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**Training policies for disadvantaged youth in Latin America:
Trends in institutional and learning approaches**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CONALEP	Colegio Nacional de Educación de Educación Profesional Técnica
CONOCER	Consejo de Normalización de Competencias Laborales
CSOs/NGOs	Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil/ Nongovernmental Organizations
CUT	Central Unitaria de Trabajadores
GTZ	German Government’s Technical Co-operation Agency
IADB	Inter American Development Bank
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
INA	Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje
INADEH	Nacional de Formación Profesional y Capacitación para el Desarrollo Humano
INAFORP	Nacional de Formación Profesional
INCE	Instituto Nacional de Cooperación Educativa
INEA	Instituto Nacional de Educación de Adultos
INET	Instituto Nacional de Educación Tecnológica
INFOCAL	Fundación Nacional para la Formación y Capacitación Laboral
INFOTEP	Instituto Nacional de Formación Técnico Profesional
INTECAP	Instituto Técnico de Capacitación y Productividad
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IYF	International Youth Foundation
MED	Ministry of Education
MIF	Multilateral Investment Fund
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MSA	Ministry of Social Affaires
PLANFOR	Plan Nacional de Formación de Trabajadores
POCET	Programa de Educación para el Trabajo
SENA	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje
SENAC	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Comercial
SENAI	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Industrial
SENAR	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Rural
SENAT	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje del Transporte
SENATI	Servicio Nacional de Adiestramiento en Trabajo Industrial
SENCE	Servicio Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo
SNPP	Servicio Nacional de Promoción Profesional
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UTU	Universidad del Trabajo de Uruguay
VT	Vocational Training
VTI	Vocational Training Institutes
WB	World Bank

1. ABSTRACT

1. This paper summarizes Latin-American trends in recent policies and programmes addressed to increase disadvantaged youth employability and employment. Revising the financial, institutional and learning arrangements of the programmes, linked or not with traditional Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), it describes promising paths in interlinking social, educational and training policies; decentralization strategies and public-private partnerships that seem to work better.

2. Although the policy approaches that have been particularly relevant for disadvantaged youth to find decent jobs and to generate income are difficult to determine, some practices seem to be more hopeful. Between them: promoting a closer bond with the private sector employer in order to add work insertion strategies from the designing stage of the program; combining both technical training and personal as well as social and livelihood skills; including on-the-job learning (internship/placements) as a part of the training; ensuring young people's access to work insertion services and counseling, either on self-employment, micro-enterprises, or paid employment; advisory, coaching actions and access to micro-credit for inexperienced small self-employed entrepreneurs, in first stages of business; linking different educational paths and learning environments (formal schooling, vocational training, workplace); improving local partnerships that link different types of institutions (educational, firms, local governments, NGOs) in a strategic plan of social and economic development.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. Differences in educational and employment opportunities, as well as an unbalanced income distribution, are certainly structural phenomena in Latin America. Between 1990 and 2004, economic growth could be considered deficient and erratic, and was the reason for the growing unemployment, the increase of low-quality jobs and a widespread emigration, the young population being the most affected. With this background, the purpose of this paper is to summarize Latin-American trends in recent policies and programmes addressed to increase disadvantaged youth opportunities to accede to jobs, hopefully decent jobs. We revise the financial, institutional and learning arrangements of the programmes, linked or not with traditional TVET. We describe promising paths in interlinking social, educational and training policies; decentralization strategies and public-private partnerships that seem to work better.

4. Nowadays, in Latin America, there are three predominant institutional and financial arrangements in the training of disadvantaged young people, all of them involving public-private partnerships¹: a) vocational training based on the traditional national institutions of TVET managed by tripartite authorities (unions, employers, governments) or public institutions depending on the Ministry of Education (MED); b) Other types of training based on *ad hoc* programmes, which delegate training to diverse institutional agents, many of which are private non-profit organizations or private training institutes. These new types of institutional supply include: programmes that adopts competitive “open market” models; ones that grant subsidies to organizations working with disadvantaged groups.

5. In the region, the supply of vocational training for young people has been, ever since the fifties, under the responsibility of the tripartite of Vocational Training Institutes, or the training institutions dependent on the departments/ministries of education. Para-fiscal contributions are the mechanism that originated the Latin American model of vocational training institutions. Most institutions are subordinated under the Ministry of Labour (MOL) with a ruling body composed of public sector, private firms, and unions or workers’ representatives.

6. Programmes under the name “Apprenticeships” constituted the first public policy for training and employment addressed specifically to young people, but the groups accessing many of these measures, however, were not generally the most disadvantaged. Concerning the training-centre-based training, it was only at the beginning of the seventies that programmes started to be implemented with an orientation towards the informal sector.

7. Since the nineties, there has been a diversification of training suppliers (public and private) to respond to the new demands of the productive sector and the social needs of individuals. In the context of measures towards unemployment alleviation, youth and other disadvantaged groups at high social risk have been taken care of since the early 1990s.

8. The most important new model was developed principally by the MOLs, and financed by the Inter American Development Bank (IADB) and, in some cases, by the World Bank (WB). The “open market” model adopted consisted in the outsourcing of courses to basically private institutions (but there were also some public ones), by means of bids. The institutions supplied flexible training oriented to the formal labour market, including placements in companies, and were responsible for course design and finding placements for the young people. Incentives were paid to the training center for the effective job placement of the trainees. Inside this training model, a range of training courses in various occupations were subcontracted to a wide range of institutions and organizations both public and private. The bidding approach for courses specifically focused on the needs of unemployed young people continues to be the model implemented in countries like Uruguay, Peru, Chile and Colombia.

9. Another financing procedure was developed within the framework of the Ministries of Social Affairs or Secretaries of youth, and financed in many cases by multilateral agencies. Under this scheme, NGOs, foundations, churches (particularly the Catholic Church), national training institutions,

local governments, etc., receive subsidies from the state to develop the learning programmes. The training in these cases is geared towards the informal sector, self-employment and/or the creation of micro-enterprises. These social programmes promote habitually local alliances and more adapted and flexible strategies. However, they show less concern about the technical quality of the courses and lack clarity regarding the expected results in terms of jobs.

10. Concerning the learning approaches, the traditional supply approach in programmes addressed to disadvantaged groups is to bring specific technical courses in a stand-alone short term program. The diversity between the training centers is enormous, from well-settled public or private training centers to simple places in community centers. The trainers have also very different profiles, depending on the institutional backgrounds. The most common weakness in technical teachers and trainers lays on the lack of pedagogic training.

11. Since the development of the demand driven approach, the programmes have tended to include more complex perspectives of training. First, the internships at work places have become a widespread trend in courses oriented to training for jobs in the formal sector. Second, it is nowadays common that training focused on disadvantaged youth includes technical (theoretical and practices), social, livelihood and basic skills, as well as job seeking skills. One of the most important recent innovations is the implementation of a skill-based approach.

12. Another recent innovation is the introduction of job-placement services. In those cases, each youth receives support for a period of six months to one year after training. Even though most of unemployed youth target of the vocational training programmes have not accomplished secondary education – and in many cases not even their basic education -, there are scarce, only incipient initiatives to develop articulations with mainstream education or with alternative secondary or basic education supply. However, during recent years, some social and employment programmes have encouraged young people and adults to finalize their basic and/or secondary education through learning alternative strategies (in many cases part-time schooling). Some initiatives of this type have taken on momentum in recent years in Chile, Brazil and Argentina, as well as in other countries.

13. Nevertheless, an improved more fluent relationship between formal and non formal education, which enables to develop lifelong learning pathways remains in general a debt yet to be addressed by public policies. There has been some development, though, of National Qualification Frameworks, to link formal, non formal and informal education and learning. Therefore there would seem to be three main groups of countries: a small group of countries where the system has been developed and the main actions, as certification, have been launched; another one, where the system has begun the implementation; and a third and most extended one, where preliminary experiences are on their way.

