneficiaries need to be oriented about the need for relevant technologies, the selection of the right equipment and minimum standards of product quality as demanded in the market.
- There is a crucial need for the introduction of non-traditional livelihood activities¹ through technical demonstrations, specific skills instructions, technological information, etc.
- For simple livelihood activities (not skills-intensive trades), using a demonstrative format for training is advantageous in that it is entirely flexible, based on the needs of a particular group of participants, is usually given in a practical and participatory manner, and is of low cost.
- Pre-credit orientation, demonstration of technologies/production techniques, short training courses, business counseling, and marketing assistance are all activities that could be conducted to complement the provision of small amounts of working and investment capital.
- Community based training is a prime example of outreach training for self-employment. It revolves around the identification of employment opportunities in a participatory manner prior to conducting any training.
- Promotion of livelihood activities is probably the best way to increase the incomes of households whose children are at risk of trafficking as they can provide additional income to parents that can help to keep their children in school.

1.2 Traditional Apprenticeship Training (TAT)

Traditional apprenticeship training (TAT) is the most widespread form of rural skills training in south-east Asia). TAT is arguably also the most appropriate type of training for rural employment and income creation as it provides skills training at an appropriate level and the apprentices are also in a position to acquire basic management practices and have a chance to build up their business network. At the same time, it should be emphasized that there is often a need to improve the quality of apprenticeship training and a necessity to prevent the use of apprentices as a source of cheap labour.

- There is general consensus that any interventions in the apprentice system need to be introduced step-by-step. The intricate balance that has evolved over a long period can be easily upset. It is especially important that the masters see clear and tangible benefits and that their authority is not undermined.
- Apprentices would benefit from counseling and guidance before and during the training. Masters should receive advice and training on selection and training of apprentices.
- Apprenticeship contracts should be made with mastercraftspeople and stipulate training purpose, period, content, apprenticeship fee and gradual remuneration of apprentices that is commensurate with their progress.
- Apprenticeship fees should be paid to the mastercraftspeople in installments: a down payment at the start of the training and a final severance payment at the end of the training period.
- Conditions of the apprenticeship training, as well as the progress and results, should be closely monitored through visits to the workshops of the mastercraftspeople.
- Sometimes an incentive is needed for the mastercraftspeople to participate in the scheme; this can consist of specialized product-based skills-upgrading for the master, some form of business counseling or marketing assistance.

¹ Note that the innovative characteristic of non-agricultural activities depends foremost on existing consumption patterns. Whereas bakeries may be new in one context, they could be more conventional in others.

1.3 Product based skills development interventions

Training for product development

- Product-development interventions may allow small producers to receive a higher price for their products, have a larger or at least more stable turnover and upgrade their skills and knowledge – usually free of charge as the costs are borne by the marketing intermediary. Most importantly, product development helps small producers to diversify. Product differentiation is one of the best ways to overcome the fierce competition from other micro and small enterprises.²

Workshops and exposure visits

- Workshop visits³ and exposure visits⁴ seem to be a low cost and successful way to improving the skills and production techniques of small producers. When informal sector associations or other informal groupings have been involved there has been a noticeable impact in the areas of technology, management, and marketing.
 - ✓ Enterprise exchange visits can be organized on an individual basis, but it has been found more cost-effective to form groups of 5 to 10 small producers and on a sectoral basis.
 - ✓ In both cases it is important to stipulate prior to the travel what are the objectives for the planned visits and the way in which follow-up will be given. Without this, the visits may end up mere shopping trips.

Dissemination of information

- Information is essential for all producers engaged in economic activities of any scale. Innovative information dissemination mechanisms include: making available product catalogues with pictures, from large commercial firms selling clothing, furniture (such as IKEA), special weekly radio, programmes (one hour) directed at small entrepreneurs, and rural tele-centres where small producers can access Internet (and assistance to use it).

Introduce more efficient technologies

- Deficient technologies are the main cause of the low levels of productivity and product quality and lead to marketing/demand problems. It is crucial for small producers to address technological improvements, especially with the opening up of local markets and wider globalization issues, such as product improvement and diversification.
- Technology development interventions need to be market led; a tangible business-like message has to be adopted; final users have to be perceived as clients, not recipients of charity; incentives have to be understood and built into the value-added chain; marketing techniques must seek to educate potential customers and raise awareness; and the people who provide support must have a feel for business as well as a commitment to poverty alleviation.
- Once the phase of the initial development costs has passed, technology development and transfer should become self-financed.