14. It can be said that a general pattern of training public policies in the region are increasingly the decentralization and the public-private partnerships. It's difficult to establish what types of agencies and administrations are better positioned to design and manage the programs and at what level. The strongest public-private alliances call for varied public and private actors. The State is usually a key actor, not only for funding, but also for designing and co-ordination of programmes, aligning them with policies for equity and struggle against poverty. The companies bring in pertinence in adequate training design to functional needs of the world of work. It is also the sector providing working places for internship programmes. Training institutions must combine technical quality with an ability to work with disadvantaged population. Specially when addressed to youth, some methodological instruments on "social education" seem essential. It is at the local level that these actions are ultimately implemented and it is therefore indispensable establishing local networks, between institutions addressing training, companies; NGOs, and other social institutions, like sanitary services. However, in most cases, the efforts are insufficient to establish lasting relationships between training institutions and employers at the local level; therefore, they become more of isolated experiences rather than networks with one joint strategic vision of local development.

15. There has been considerable institutional improvement on the strategies to approach enterprises, the most promising of which seems to be close co-operation between training centers and companies. In some cases, co-operation has even extended to the joint design of occupational and training profiles.

Evidently, local actions towards the establishment of a National Qualification Framework encourage and strengthen more pertinent training developments.

16. There is not a great deal of evidence available on results and impacts. The few public policies that have been studied and evaluated rigorously are the youth job training programs of the nineties and more recently, regional programs as *Entra 21* and some national ones. Usual indicators in the follow-up studies are improvements in employment, wages and quality of jobs for participants. One evaluation shows that employment effects range from null to ten percentage points, and positive impacts in terms of the quality of jobs that trainees get, measured either by access to the formal sector or through receiving benefits, and better wages. Other more recent regional programmes evaluated show similar results.

17. Programmes that promoted the creation of micro-enterprises and/or self-employment also played a relevant role. With different quality and ranging from simple courses on micro-enterprise management to more comprehensive ones, these programmes include modules concerning three main instruments oriented to: 1) providing entrepreneurial skills, sometimes covering also specific craft skills; 2) technical assistance and coaching in business plans and in the implementation of entrepreneurial projects; and 3) in some cases, not always, micro-credit to support the implementation of entrepreneurial projects. In general, the strategies are more oriented to support the projects initial development than to develop permanent policies intended to formalize the enterprises.

18. The promotion of self-employment experiences and/or micro-enterprise opportunities for young people from low socio-educational backgrounds seems to require extensive follow-up, including measures like: support in the selection of viable niches for products or services; training in management, marketing and skills related to the activity; access to loans and technical assistance and coaching for an extensive period, including psycho-social support. Another key factor is to link these efforts with the support to help the micro-enterprises to enter the formal sector. It is important also for these programmes not to be isolated but rather related to socio-economic development policies. Concerning the effects of the programmes which promoted micro-enterprises and self-employment, evidence concludes that these tend to be low, considering the small percentage of companies that are able to survive in the first year. There is only evidence of good results in more integral programmes, but those with the highest degree of blending tend to exclude young people from the most disadvantaged sectors.

19. Promoting labour as well as social inclusion of young disadvantaged people is a big challenge for Latin America in the context of increasing inequalities. The arduously implemented programmes have advanced in proposing alternatives of education, training and social and work guidance for those young people with minimal opportunities.

20. Although to determine which policy approaches have been particularly relevant for disadvantaged youth to find decent jobs and to generate income is not a simple issue, some practices seem to be more hopeful.

- Promoting a closer bond with the private sector employer in order to add work insertion strategies from the designing stage of the program. Co-operation might be extended to the joint design of occupational and training profiles. Evidently, actions towards the establishment of a National Qualification Framework encourage and strengthen more pertinent collaborative programmes.
- Combining both technical training and personal as well as social and personal skills.
- Training in innovative activities, such as new technologies and communications, or creative, artistic and entertaining local activities.
- Including on-the-job learning (internship/placements) as a part of the training;
- Ensuring young people's access to work insertion services and counseling, either on self-employment or regular formal one.
- Tutoring the young in their insertion to work market, through placements and other "bridges" to decent jobs.

- Advisory and coaching actions for inexperienced small self-employed entrepreneurs, in credit access and first stages of business.
- Creating or reinforcing bridges between and within different educational paths and learning environments (formal schooling, vocational training, workplace), to encourage the weight and social significance of education with the goal of integrating young people into the labour market.
- Only for some carefully selected groups of a population, it would be adequate to promote self-employment and the creation of small enterprises, supporting them with financial services, training and counseling and linking them with more vast development policies and measures intended to facilitate their access to the formal sector.
- Adopting local approaches that link different types of institutions (educational, firms, local governments, NGOs) in a strategic plan of social and economic development seems to be the better level to respond to disadvantaged youth social and employment needs.
- Implementing more systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures to determine the best strategies in different contexts with different profiles of disadvantaged youth.

3. INTRODUCTION: DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN LATIN AMERICA: BRIEF CONTEXT OVERVIEW²

21. Differences in educational and employment opportunities, as well as an unbalanced income distribution, are certainly structural phenomena in Latin America. Globalization, the opening of markets and the structural adjustments initiated in the nineties add to this background of exclusion and have reinforced productive heterogeneity. One key characteristic of the region is the heterogeneity in its economies and production standards. Although a certain technological and organizational modernization has taken place inside the leading productive sectors in the recent decades, productivity in small and micro-enterprises still remains stagnant and, in many cases, outdated forms of production persist.

22. Between 1990 and 2004, economic growth could be considered deficient and erratic, and was the reason for the growing unemployment, the increase of low-quality jobs and a widespread emigration (CEPAL, 2005). The proportion of the informal sector in the urban job market jumped from 42.8% in 1990 to 46.7% in 2003. The differences between the average income in the formal sector and the informal sector increased from 59% to 72% (CEPAL, 2005). Employment in the informal sector is also heterogeneous, it includes not only people struggling to survive in precarious, low-income conditions, with low possibilities of reproduction but also efficient productive units, which are often small businesses profiting from certain activities outsourced by large companies. These units are not only feasible and profitable but also – provided the right support - hold great potential to integrate to the formal sectors. (Tokman, 2001)

23. The decline in the job market and the increase in social segmentation processes did not impact equally on every social group in the population. One of the most affected was certainly the young first-time job seekers.

24. As a matter of fact, demographic tendencies as well as the expansion of schooling towards universality of primary education (UPE) and large but nationally very different increases in secondary education, led many to believe that the relative position of young people in the workforce would improve during the 1990s. However, a number of developments prevented this from being the case.

25. On the one hand, the rates of enrolment at secondary education reflect that participation in the educational system still falls short. Even in the countries of the southern region, where enrolment rates in secondary education are high, almost half of the young people do not graduate at secondary level. The most critical problems still at place include high rates of repetition and dropouts, and a poor quality of educational supply in many cases. Simultaneously, the basic qualifications demanded for obtaining quality jobs drift towards completion of secondary school, whereas the region shows a devaluation of degrees, certificates or diplomas as the average educational level of young people increases.

26. On the other hand, the erratic economic growth coupled with the increase in unemployment affect particularly young people, as first-time job seekers; employees with a high turnover are mostly young. Unemployment rates of the young are at least double than that of the total workforce. For example, if at the end of the 1990s the general urban unemployment rate was a 10.2%, the average unemployment of young people from 15 to 24 years old stood at 19.5% (Weller, 2003). These figures add to deteriorating recruitment conditions and low salaries.

27. Whereas the position of young people is generally difficult, the situation for those from poor backgrounds and/or low educational levels is still worse. Unemployment rates and precarious employment increase notably among those who are poor and as educational levels drop. Women, especially those with low formal educational levels, encounter the biggest problems to integrate into the job market. In fact, among the low qualified, young women show unemployment rates more than 50% over those of their male counterparts, while in the group with the highest educational level (13 years or more), this gap is “only” 20% (Weller, 2006).

28. In an environment demanding more and more a secondary degree as a necessary but not sufficient requisite to obtain a good job, or even just *a* job, what can be expected from learning programmes

focused on specific vocational training and immediate placement in the job market? Very often the limited effects of one time training programmes have been questioned and the need is emphasized for projects targeting the most disadvantaged -like the young- to go beyond the purely assistance approach and to be linked with integral policies of development and social integration (CINTERFOR, 1998; Jacinto, 1999; Gallart, 2000).

29. The purpose of this paper is to summarize Latin-American trends in recent policies and programmes aimed at increasing employment opportunities (and good ones) for disadvantaged youth. The financial, institutional and learning arrangements of the programmes, are revised, be they linked or not with traditional TVET. Promising paths are described that interlink social, educational and training policies; decentralization strategies and public-private partnerships that seem to work better.