² However, risks include increased production costs, dependence on the intermediary, difficulties in management and organization brought about by producing for export, and the overall volatility of the world market.

³ an organized way in which small producers pay a visit to pre-selected peers to exchange information on technologies and equipment in use, suppliers of equipment and materials, market prices, marketing channels, etc. The visits take place in workshops, which provides a hands-on context for discussions on various topics and the direct exchange of experiences.

⁴ same as workshop visits, except exposure visits take producers to small, medium, and even large enterprises as well as to supplier outlets in urban areas, international expositions and research and development organizations.

2 ORGANIZATION AND DELIVERY OF RURAL SKILLS TRAINING INTERVENTIONS

2.1 Training Needs and Opportunity Assessment

- From the start it should be clear if the skills training to be offered aims specifically at wage employment, self-employment, micro-enterprise development or the promotion of livelihood activities because each requires a different approach.
- Provision of training for marketable skills requires some form of explicit analysis of the local economy and available early-return employment opportunities through some kind of simple Rapid Rural Appraisal-type of labour market research.
- The analysis of the rural/village economy should adopt a dynamic perspective. It should take into consideration government development programmes and planned investments by the private sector. To the extent possible, it should try to identify upcoming niches in the market. In this way, the research can address the sometimes limited business vision of poor entrepreneurs.
- Accessibility of education and training programmes for the poor can be significantly increased by taking into account the time and work constraints of the trainees and adopt a client-friendly delivery in terms of course duration (short), location (close to the trainees) and time schedule (part-time, during afternoons/evenings and weekends). Agricultural peak seasons should be taken into consideration.
- Different methods of varying intensity have emerged to undertake training needs and opportunities (TNO) data collection and analysis.

2.2 Participatory Approaches

- Successful programmes actively involve the target clients and their communities during the various phases of the programme, including the design, implementation and follow-up.
- While involving communities in skills training is an important way to create “ownership ” of the intervention, it should be realized that poor, rural communities have a rather limited horizon when it comes to non-agricultural activities. Having the participation of local experts, such as extension workers, businesspeople, rural bankers, school principals, etc. is sufficient enough to achieve realistic, business-like considerations and outcomes.

2.3 Selection of Trainees

- Experience shows that the selection of trainees is done best in consultation with the community or a trade association.
- Experience also emphasizes that not too many trainees from the same area or village should be selected, at least for training in the same trade as they will only become competitors after the training. In the case of tailoring, carpentry, motorbike repair, etc., not more than one or two trainees should be selected from the same community.
- Selection of trainees should take into consideration their interest for skills training and the desired future use of the skills. Encouraging experiences have been gained in using training contracts to record the intention to use the skills and define consequences of dropping out of the course; they could also include clauses on sharing of training costs.
- Common practice currently treats self-employment, or entrepreneurship development, as an add-on toward the end of the course. When the trainees have not been purposely selected for self-employment training and actually are intending to look for wage-employment, effectiveness of the training will be low.

2.4 Training Curriculum

- Although courses should be short, they should not limit themselves, by necessity in view of the short course duration, to a rather rudimentary set of skills. Transferring a complete set of skills for most trades is not feasibly done in only a few weeks or months. Basic skills training should be conducted through short (maximum one to three months) courses based on a modular⁵, or series, approach.
- The provision of basic entrepreneurial and business skills within the curriculum is important. Some prime examples of such skills are investing, costing, production planning and marketing, and they can also include: business preparation, credit application, negotiations, customer relations, etc.⁶
- Training curricula should be practical, ideally in local languages and, to the extent possible, suitable for illiterate trainees by including pictures, comics, etc.
- Effective training programmes include training counseling that seeks to match the interests of the students/trainees with the available opportunities on the labour market and to determine the type of training that is required to make use of them.
- Training should be practical and only dedicate some 10 to 40 percent of the time to theory.
- To enhance the relevancy of education and skills training programmes for self-employment, they should pay attention to entrepreneurship and business management aspects and should be linked to credit, technology, marketing and other relevant support services.
- ***In addition, special consideration needs to be given to child trainees:***
 - ✓ The training content for children should not only consist of rural skills, but also should include the teaching of literacy, numeracy and life skills and leave room for learning basic knowledge and creative activities
 - ✓ Training should not be physically or mentally harmful. Training should include knowledge on occupational safety and health (need for protective gear).
 - ✓ Do not offer an option for re-entry or early entry of other children into the labour market.
 - ✓ In view of the likely low educational levels of young trainees, there are advantages in selecting simpler trades, such as hairdressing and masonry.
 - ✓ For youth, there is usually far more interest in mastering more “modern” activities (e.g. motorbike repair, electronics repair, etc.) than for more traditional activities (e.g. agriculture and handicrafts).