30. Overall, many innovations have shown interesting ways of responding to the complex situation of disadvantaged youth and the inequalities they experience. But the problem concerns a global situation of inequity and underdevelopment that put the limits of the limited strategies.

4. FINANCING AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

31. In a context of structural transformations and employment difficulties, which effects on the labour markets have just been summarized, social expenditures - with financing of the co-operating agencies – tended, during the last fifteen years, to be oriented towards compensating measures, placement and vocational training programmes, many of them intended for young people who drop out prematurely from secondary, or even primary school.

32. Nowadays, in Latin America, there are three predominant institutional and financial arrangements in the training of disadvantaged young people, all of them involving public-private partnerships:

- a) Vocational training based on the traditional national institutions of TVET managed by tripartite authorities (unions, employers, governments) or public institutions depending on the MED;
- b) Other types of training based on *ad hoc* programmes, which delegate training to diverse institutional agents, many of which are private non-profit organizations (known as Civil Society Organizations - CSOs) or private training institutes. These new types of institutional supply include:
 - b.1) Programmes adopting competitive “open market” models through bidding for the selection of training institutions and courses.
 - b.2) Programmes granting subsidies to organizations working with disadvantaged groups.

33. However, both amongst the regular supply of vocational education and training, as well as the new models, certain common tendencies are observed like the establishment of public-private alliances and decentralization favoring regional and local governance. In the following paragraphs, we will analyze in detail these different types of occupational training for unemployed young people, especially those coming from poor backgrounds and with low educational levels.

4.1. Traditional supply of vocational training and measures for disadvantaged youth

34. In the region, the supply of vocational training for young people has been, ever since the 1950s, under the responsibility of the tripartite of Vocational Training Institutes (VTI), or the training institutions dependent on the MED.

35. One remarkable difference of the Latin American vocational training supply is the relevance of the role that the entrepreneurial associations have had in the construction of the system. The most active entrepreneurial participants in the tripartite institutions are in Brazil (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Industrial [SENAI], Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Rural [SENAR], Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Comercial [SENAC], Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje del Transporte [SENAT]), Colombia (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje [SENA]) and Costa Rica (Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje [INA]).

36. Para-fiscal contributions are the mechanism that originated the Latin American model of vocational training institutions. These taxes are levied specifically for vocational training, and they are almost always calculated as a percentage of the amount of the workers' payroll.³ Most institutions are subordinated under the MOL, with a ruling body composed of the public sector, private firms, and unions or workers' representatives. In the case of Brazil, the employers, through the National Federation of the Employers' Association of a specific sector, manage the resources and also run the corresponding VTIs. In other cases, they are private and non-profit institutions, managed directly by national or sector corporate chambers (e.g. Fundación Nacional para la Formación y Capacitación Laboral [INFOCAL], Bolivia) or by the entrepreneurs themselves who are also responsible for the design, development and evaluation of the training programmes (e.g. Servicio Nacional de

Adiestramiento en el Trabajo Industrial [SENATI], Peru). In some cases, as in Mexico, the training system is dominated by a public vocational education institution (Colegio Nacional de Educación Profesional Técnica [CONALEP]) that owns and operates training facilities and programmes under the authority of the Secretary of Education. Though CONALEP's main source of resources is the public budget, it also sells training services to the private sector and the MOL. Argentina and Uruguay run a public technical and vocational institutions (Instituto Nacional de Educación Tecnológica [INET] and Universidad del Trabajo [UTU], respectively) (Galhardi, 2002)

37. Programmes under the name 'apprenticeships' constituted the first public policy for training and employment that specifically addressed young people (Casanova, 2004)³⁴. The groups accessing many of these measures, however, were generally not the most disadvantaged, but learners who -at least potentially- had the skills profiles required in the formal sector of the economy. Concerning centre-based training, it was only at the beginning of the 1970s that programmes started to be implemented with an orientation towards the informal sector; for instance the SENA of Colombia, the *Programa de Educación para el Trabajo* (POCET) in Honduras and the *Talleres Públicos de Capacitación-Producción* (INA) in Costa Rica. Financed and maintained by public funds and with instructors working as civil servants, these institutions implement a valuable know-how and provide a low-resource work force with vocational training, counseling and, sometimes, also loans to start micro-enterprises (Gallart, 2004). Likewise, some institutions provide their equipment for use by self-employed. Under these circumstances, the schedules tend to be flexible and the training programmes adapt to the perceived needs. Very often, these training centers maintain a close relationship with community associations and diverse NGOs locally offering parallel services. Within the participating population, young people receive training to start working in specific jobs (generally in traditional occupations) under self-employment conditions or, in some cases, as entrepreneurs. But in the case of young people, as it will be discussed later, the lack of work experience weakens their possibilities to develop as micro-entrepreneurs.

38. Since the 1990s, there has been a diversification of training suppliers to respond to the new economic and labour-market demands. The growth of the informal sector has generated new challenges for the existing training institutions that were mostly oriented to provide initial training at work for employees to develop skills needed in manufacturing and traditional occupations. The new demands of the productive sector and the social needs of individuals have reoriented the national training policies. Governments, through the MOL, have placed vocational training under the umbrella of national action plans for employment. Measures have been taken to alleviate unemployment among youth and other disadvantaged groups at high social risk have been taken since the early 1990s. Despite the existence of the traditional public funding through the existing vocational training and technical education systems, new financing schemes have emerged. Examples of these are tax incentives, such as disbursement schemes, whereby the tax is collected from all enterprises, then disbursed back to some firms that meet training criteria; and exemption schemes, whereby firms are able to reduce or eliminate their payroll and other taxes to the extent that they provide acceptable training, are some examples. (Galhardi, 2002).

39. In this context, some programmes involve companies which provide the places where youngsters do their internships, in exchange for tax credit, as in Chile, Colombia and Brazil. One of these initiatives that intended to create direct incentives for companies has become renowned in Brazil: the *First Job Incentive Programme*, which offers R\$1500 for every posted job for unemployed 16 to 24 year-old youngsters searching for their first job in the formal work market. A difference with other more traditional apprenticeship programmes is that it is focused on youngsters from low-income families and with some limited education; special attention is given to gender, ethnicity and special needs. There have also been recent attempts to implement the apprenticeship system again. For example, Colombia established in 2003, a minimum of apprenticeships per company, which, if unfilled, was fined. Some of the statistics show that many companies prefer to pay the fine rather than hire interns (Finnegan, 2006).

40. Other financing strategies, especially in the framework of the MOL or, in some cases the MED, involving private or public providers to support initial and continuous training are raised. The

allocations of particular state budget or funds targeting disadvantaged youth constitute additional public financing sources to vocational training.(Galhardi, 2002) Some countries – like Brazil and Uruguay – created a special fund for this initiatives managed by tripartite actors. Also international funds are oriented in this sense.

41. In the next section, the type of programmes developed for these initiatives will be discussed. In some countries where traditional vocational training systems are solid, those vocational training centers depending on National Vocational Training Institutions have intensely participated in the development of new programmes. This is the case of SENA in Colombia, which has participated in the *Youth in Action* programme for the last years, and the SENAI and SENAC in Brazil, which have participated in the *Plan Nacional de Formación de Trabajadores* (PLANFOR) and more recently in the *First Job* programme.

4.2. The diversification of actors and models of training

42. As already mentioned, beyond these offers of traditional institutions, the 1990s witnessed the frequent implementation of social programmes and *ad hoc* measures against poverty, oriented towards providing vocational training to disadvantaged young people who did not normally access the institutions of formal training. Many of these programmes were designed by the state, with a great deal of financing from co-operating agencies and multilateral banks, and were implemented by many different institutions and organizations.

43. The two predominant models within these new programmes will be examined next.

4.2.1. The ‘demand driven’ model

44. The most important programme model was developed principally by the MOL, and financed by the IADB and, in some cases, by the World Bank (WB). The ‘open market’ model adopted consists in the outsourcing of courses to basically private institutions (but there were also some public ones), by a bidding process.

45. The institutions supplied flexible, training oriented to the formal labour market, including internships in companies, and were responsible for course design and finding placements for the young people (Jacinto, 2002).