2.5 Training Aides and Materials

- It is quite possible for training providers to make their own training aides. Many trainers have similar ingenuity and once challenged and given some funds, can probably make most of the training equipment they need, at a far lower cost than imported aides.
- In the case of major pieces of equipment, it is also possible to ask for discarded tools, equipment and models (engines, cars, etc.) from private businesses.

⁵ Instead of trying to transfer the entire set of skills for a particular trade in one go, short courses should provide building blocks, starting with a basic set to which gradually other sets of skills can be added through other equally short courses. When a trainee has gone through all the modules, he or she will have mastered all the skills usually equated with an occupation at a particular level.

⁶ Some training organizations schedule the entrepreneurship and business skills as a separate module at the end of the course, while others prefer to mix the technical and business skills training, providing 15 to 30 minutes of trade-specific business training each day.

- Trainees should also be provided with handout sheets of information, instead of asking them to write down all the important points made by the instructor. In fact, they need reference books, if not purchased on an individual basis then at least available in a library in or near the VTC.

2.6 Trainers

- Positive experiences have been gained by getting trainers from the business sector itself: Mastercrafts-people from the area are being contracted as trainers for technical training courses and have the correct technical and business skills. If they do not possess the right teaching skills, it might be useful to train them in instructional methodologies – especially adult learning.
- Local instructors present advantages in terms of acceptance by the trainees, local language and customs, business experience and post-training counseling.
- The seasonality of the use of certain skills can play an important role in the availability of specific trainers, training facilities and equipment.

2.7 Trade Testing and Certification

- Most trainees, even those in informal training systems, are very keen to participate in external or internal trade testing, or at least to receive a certificate of attendance. They maintain that such a paper also helps to get entry into an informal sector workshop (as an apprentice or worker), or even in the event they become self-employed, certificates will help to get customers, as a diploma establishes their skills level.

2.8 Additional Considerations for Working Children

- The education background of working children is often weaker than that of others and possibly simple trades should be purposely selected. Additionally, working children, in view of their experiences and situations, may need much more intensive guidance and counselling than other training graduates.
- Course duration for working children should be short and the relation with employment as direct as possible, since their families (and even the children) cannot go without incomes for a long period. Additionally, in view of their and their family's poverty, working children are even more in need of financial assistance when they want to start their own business after the training.
- For those already working, training could focus on increasing their level of skill so they could do less hazardous tasks and increase their income, or specifically to improve their working conditions, such as training in occupational safety and health.
- For working children, rural skills training could best be followed by entry into apprenticeship training.

2.9 Gender

It has become clear that in south-east Asia there is a need to make a conscious effort to include girls and young women in education and training programmes, as they are found to have the least access to them.

- Specific targets should be set to increase the enrolment and integration of women into existing training programmes. Public and private employers should be encouraged to employ increased numbers of female apprentices.

- MSE development programmes and training should be available to women. High priority should be given to management training for women.
- Support facilities and measures, including hostels, transport facilities, childcare centres and tool kits are required to enable women to participate in all training. Special mechanisms should be devised in the delivery of training to enable increased participation and take-up by women, including mobile training units, extension schemes and in-factory training.
- Specific training provision should be made to meet the training needs of women in rural areas and in agriculture. Because of obligations usually in the home, to ensure the involvement of girls women, it is of prime importance that programmes have a short duration, are in a local venue, and have a suitable time schedule.
- Training programmes for women should include personal development and life skills training modules.
- The pool of women trainers should be increased; staff development programmes should be established to take into account the special needs of women.
- When statistics are collected, the data needs to be separated between male and female trainees/graduates, as there is an urgent need to analyze the effects that education and training have on gender roles and to review the role of education and training for improving the situation of women accordingly.
- In many societies in south-east Asia, it is traditionally not common for women to be involved in commercial activities. Simple and practical ways should therefore be sought to address this socio-cultural issue. This could be done, for instance, by creating positive role models for girls through talks by successful local businesswomen at secondary schools.
- In the case of skills training, it should be attempted to open up non-traditional skills training courses for girls and women. Alternatives from those in which they almost always end up, such as tailoring and food-processing should be made available.

3 FOLLOW UP SUPPORT SERVICES AFTER TRAINING

3.1 Job Placement

- Training programmes that aim for wage employment should include career counselling and job placement services. A training centre official locates potentially interesting companies and workshops, visits them to see if they might be interested to take on course graduates and sends them curriculum vitae in the hope of an interview for any of the trainees.
- For self-employment, job placement officers are useful in finding workshops where the trainees can do their "attachment" period, which is similar to being an apprentice for a short period.

3.2 Post Training Counseling

- Regular one-on-one provision of advice similar to agricultural extension is strongly recommended for training graduates. Currently, services are mostly set up to remedy management and administrative problems, but they also could be effective in assisting small producers to overcome their production and marketing problems.
- Self-employment graduates greatly benefit from a marketing officer who assists them in identifying and linking up with markets for his or her goods and services.

- Counselling also has the potential to assist micro and small enterprises in the more technical areas of production techniques, selection of equipment, product quality control, and occupational safety and health.

3.3 Networking for follow-up support

- It is becoming clear that training organizations should be dissuaded from providing credits and other support services, such as marketing, to trainees – as they do not belong to their core activities. Far better results are achieved through ‘networking’ with other service providers. In the case of credit, for instance, training organizations should seek to establish link-ups with suitable credit schemes.
- Early involvement of relevant persons from the community, such as representatives from the business community, has proven to be important.
- Complementary services should not be provided by the training organizations themselves but rather ensured through institutional networking or reference services.

3.4 Monitoring

- Monitoring should be used to review the overall training set-up and to assess the structure and staffing of the organization. A disconcerting small number of training organizations (including those with donor-funded activities) regularly engage in quality-and impact-evaluation exercises.
- For feedback on the relevancy of the training courses, tracer studies should be carried out among former trainees. Ideally, they should take place at three-, six-and twelve-month intervals after completion of the training.

3.5 Collection and Dissemination of Good Practices

- There is a huge need for national and regional clearinghouses that collect, synthesize and disseminate good practices in the area of skills training and especially of basic level and community-based training.

4 FUNDING AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL SKILLS TRAINING INTERVENTIONS

Sustainability of skills training interventions makes it imperative to adopt a low-cost approach (simple training facilities and equipment, part-time trainers, use of local volunteers and management), a form of cost-sharing by the programme clients, and/or arrange for innovative funding generation measures.

- Training organizations with only limited funding available should carefully review investments and operations and consider lowering: (i) investment costs by manufacturing their own training equipment and aides, (ii) fixed costs by replacing permanent trainers with contracted instructors, and (iii) variable costs by adopting different training delivery modes, such as shorter courses and out-reach training in which the community pays for the training venue, electricity costs, etc.
- In case of small or inexperienced organizations, difficult local conditions and limited available funding, the skills training courses can be best based on local materials and local markets. Interventions aiming for export are much more complex and expensive.
- The best strategy for non-profit training providers to finance their training offerings is to maximize funding from (i) existing government and donor programmes; (ii) revenue-generating

activities linked to the training provision - such as training-cum-production, additional commercial courses and exploitation of training facilities and staff; (iii) contributions from the rural communities in cash through funding drives, raffles, or in kind - such as providing the training venue, training materials, volunteers for programme implementation; (iv) contributions from the private business sector (possibly through levies imposed by the government); and, (v) training fees charged to the training participants.

- Training fees is an important mechanism to enhance the quality of training provision. Studies show that trainees are more genuinely committed to the training when they have to pay and are more likely to demand good quality training from the VTC. Special arrangements could be set up to assist those from the poorest households who could not afford to take advantage of the training offerings through training loans, bursary schemes or through income or food support.
- The capacity of communities, even poor ones, to pay for training should not be underestimated. When convinced of the quality and impact of the training, even poor communities have been found to share substantially, if not solely, in the training cost. They may organize a community party, a raffle or just collect for the funds. They are also known to approach the local business sector to sponsor the training.
- Contributions can also be solicited from another, largely untapped potential source, namely contributions in kind (staff time, training materials, or training venues) or cash from the private business sector.
- In general it has been shown that it pays to be creative in searching for ways to finance education and training schemes. There appear to be many unexplored opportunities to obtain contributions from the private sector. There are examples of sponsorships of courses, making staff available as instructors, contributing toward printing of training materials and donations of second-hand equipment for training purposes.