46. Inside this training model⁵, a range of training courses in various occupations were subcontracted to a wide range of institutions and organizations both public and private - such as labour unions, technical NGOs (some with an extensive experience in the field, and others recently created) and private training centers. The mechanism began in the so called *Chile Joven* program and (with the participation from the International Labour Organization (ILO), which also supported governments in preparing proposals for this type of operations) it was later replicated throughout Latin America: Venezuela, Argentina, Paraguay and Peru in the early to mid 1990s, then to Colombia, Panama and the Dominican Republic, and recently in Haiti.

47. There is enormous heterogeneity across countries regarding the institutional arrangements and sustainability of these operations. In Chile the programme was executed by the national regulatory agency (Servicio Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo [SENCE]). In these cases specialized executing agencies were not established as parallel bureaucracies. The experiences in the Dominican Republic (DR), Panama and Peru are similar in specialized executing units they established within the ministries, deliberately avoiding the national training institutions in the first two cases (Instituto Nacional de Formación Técnico Profesional [INFOTEP] in the Dominican Republic, Nacional de Formación Profesional [INAFORP], today Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional y Capacitación para el

Desarrollo Humano [INADEH] in Panama⁵). In the Dominican Republic, INFOTEP was invited to the program as evaluator of proposals and as supervisor, which has had positive results in terms of the consolidation of the project and its viability. Meanwhile, in Colombia the national training institution – SENA – was avoided, at first stages of the programmes, and an elite executing unit was established within the Office of the President, but latter the executing unit was transferred to SENA, it was considered that this was the best option for its sustainability. Paraguay represents the only attempt (unsuccessful) of an IADB financed project to transform a system centered around a national training institute (the Servicio Nacional de Promoción Profesional [SNPP]) (Ibarrarán and Rosas, 2006). In Brazil, the *Planfor* permitted the participation of traditional institutions of Vocational Training (SENAI, SENAC, SENAR) in the public bidding for training courses (Leite, 2004).

48. The training institutions were also responsible for arranging the internships (in Mexico the in-house training modality results in an automatic internship, while in Paraguay internships were only required for some trainees). All programmes provided a basic stipend to participants. One key aspect of the model in some of these programmes was the incentives paid to the training center for the effective job placement of the trainees.

49. There are important differences in the scale of these programmes between the countries and moments: the first cohort was designed as large-scale programmes. In Chile over 100,000 were targeted, while in Argentina the first phase trained more than 100,000 and the second (not achieved) aimed at training 180,000. However, with the exception of Mexico, the rest of the programmes are relatively small: in Peru about 4,000 people are trained each year, in Panama less than 4,000 have been trained since 2003, an average of 1,500 each year in Uruguay, and in the Dominican Republic 27,000 were trained over four years. This reflects the fact that these programmes are not expected to solve the overall problem of unemployment, but rather that they are considered as a tool to improve the labour market performance of a specific group (Ibarrarán and Rosas, 2006).

50. These programmes are examples of short “demand driven” training, combined with stages of training ‘at work’ through internships (De Moura Castro y Verdisco, 2002). In some cases, these programmes have reached good results in terms of labour market integration, slightly superior to those of the traditional vocational supply, because their courses were more oriented toward concrete opportunities integration into the labour market. It was clear, however, that their positive impact was closely dependent on the general buoyancy of the labour market and the individual size and design of the programme. In Argentina, for instance, the grand-scale programme was operated during a period of massive increase in unemployment figures. Consequently, its effects on the integration of these young people into the labour market were almost non-existent (Devia, 2003); in Uruguay by contrast, where the programme operated on a much smaller scale and with various designs adjusted to different sub-groups of young people, the relative results for the young participants were satisfactory (Lasida, 2004). But their certifications and knowledge were not recognized in formal education.

51. The impact studies show that some of these programmes have improved social insertion allowing a considerable part of the trainees for access to a job, and for a moderate proportion of them, to formal employment instead of informal jobs, at least in the short term (see evidence information). Research also reveals that the young attendants feel fuller satisfaction with these training programmes, as they acquire competences and increase their self-esteem. Furthermore, graduate follow-up proves that many return to formal education upon conclusion of these training courses (Pieck, 2001; Gajardo and Milos, 2000).

52. But these programmes generally imply poor contribution to the enhancement of the training institutions. Many of the training centers participating in these short-term programmes operated with greater flexibility than the traditional institutions, but lasted only a short time⁶ and were hardly sustainable. The intention to develop an alternative model to the traditional institutions, capable of overcoming bureaucracy and avoiding the repetition of training courses not related to the actual demands of the labour market, seem to have affected the sustainability of institutional learnings (De Moura Castro and Verdisco, 2002). One of the dilemmas for the vocational training supply is still how to create conditions which may stimulate experimentation, generate stable technical teams and

institutional sustainability, establish at the same time links with the labour market and produce acceptable results after completion of the training (Jacinto and Bessega, 2001; Lasida and Berrutti, 2002). When they “work”, the importance of such programmes oriented towards the job placement in formal jobs, is that they provide access to a decent job that it would otherwise been out of reach for disadvantaged young people.

53. The bidding approach for courses specifically focused on the needs of unemployed young people continues to be the model implemented in countries like Uruguay, Peru, Chile and Colombia.

54. To this date, as they were in the 1990s, multilateral agencies are involved also in financing to a smaller yet regional scale. Such is the case of *Entra 21*, co-financed by Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) and private companies and coordinated by the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Hence, with a different relevance according to the country, foreign funding still leaves a mark both in the design and the modalities of the programmes.

55. Traditional vocational training institutions, such as SENA, tend to participate in youth programmes articulating the process of selection and follow-up of courses. Even when they do not participate, like in Uruguay (where the UTU is in charge of formal vocational training), the permanence of flexible vocational training programmes oriented to disadvantaged youth has enabled the consolidation of some training institutions specialized in training vulnerable groups, which have built strong relationships with companies, such as *Projovent* in Uruguay. The long duration (over ten years) of this programme, together with its actions towards institutional strengthening, has consolidated institutions that are both flexible and specialized in disadvantaged youth and work insertion.

56. Other countries that during the 1990s chose to outsource training to private institutions are currently focusing on strengthening public vocational training centers. As an example of this Argentina has a national minimum income programme that has established connections with technical secondary education as well as other vocational training services depending on the provincial governments, to enable its beneficiaries to have access of vocational training courses.

4.2.2. The subsidy model to train for the informal sector

57. Another financing procedure has been developed within the framework of the Ministries of Social Affairs (MSA) or Secretaries of youth, and financed in many cases by multilateral agencies. Under this scheme, NGOs, foundations, churches (particularly the Catholic Church), national training institutions, local governments, etc., receive subsidies from the state to develop the training programmes. The training in these cases is geared towards the informal sector, self-employment and/or the creation of micro-enterprises. Normally, these programmes are concerned in the “struggle against poverty” policies.

58. In many cases, these programmes tend to develop a more integral approach of the training and combine the learning of technical skills with personal, cultural activities and social competences (also in the broad sense, for example, training for citizenship). These social programmes usually promote alliances between different public organizations, including health services, education and training institutions and private agencies enhancing social well-being, such as banks awarding micro-credits, youth centers etc. to subsidize organizations working for poor populations allowing in general the adoption of more flexible strategies, adjusted to the individual characteristics and expectations of the young people themselves.

59. However, these programmes show important weaknesses. They show low concern about the technical quality of the courses and lacked clarity regarding the expected results in terms of jobs (Jacinto, 2002). Little emphasis has been made in the placement of the learners, and little guidance toward concrete occupational opportunities, even in the informal sector. Some of these training courses are oriented to the development of entrepreneurial capabilities in general, without having any link with the training in craft skills. Many a times, they have not taken into account whether or not the selected young people had the experience and the personal characteristics to manage their own enterprises (Jacinto, 2002). In

these 'struggle against poverty policies' promoting micro-enterprises, the strategies are more oriented to the creation of a source to generate incomes for the poor than to develop sustainable formal micro-enterprises.

60. Nevertheless, another relatively significant part of these social programmes have focused on young people and promoted the self employment or the creation of micro-enterprises, using a more specific and complex approach. In these cases, mechanisms of selection, training and post-training guidance have been included. Also, they are articulated to micro-credit. The amounts received are very heterogeneous: Brazilian SEBRAE's micro-credits do not exceed USD5,000.-. The Impulsar Foundation, in Argentina, offers loans to youngsters for small entrepreneurial projects of up to USD1,650.-. Micro-credits in Peru average USD500.-, a much smaller amount than the USD2,500.- estimated by the IADB-sponsored programme *Entra 21*. However, these more complex programmes have been more demanding and have frequently excluded the poorest, as the criterion by which candidates are admitted is that they hold a business and/or a secondary qualification (Jaramillo, 2004). This prerequisite is based on some evidence that a certain level of skills and experience are essential if young people are to be successful in business initiatives (i.e. experience in salaried work, entrepreneur skills and a business plan) (Lasida, 2004).

5. LEARNING APPROACHES

61. Training programmes addressed to disadvantaged youth in Latin America may be divided into two main orientations: those focused on particular labour-market opportunities, usually the ones involving internships and/or other strategies related to the demand; and those usually related to the 'struggle against poverty', oriented towards self-employment or small entrepreneurial projects. Nevertheless, some of the programmes focus both on salaried employment and self-employment, as well as other possible job opportunities. As it has been said, the initiatives entirely based on the learning in the workplace are not the most expanded ones.

62. The basic traditional supply approach in the programmes addressed to disadvantaged groups is to bring specific technical courses in a stand-alone short-term programme. Most of the courses are limited to vocational and labour-related content, sometimes adapted to a particular environment. The diversity between the training centers is enormous. The training is generally conducted using the training sites, classrooms and laboratories: from well-settled public or private training centers to simple places in community centers where equipment and laboratories are often scarce.

63. The trainers have also very different profiles, depending on the institutional backgrounds. There are technical teachers working in regular VT institutions, but also technicians with no teaching training at all. In some cases, the courses at community centers are imparted by craftsmen with no specific training. The most common weakness in technical teacher and instructors lies in the lack of pedagogical training and/or their distance with updated forms of productions or management in the real work.

64. The training supply for technical teachers is based on general learning and, therefore, is inadequate for the specific requirements that vocational and technical training teachers must cover. However, sometimes there are no teacher profiles available to design and orient teachers training. In Latin American countries such as Chile, Costa Rica and El Salvador, there have been some initiatives intended to organize the pedagogical training of technical teachers both at beginners and other levels through networking with other productive, union and educational sectors (Barba et al., 2007).

5.1. Some innovations in pedagogical approaches

65. The updating of approaches includes the traditional training system as well as the demand-driven courses introducing more complex perspectives. It is nowadays common that training focused on disadvantaged youth includes technical (theoretical and practices), social, livelihood and basic skills, as well as job-seeking skills.

66. Apart from the traditional approaches, many pedagogical innovations have been introduced and expanded in the last decade, given the transformations in the world of work and the new skills therefore required, as well as in the population targeted.

67. In the technical component, one of the most important recent innovations is the implementation of a skill-based approach (rather than content-based), where learning becomes a permanent process to develop skills that are personal, technical, organizational, and even entrepreneurial. It is usually required that both instructors from the training institutions and workers or employees from the companies participate in workshops to learn how best to implement this approach.

68. But only very few courses in these programmes addressed to disadvantaged youth are based on national occupational standards, assessments and certifications, when available. One interesting example is a programme developed by the NGO Hospitalidade in Brazil, based on national standards for the Brazilian hospitality, tourism, and entertainment sector.

69. Another innovation is the introduction of a 'dual' approach in some courses, where teaching/learning activities are alternated with business activities (apprenticeship, work practices) with a minimum of hours for each trainee.

70. Apart from technical contents, other contents have become relevant in training and are more often included in curricula such as modules of generic skills, livelihood and social skills for work, so called "transferable" skills.

71. Disadvantaged youth, who begin vocational training programmes without having finished their secondary education, are often lacking in basic 'transferable' skills which can be applied to a variety of situations, not only because they dropped out at a certain level, but also because the schools they attended were not good enough. Faced with this situation, many vocational training courses for young people have begun to include these basic skills as part of their curriculum. Once the basic skills required in the workplace have been identified, educational strategies are designed and developed for teaching them.

72. Generally speaking, such experiments are innovative and have not been introduced on a large scale. An International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) study focused the analysis on four innovative training experiments carried out in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. The introduction of *basic* skills was done from two angles (Jacinto, 2006b). On the one hand, it represented the minimum prerequisites for 'trainability', if vocational training is expected to provide more than just the ability to perform manual operations and empirical knowledge with low transferability. This basic minimum is lacking if the young person is unable to describe aspects of daily life in an ordered and meaningful way, either orally or particularly in writing, or if he or she has difficulty in applying simple techniques to resolve problems arising outside the school environment. On the other hand, the question arose as to which of the basic skills needed not only to perform a specific job but also more generally in the workplace should be covered by vocational training programmes. Analyzing the approaches to this question, it was identified that while some experiences put more emphasis on developing a basic level of core skills needed for **any** job, adopting a somewhat wider remedial approach to what was not learned during formal education, others were more oriented towards providing training in **specific work** skills needed for a given occupation, or family of occupations (Milos Hurtado, 2003).

73. Many programmes have also developed modules on "livelihood and social skills", consisting of 40 to 200 one-hour training programmes intended to develop skills on interaction and work-related practices and attitudes, the contents of which have even been addressed in widely distributed manuals (Cinterfor, 2000 and Kaplum, 1997). They usually consist in workshops oriented to operative abilities such as how to face interviews, strategies for job seeking, work interview techniques, resumé preparation, and self-esteem. These modules also provide information about labour rights, and profitability in different professions. It is also intended to support the construction of a self-made career project and the balance of skills (Silveira, 2005).

74. Graduates follow-up studies show the importance of these modules focused on the development of life and social skills. Youngsters deem these modules useful. Research studies prove that at many times, these abilities often play a stronger role in accessing a job than specific technical skills (Lasida y Rodríguez, 2006; Scarincio, 2001; Silveira, 2004; Jacinto et al, 2005).

75. The training programmes oriented to youth entrepreneurial projects include, apart from core skills modules, an special module which usually concerns three main instruments oriented to: 1) providing entrepreneurial skills, sometimes covering also specific craft skills; 2) technical assistance and coaching in business plans and in the implementation of entrepreneurial projects; and 3) micro-credit to support the implementation of entrepreneurial projects as disadvantaged youngsters may hardly be eligible for bank loans and/or find formal jobs. In general, the strategies are more oriented to support the projects initial development than to develop permanent policies intended to create formal micro-enterprises.

76. One interesting recent example of a program that links different components and has achieved interesting results is the so-called *Entra21*. This programme supports different types of private training

including NGOs that develop training and youth employment projects in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) with a fund of US\$20 million, co-financed by the IYF and the MIF, from the IADB. The programme subsidizes projects of approximately US\$375,000 for up to three years. Until July 2005, *Entra 21* had operated 24 projects in 16 countries, reaching 11,227 disadvantaged young people. Some interesting aspects of this programme concerning its design and execution are worthwhile mentioning. First, its focus is on occupations using new technologies with a broad approach of training that include not only learning of technical abilities but also of personal and livelihood skills, as well as internships. It also emphasizes public-private co-operation for design and implementation, in order to join resources and facilitate job integration after the training. This last aspect constitutes the most outstanding point of the programme: the commitment to job placement from its very design. Consequently, mechanisms to assist young people during the transition process were put into place. It pretends to be not just one more VET programme, but a job placement including training. The placement results for young people have been satisfactory, achieving rates between 40% and 68% of placement into the job market just six months after the training.

77. In general, an important and persistent weakness of these programmes lies on the fact that the courses are often short specific and hardly ever organized as modules, which would allow for customized training itineraries and/or improved deepened learning.

5.2. The internships as a part of the training

78. Many of the training-center-based courses have introduced internships at a work place. It was first offered by apprenticeship programmes, and only later, it was included in youth programmes with “demand driven” approaches as a main and mandatory stage for most courses (Lasida, 2004). In spite of the extended consensus about the importance of these internship practices, their design and implementation have not escaped varied obstacles. The most frequent objections have to do with the substitution of regular salaried employees by interns. Another objection is the lack of supervision from the training centers involved (Fosis, 2002; Jacinto, 2006). However, there is also agreement that internships are strongly motivating for youngsters, they provide pertinent skills and even help them build a ‘bridge’ to work, as some of them end up working for those companies (Lasida y Rodríguez, 2006). Pedagogical material for orientation has been developed as well, including curricula containing techniques to identify the companies’ demands, training design and the description of the tutors roles, both for teachers at the training centers and for employees at companies (Cinterfor, 2003 and Pasman, 2006).