5 INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF RURAL SKILLS TRAINING INTERVENTIONS

5.1 National Training Systems

- There is an emerging consensus that governments should get out of direct training provision, at least at basic skills levels, and focus instead on the formulation of training policies, provision of guidance and support to actual training providers and, possibly, trade testing and certification. Such tasks could be best taken up by a more independent and professional vocational education and training authority.
- ***Governments could establish national training systems that are suggested to include the following elements:***
 - ✓ Training needs and employment opportunities assessment to provide assistance to training centres in carrying out labour market research to identify employment opportunities and pinpoint training needs in specific areas and for special target groups, as the basis for the development of training programmes.
 - ✓ Curriculum development to update existing curricula as well as to design new, flexible, modular and competency-based training curricula that are responsive to the demands of the labour market as well as of interest to future trainees and the needs of society at large.
 - ✓ National occupational skills standards, testing and certification system that provides the training providers, trainees and prospective employers with an objective system to measure the skills imparted in training programmes.
 - ✓ Accreditation system for training institutions and training programmes to make the training capacity and quality of training providers more transparent and facilitate the selection process of prospective trainees.
 - ✓ Technical support to strengthen a flexible and demand-led approach to training and to improve the quality of training delivery by public and private sector VTCs and training programmes.
 - ✓ Development and installation of monitoring and evaluation systems.
 - ✓ Training of instructors of both public and NGO/private sector training providers.

- ✓ National Training Fund to finance training provision by public, NGO and private sector training providers, including enterprise-based training programmes.

5.2 NGOs

NGOs play an active role in rural skills training, especially in areas not covered by government agencies. These NGOs can be categorized into traditional social NGOs, and more business-like NGOs, with the latter being more effective skills training service providers.

- ***The effectiveness of traditional NGO training interventions could be significantly increased by:***
 - ✓ strategic planning to come up with more realistic and consistent institutional vision/mission
 - ✓ better preparation of the training programmes and especially basing the selection of the training areas on demand for skills in the labour market and demand for goods and services produced by self-employment ventures
 - ✓ more flexible training and particularly short, modular, low-cost training delivery
 - ✓ enhanced monitoring and evaluation as the basis for continuous assessment of activities
 - ✓ a minimum of fees charged to the trainees, to supplement other sources of income so as to improve training facilities, tools and materials and attract well-qualified instructors
 - ✓ networking with others and especially specialized service providers.
- ***Some of the characteristics of NGOs that have adopted a more business-like approach to the provision of services to particular target groups include the following:***
 - ✓ They no longer view their target group as poor beneficiaries but rather as clients who are interested in the services the NGO offers
 - ✓ Many of the staff being recruited must have a background in business administration, economics, agricultural or industrial engineering, instead of social sciences as before.
 - ✓ Increased interest and investment in internal efficiency is taking place with modern management practices, short training courses for high-level staff and computerized financial administration.
 - ✓ There is greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation to assess efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of support services provided.
 - ✓ There is also increasing reliance on external resource persons instead of employing a permanent staff for all activities.
 - ✓ There are closer links to other NGOs as well as the private sector.

5.3 The Private Sector

- The private business sector has a definite potential to contribute to rural skills training, which so far is still largely untapped. In a direct way, firms can assist in the transfer of skills by making staff available for training, demonstrating equipment and technologies and receiving exposure visits. Local businesspeople can serve as members of the Board of training initiatives, as management or education-training advisers, or resource persons in the classroom.
- Many private companies have an in-house capacity for the training of their workforce. There may be possibilities for NGO training providers to link up with companies and work out a scheme in which both parties contribute toward skills preparation and for the possibility to select parents whose children are at risk of child labour and trafficking.
- Incentives for investments in facilities and equipment may stimulate the establishment of private-for-profit vocational training providers, which could be more responsive to changes in the demand for skills and arguably provide relatively higher quality training.

5.4 Networking between government agencies, NGOs and the private sector

- With the increasing need to have flexible training and lower the barriers to skills courses, training programmes should consider networking with other organizations (government, NGO,

and private sector) and creating arrangements in which partners are responsible for one of the required elements, while outsourcing other elements.