79. As the openings for internships at the work place are relatively scarce, these practices are hard to extend to vast populations; therefore some programmes have included internships at NGOs or even public institutions.

80. Some countries (Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina and others) have even developed their recent laws and regulations to organize the internships. The resourcefulness of the internship depends essentially on the accuracy of the networking strategies between the education and work sectors, and the emphasis made in the competences to be developed. Outside the training scope, internships seem doubtful as they mainly stand like subsidies for private employment.

5.3. The post-training: introducing job placement services

81. Another recent innovation is the introduction of job-placement services, more and more extended in programmes’ design. In training and employment programmes that introduce these services, each youth receives support for a period of six months to one year after training. Job placement activities are the responsibility of the training centre.

82. It is known that youngsters sometimes lose their jobs because they ignore the codes, roles and routine practices of their work places and therefore are disappointed with or disappointing to their employer. When a job placement service is available, in the event that any trainee loses his or her job, the training center provides assistance in finding a new job and tries to find out what caused the redundancy from the previous job and give the ex-employee relevant feedback. The training center assistance may also include additional training to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes which will facilitate the trainee's search for a new job and help them to keep it.

83. The uncertainty of the labour market and the unequal distribution of information make the coaching and intermediation strategies implemented by some of these programmes, a 'bridge' without which most disadvantaged youngsters could not access to employment.

84. For the youth who develop their own self-employment initiatives, job placement services provide support in their business plan, which often includes visits to other businesses resembling the one they would like to start. In these cases, they are oriented by mentors. Once their project of enterprise is approved they would have access to credit accompanied by technical assistance for the period of the loan to guide and consolidate their enterprise.

85. Therefore, be it as a facilitator of access to work or as a stage of analysis of work practices, job placement and coaching have been introduced as useful instruments in training programmes. This module was first implemented at late nineties, in programmes like *Entra 21* as a regional model, and *Projoven* in Uruguay.

5.4. Incipient linkages to mainstream education or alternative basic and secondary education

86. In Latin America, even though most of unemployed youths targeted by vocational training programmes have not accomplished secondary education and in many cases not even their basic education, there are scarce, only incipient initiatives to develop articulations with mainstream education or with alternative secondary or basic education supply.

87. However, during recent years, some social and employment programmes have encouraged young people and adults to finalize their basic and/or secondary education through alternative programmes (in many cases part-time schooling) attempting to respond in a more pertinent way to their needs and interests than traditional educational services did. Some initiatives of this type have taken on momentum in recent years in Chile, Brazil and Argentina, as well as in other countries.

88. Among such experiences, the example of Chile is probably the one that has been most systematically implemented and evaluated. A component of the *Chile Califica* programme (see box below), consists in a flexible method to complete basic or secondary studies. This pattern is structured in learning blocks and envisages both classrooms as self-learning activities. It works with cost-free books supplied by the MED. The MED also evaluates the students' progress and awards the degrees. Between 2002 and 2004, 42,000 persons obtained a certificate of basic education and 74,000 were certified in secondary education through this system. An interesting aspect of this programme is that it achieves better completion rates than those of the traditional educational paths for adults (Letelier, 2005). Some studies have reported positive results in graduates' income and occupational level, especially among women and young people.

89. A similar programme has been launched in 2003 in Mexico. The *Zero Educational Lag*, which depends from the Instituto Nacional de Educación de Adultos (INEA), intends to increase re-insertion permanence and graduation for youngsters and adults between 15 and 34, who have only finished their basic studies and/or have attended only few years to secondary schools. Instead of addressing youngsters as individuals, they call on communities, organizations and society as a whole, in an

attempt to promote commitment and social responsibility, through the participation of relatives and close friends as part of a supporting network of tutors.

90. In Argentina, a large-scale national unemployment programme originally called *Más y Mejor Trabajo Plan*, but now called *Seguro de Capacitación*, gives conditional cash transfers to poor unemployed population conditioned to follow vocational training or formal alternative basic or secondary education. The institutes involved are public training centres or youth and adult educational centres (evening second chance schools), dependant on 24 provincial ministries of education. The plan provides or funds editorial material, both for students and teachers. It also involves attending classes (and tutoring) as well as self-education. Since 2005, the plan has registered 80,212 new beneficiaries, 63 per cent of which has entered the alternative formal education, and 42 per cent entered the VT programme. Eighty per cent of the population that entered these programmes were women.

91. The special attention that these programmes have recently gained shows relevance both for youth and adults of leveling and secondary degrees. These initiatives that provide flexible customized services both for youngsters and adults, who already have other responsibilities, prove that formal education degrees are considered key to accede to good jobs. These initiatives may be seen as a breakthrough in work insertion strategies for disadvantaged youth, from the extended trend of exclusively providing a vocational training supply.

92. Nevertheless, an improved more fluent relationship between formal and non-formal education, which enables to develop lifelong learning pathways remain in general a debt yet to be addressed by public policies in the region. There has been some development, though, of national qualification frameworks to link formal, non formal and informal education and learning.

5.5. Some recent approaches to develop systems based in skills certification

93. In general Latin American countries, after a decade of discussions, have accepted the conceptual and methodological basics of the British skills certifications system (Vargas, 2004). Therefore there would seem to be three main groups of countries: a small group of countries where the system has been developed and the main actions, such as certification, have been launched; another one, where the system has started being implemented; and a third and most extended one, where only preliminary experiences are on their way. While there are no fully developed national certification systems in the region, this approach has been included in training for work in different levels, through large-scale national institutions. Therefore, the region seems to have gone through a non-typical path, implementing skills-oriented training programmes before deploying national certification systems.

94. According to Vargas (2004), amongst the most economically developed countries in the region:

- México has developed a system of skills standards, which covers an important scope of the existing activities (Consejo de Normalización de Competencias Laborales [CONOCER]) and is on its way to creating a certification system.
- Chile has also reached the stage of certification, with the implementation of its *Chile Califica* programme. However, it only covers four industrial activities.
- Brazil has finally formed a political spirit through the implementation of a preliminary programme to create a national system, and
- Argentina is only now promoting a project, also inspired by the British model, reaching four industrial areas.

BOX: Chile Califica

The *Chile Califica* Programme was jointly launched by the Chilean ministries of economy, education and labor and social security, in June 2002, financed 50 per cent by the World Bank. The mission of this programme is to contribute to the productive development of Chile and to improve opportunities through the creation of a life-long learning education and training system, the main goal of which is to allow workers to update their knowledge, skills and attitudes to adequately respond to the demands of the industry, facilitating access to a system of educational equivalence for the different educational levels for those who could not complete their formal school education and improving access to work training for those who completed their formal education.

One of the major initiatives of this programme involves the preparation of a project to create and implement a national skill certification system (Sistema Nacional de Acreditación de Competencias Laborales) as well as the improvement of the already existing national training and work statute (Estatuto Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo), presented in March 2004 by the government. Another most important initiative is a Programme that allows youth and adults to access a system of educational equivalence for the basic and secondary levels (Programa Especial de Nivelación Básica y Media para Adultos), intended to include all youth and adults, who do not benefit from other programmes providing alternatives to finish primary and secondary education. This programme, managed by the national training and work system (SENCE), offers tax exemption to companies whose workers chose to take courses. The programme encourages combining professional training with leveling studies.

Finally, through its job-orientation component, *Chile Califica* also promotes an update of the orientation function of secondary school, which may entitle both youth and the adults to make more adequate choices regarding their further education and working plans. Since 2003, many vocational and job-orientation plans at school levels, which provide the educational offer with the information on labour markets, have received financing through this initiative. These plans also produce strategic alliances and networking between their staff and other actors in the industrial, government and public and private sectors.

95. Although it can be said that the use of the key skills – either more generic or related to employability – is increasingly expanding throughout the region, the most significant experiences mentioned show a limited expansion of the model. Beyond the already mentioned national experiences, there are some specific ones, worth noting like: a) *Formujer* (by *Cinterfor*), a limited but innovative regional programme including Argentina, Bolivia and Costa Rica, targeted at women in poor vulnerable areas, the training was based on employability skills, promoting the preparation of career projects; or b) some public and/or private experiences targeting different sectors, which focus on a specific activity or branch of activities, have included key-skills in their training programmes.

96. Very few of youth training programmes have developed skill-based curricula (*Colombia Joven*; *Projoven* in Uruguay and the already mentioned *Chile Califica*). However, even in those cases, the certification and validation of non-formal and informal skills are incipient processes.

6. POLICY APPROACHES: INTER-LINKING, DECENTRALIZATION, PARTNERSHIPS

97. It can be said that a general pattern of training public policies in the region are increasingly the decentralization and the public-private partnerships. It is difficult to establish what types of agencies and administrations are better positioned to design and manage the programmes and at what level.

98. Following the 1990s trend, most of the national programmes have adopted a decentralized management pattern, through the province and municipal government; however, there are very different scopes and implementation models in different countries. But national governments continue to have a key role in the design and financing of the actions

99. Many VITs have adopted a decentralization strategy that is very much related to the upsurge of new providers of training, funding mechanisms and social partners' participation in the local/sectoral management of training programmes. The INA in Costa Rica, SENA in Colombia and Instituto Técnico de Capacitación y Productividad (INTECAP) in Guatemala, among others, administrative and operational responsibilities have been handed down to their respective regional departments. In the case of Brazil as well, SENAI, SENAC and SENAR are following the same pattern (Gahlardi, 2002).

100. Decentralization to both provincial and municipal jurisdictions has also reached the programmes implemented by MSA and Youth National Institutes. Most of the programmes are executed through CSO of different types, Catholic, non-profit organizations, community centers, NGOs focused on promotion, some of which have even reached the so-called 'second level', meaning they outsource implementation to other smaller NGOs, and focus themselves on design and co-ordination. An example of this is the SES Foundation in Argentina, which has implemented a training programme for youth in 15 different cities.

101. There is also evidence of the growing relevance that foundations related to enterprises have gained in connection with the corporate social responsibility approach. As an example of this, there is the Brazilian programme developed by the Instituto Hospitalidade.⁷

102. These examples as well as the ones previously mentioned show the role of each actor in these partnerships. The State is usually a key actor, not only for funding, but also for designing, and co-ordinating programmes aligned with policies for equity and the fight against poverty. The companies bring in pertinence adequating to functional needs in the world of work. It is also the sector providing working places for internship programmes. Training institutions bring technical learning with an ability to work with disadvantaged people: especially when addressed to youth, some methodological instruments on 'social education' seem essential.

103. Nevertheless, it is at the local level that these actions are ultimately implemented and it is therefore indispensable to establish local networks between institutions addressing training, companies NGOs, and other social institutions, like sanitary services.

104. Some of these initiatives have developed interesting relationships between local governments, general education and vocational training institutions and employers to favor the design and implementation of programmes targeting unemployed youngsters. Some of these cases are: Medellin in Colombia, Rosario in Argentina and Montevideo in Uruguay.

105. One of these interesting experiences is the one promoted by the Corporación Paisajoven in Medellin, an alliance between the Conserjería Presidencial in Medellín, the local government and GTZ (the German Government's Technical Co-operation Agency), which begun in 1996. This alliance promoted a local observatory of the work market and initiatives for trainers' training. It implemented actions in an inter-institutional perspective to improve their management and fund raising capacities. The action involved: 1) links with youth organizations; 2) collaborative design of pedagogical models; and 3) joint strategies to improve links with workplaces. The result of the project during 5 years is a network of NGOs with strengthened capacities in training disadvantaged youth. Once the Paisajoven

was completed, the network continued working in alliance with the implementation of the Colombia *Joven* programme. Between 2002 and 2005, it took over an *Entra 21* project (see description in paragraph 76), to train and help youngsters insert in the work market. Since 2005, through its consolidated intervention model, the network has developed the *Youth with a future* programme, implemented by the Medellin Municipality. The sustainability of the network during more than ten years seems to be the result of a successful alliance between international cooperation, national and local government, and the NGOs network working in the field.

106. In some other cases, inter-institutional projects are implemented locally to promote networks between education, training and the world of work needs. As an example of this, the *Chile Califica* programme has promoted networking between technical training and those sectors key to regional production, through a bidding fund of technical and vocational training articulation projects. Within inter-regional differences, these networks have become a meeting point for educational institutions, enterprises and workers. Since its beginning in 1997, the programme has funded 37 projects.

107. However, in most cases, the efforts are insufficient to establish lasting relationships between training institutions employers, and other actors at the local level; therefore, they become more isolated experiences rather than networks with one joint strategic vision of local development.

108. The most successful and lasting experiences are those that focus on the endogenous possibilities of the territory's resources as well as on the dynamics of local social and institutional actors (Tapia, 2005). Each process varies according to local resources, and historical, social, productive and demographic conditions. In the end, creating networks for youth insertion with the co-operation of municipal and eventually national governments is an on-going process, which innovative experiences and good practices - even if challenged by obstacles - may be valued sources of learning and evaluation.

6.1. Strategies used to determine adequate employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth

109. As previously mentioned, the strategies implemented by the programmes addressed to disadvantaged youth have been oriented to their placement both in the formal and informal job market.

110. The so-called *Joven* model has focused on training for semi-qualified jobs in the formal market, in varied activities especially in services, such as small businesses, supermarkets, fast food chains and junior administrative and logistics positions. On a minor scale, it has also dealt with the construction and industrial markets. Other programmes, such as *Entra 21*, have focused on information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

111. A recent research study (Velilla, 2005) focused on the different strategies for job market analysis processes implemented by these programmes to design the courses. The main strategies outlined are:

- Open survey in companies: to assess, through questionnaires and interviews, their human resources needs.
- Already existing prospective analysis review: spotting sectors with productive potential which may require special and/or improved training.
- Direct contact with companies: customizing the design of training according to the profiles required by the different productive sectors.
- Experts Committee: through in-depth interviews and focus groups.
- Previously developed skills profiles for selected occupations.

112. The study reflected important weaknesses in the implementation of these methodologies: the lack of expertise – both in staff and other resources – in the analysis of labour markets. The quality of the information gathered is directly related to the sources consulted; limited time and resources are another weakness in these procedures. There is one major weakness in the fact that in order to enter the bidding process, each institution must develop its own curriculum and profiles. Last but not least, the analysis of training needs is usually carried out with focus on specific crafts, instead of an occupational family. One wider-scope policy addressing skills profiles for key occupational families would cover these gaps.

113. In this respect, there has been considerable institutional improvement on the strategies to approach enterprises, the most promising of which seems to be close co-operation between training centers and companies. In some cases, co-operation has even extended to the joint design of occupational and training profiles. Evidently, actions towards the establishment of a National Qualification Framework encourage and strengthen more pertinent training developments.

114. As it was said, programmes that promote the creation of micro-enterprises and/or self-employment also play a relevant role in the strategies against unemployment. However, there are many pre-conditions to develop sustainable entrepreneurial projects. Key ingredients for a successful micro-enterprise lie on adequate personal skills, motivation, technical skills and certain support as well as market conditions.

115. The promotion of self-employment experiences and/or micro-enterprise opportunities for young people from low socio-educational backgrounds seems to require extensive follow-up, including measures like: support in the selection of viable niches for products or services; training in management, marketing and skills related to the activity; access to loans and technical assistance and coaching for an extensive period, including psycho-social support (Ruetalo, Lasida and Berutti, 1998). Another key factor is to link these efforts with the support to help the micro-enterprises to enter the formal sector. It is important also for these programmes not to be isolated but rather related to socio-economic development policies.

116. Summing up, there is consensus on the fact that promoting micro-enterprises does not convey a universally valid solution for youth unemployment. Some agree that they should be addressed as programmes limited in time, where coaching, training and economic support are indispensables. Others highlight that that youth are nowadays motivated to create their own places jobs in a more creative independent environment, such as the arts and/or new technologies. However, it is needless to say that the opportunities such projects convey will be closely related to their available resources, skills developed social capital and cultural background.

117. Concerning the effects of the programmes which promoted micro-enterprises and self-employment, evidence concludes that these also tend to be low, considering the small percentage of companies that are able to survive in the first year. There is only evidence of good results in more integral programmes (see point 6.2), but these ones with the highest degree of blending (i.e. including training, follow-ups and credits) tend to exclude young people from the most disadvantaged sectors (Jaramillo, 2004).

6.2. Some evidence based on evaluation

118. The way and extent to which these programs are adequate and effective in improving youth opportunities in their actual context is not an easy question.