- In some countries, there are efforts to form associations of training providers to exchange knowledge and experiences to improve the quality of their training. Another reason for training providers to join forces is to become a more interesting partner for the new-style training authorities and benefit from their capacity in curriculum development, training of trainers, etc. Also, they believe that as a group they may be in a position to more easily attract investment capital required for training facilities and equipment, as well as receiving technical assistance from international donors.
- The organizations involved in the provision of skills training for working children are often small and engaged in a range of activities, and the skills training is just one of these activities. As a result, they often do not have special training methodologies for this group, and many organizations are in dire need of institution building. It is suggested that they set up platforms to exchange information and experiences, and out-source specific activities to specialized agencies. A further strategy might be to mainstream the concerns on trafficking into the activities of regular training organizations, both in the public and private sectors so that these agencies reach out to families whose children are at risk of trafficking. In this way the total capacity to address these problems will be enormously increased, while the impact of the professional training providers may be higher (although not necessarily so).

6 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR RURAL SKILLS TRAINING INTERVENTIONS

- Maximizing the enabling environment for the development of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in both urban and rural areas, while minimizing the negative political, legal and administrative aspects, is conditional for the success of specific programmes and interventions promoting MSE development.
- Organizations active in the area of preventing trafficking and mitigating child labour should not only be aware of the macro-economic conditions and attune their support interventions to them, but may also consider to participate in advocacy activities that aim for a better policy environment.
- A political climate in which the government is genuinely interested in rural development is an essential condition for a successful performance of programmes aiming at income generation, provided that this interest is reflected in the allocation of resources. Even when the government is politically willing and budgetarily able to stimulate agricultural and non-farming activities for the rural poor, the results of programmes to generate additional employment and incomes are still to a large extent dependent on the overall economic situation. The negative effects on the micro & small enterprise (MSE)-sector of an economic recession invariably outweighs the efforts of MSE support interventions (and, conversely, a stimulating economic environment is a much more powerful stimulus for MSE development than any MSE promotion programme).
- Broad-based macro-economic policy reforms that aim at creating a more dynamic and diversified economy can be an effective way to foster the creation of productive employment in MSEs.
- Paying special attention to rural development through agricultural policies that favour small farmers, investment in rural infrastructure, and social services for the rural population is needed to increase demand for goods and services produced in the rural informal sector.
- Advertising through subsidized radio and TV time can help stimulate local demand for MSE goods and services and enhance market opportunities for these products.
- Decentralization of government administration and service provision so that the population will have a more direct say in the type and delivery mode of essential services is a further condition for poverty alleviation in the rural areas.

- Research and development institutions should be stimulated to focus on technology needs of rural areas and emphasize their out-reach to include rural producers.

7 EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

- A prime area for useful technical and donor support concerns capacity building of local organizations by international organizations, such as the ILO. This can, for instance, be done through financing of training programmes, seminars, study tours, exchange visits and specific bursaries. External assistance has been found to be valuable in the area of strategic planning, which is surprisingly often necessary to help local organizations to determine their vision, mission and actual support services. It is also sometimes easier for outsiders to initiate collaboration between organizations and to organize lobby groups and other for for a advocacy.
- Another major area for technical and donor assistance concerns the development and/or introduction of new training methodologies and delivery modalities, together with providing seed capital for the financing of pilot activities to test new approaches on an experimental basis.
- Most local organizations would also greatly benefit from improved access to existing information on good practices and lessons learned, the sharing of experiences from other countries and access to international good practices. International organizations can play a catalytic role in the sharing of information on skills training experiences, for instance by acting as a clearinghouse for relevant studies, data bases – especially – evaluation reports.
- Web sites with international and updated literature and links can be important sources of information for training organizations.
- Monitoring and evaluation are both financially and methodologically usually beyond the immediate capability of smaller local organizations. As a result, this usually ends up at the bottom of the priorities list, seriously hampering the process to improve the quality and effectiveness of the programmes. Donors can help in setting up relevant monitoring and evaluation systems, including the provision of computers.

Reference(s)

For the full text of the project paper on rural skills training please be referred to the ILO TICW-project working paper entitled: *'Non-formal education and rural skills training: Tools to combat the worst forms of child labour including trafficking (TIA-2)'*.

For a more comprehensive picture of the whole 'Income Generation' spectrum please also be referred to the ILO TICW-project working paper entitled: *'Micro-finance interventions: Tools to combat the worst forms of child labour including trafficking (TIA-3)'*.