119. Knowing that social, economical and political contexts are adverse and the inequalities are structural, what would be their expected impacts? It is difficult to isolate and control the influence of contextual factors on evaluation procedures. Often external conditions, such as families' poor standard of living or

high unemployment rates, make it difficult or even impossible for young people to succeed in school and later in work.

120. The economic benefits attributed to apprenticeship, for example, are much less favourable when the alternative is taken to be full-time education, technical or general, than when it is taken to be full-time labour market participation, with its mix of employment, unemployment and labour market programs” (Ryan 1999).

121. There is little available evidence on results and impacts. The few public policies that have been studied and evaluated rigorously are the youth job training programmes of the 1990s and more recently, regional programmes as *Entra 21* and some national programmes. Usual indicators of follow-up studies are improvements in employment, wages, and the quality of jobs for participants.

122. Some youth programmes have also had impact evaluations, comparing performance indicators of the trainees with those of a group of people very similar to the beneficiaries, except that they did not receive the training. Ibararán and Rosas (2006) analyzed the assessments of the impacts of training for six countries (Argentina, Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama and Peru), and in two others a thorough institutional assessment (Paraguay and Colombia). They found employment effects ranging from zero to ten percentage points that are on average slightly better than those reported in the literature for OECD countries. The impacts are not homogenous but that vary by age, gender and region. Conditional on employment, they found positive impacts in terms of the quality of jobs that trainees get, measured either by access to the formal sector or through receiving benefits. In terms of wages –where the data is less reliable– the analysis also suggests a positive impact. These results need to be put into perspective. As the mentioned authors said “These programs are, at best, partial solutions to complex problems”.

123. Another more recent regional programme evaluated, *Entra 21*, concludes that trainees employment rates have been between 68 per cent and 40 per cent; wages are in the level of minimum wages and quality of employment tends to be better than that of disadvantaged youth in the region. (Lasida and Rodríguez, 2006)

124. There is no evidence about other important subjects. For example, although the articulation of training with other non-formal education and cultural actions has generally been promoted, this is not a valuable criterion in the selection or evaluation of the decentralized projects included in the programmes. Despite wide consensus about how isolated courses have little impact, developing integrated actions is a complex task, because they present several structural, organizational, legal and institutional challenges, not only at the public policy level, but also in their concrete development at the local level.

125. There is no consistent evidence on cost. Only one study is available. Based on the impacts estimated and with the limited available information on costs of the youth programmes of the 1990s, (administrative costs are not readily available), Ibararán and Rosas (2006) provide an answer to the question of whether “Youth programmes” have positive returns. Where the best data on both costs and benefits is available (Dominican Republic and Panama), the direct costs are recovered in a relatively short period, on average between 18 and 28 months (but for some groups much more rapidly, for example seven months for women in Panama). Other analyses point in the same direction: in Peru the results consistently show positive rates of return, which are maintained under a wide set of assumptions. Similar analysis for Chile and Argentina also show positive rates of return. These results are explained because even though the benefits are relatively small, so are the costs. These are, in general, small investments to improve the labour market performance of a well-defined group of people, so even small improvements in their employment rate and/or labour earning suffice to recoup the costs.

126. Although impact assessments on programmes encouraging micro-enterprises are scarce, two of them have been evaluated in Peru: the *Proyecto de Formación Empresarial de la Juventud*, executed by the CARE NGO, and the *Programa de Calificación de Jóvenes Creadores de Microempresas*, implemented by the *Colectivo Integral de Desarrollo* (CID) NGO (Jaramillo and Parodi, 2003).

127. According to this evaluation, both programmes had a positive impact on beneficiaries. For those who received the full package of the programme implemented by CARE – training, technical assistance in business planning and four advisory meetings once their businesses were ongoing -, chances to open an enterprise of their own within the year after finishing the programme increased 30%. Isolated training proved to be ineffective. For those beneficiaries of the *Programa de Calificación de Jóvenes Creadores de Microempresas*, the chances of preserving their own business for over a year after finishing the programme, raised 39%. Furthermore, *ex post* analysis of the beneficiaries' income and that of the test group shows that the programmes had helped beneficiaries increase their income as well. Two key factors related with good results seem to be the conscious selection of the beneficiaries and the integral approaches. Nevertheless, these might only be taken as first findings on recently implemented programmes, long term evaluation may allow for better impact assessment. (Jaramillo and Parodi, 2003).

7. CONCLUSION

128. Promoting labour as well as social inclusion of young disadvantaged people is a big challenge for Latin America in the context of increasing inequalities. The arduously implemented programmes have advanced in proposing alternatives forms of education, training and social and work guidance for those young people with minimal opportunities. Some strategies attempt to go beyond the more limited visions of vocational training by creating better links to formal education, promoting the integration into the labour market and a more equitable distribution of employment opportunities.

129. Which policy approaches have been particularly relevant for disadvantaged youth to find decent jobs and to generate income? This is a difficult question with no simple answer. Studies on best practices (Jacinto, 2002 and 2007; Gallart, 2000; Pieck, 2002; Lasida, 2004) provide some evidence of what has worked or what seems to be more hopeful.

130. A holistic approach combining training and social services, promoting links between general education and training formal or non-formal, and targeting real local labour demands seem to be some of the key factors. Many have already recognized also the importance of adopting a skills-based design.

131. Although to determine which policy approaches have been particularly relevant for disadvantaged youth to find decent jobs and to generate income is not a simple issue, some practices seem to be more hopeful.

- Promoting a closer bond with the private sector employer in order to add work insertion strategies from the designing stage of the program. Co-operation might be extended to the joint design of occupational and training profiles. Evidently, actions towards the establishment of a National Qualification Framework encourage and strengthen more pertinent collaborative programmes.
- Combining both technical training and personal as well as social and personal skills.
- Training in innovative activities, such as new technologies and communications, or creative, artistic and entertaining local activities.
- Including on-the-job learning (internship/placements) as a part of the training;
- Ensuring young people's access to work insertion services and counseling, either on self-employment or regular formal one.
- Tutoring the young in their insertion to work market, through placements and other "bridges" to decent jobs.
- Advisory and coaching actions for inexperienced small self-employed entrepreneurs, in credit access and first stages of business.
- Creating or reinforcing bridges between and within different educational paths and learning environments (formal schooling, vocational training, workplace), to encourage the weight and social significance of education with the goal of integrating young people into the labour market.
- Only for some carefully selected groups of a population, it would be adequate to promote self-employment and the creation of small enterprises, supporting them with financial services, training and counseling and linking them with more vast development policies and measures intended to facilitate their access to the formal sector.
- Adopting local approaches that link different types of institutions (educational, firms, local governments, NGOs) in a strategic plan of social and economic development seem to be the better level to respond to disadvantaged youth social and employment needs.
- Implementing more systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures to determined the best strategies in different context with different profiles of disadvantaged youth.

132. There are many pending questions on this issue in Latin America. As evidence shows, account must be taken of the fact that these measures closely depend on social and economic development. One remaining issue is to deeply reinforce the links between the various educational services and programmes. A great challenge seems to be to develop and reinforce a strategy leading young people to obtaining qualifications. The strategic objective would be the implementation of national systems that could link education, vocational training and diverse mechanisms of learning and social integration into decent jobs.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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1 Vocational training in Latin America is part of non-formal education, which for the purpose of this study we define as all education-oriented actions that take place outside sequenced, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured formal school education.

2 This point follows that expressed in Jacinto (In press).

3 The amount of the levy varies from 0.5 to 2 per cent of the payroll, which is the same rate as in other more advanced industrialized countries.

4 Training programmes leading to a qualification, usually lasting 2 years, including work placements in the industry.

5 Recently INAFORP was transformed into INADEH, a new institution charged with overseeing, regulating and evaluating all training activities in Panama.

6 Many were created just to participate in the programmes (Jacinto, 1997).

7 This non-profit organization groups 200 enterprises working on tourism and trade, with CSOs oriented to promoting corporate social responsibility. Since the beginning of their project, in 1998, they have trained over 9000 people. They address projects on such different issues as education, work market, culture, environment protection and tourism. They have received support from the Brazilian government, multilateral agencies, local governments and enterprises. It has been declared by the Ministry of Tourism, as the leading tourism HR training organization, as their methodology and instruments have a customized design both for the industry and its trainers. It is currently deploying a training programme for unemployed youth in twelve states with a budget of USD 5,427,438